

2014

Sustainable Ewing Township Green Team



**EWING
GREEN
TEAM**

An action and capacity building guide for the Sustainable Ewing Green Team.

SUSTAINABLE EWING GREEN TEAM STRATEGIC PLAN

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SUSTAINABLE EWING GREEN TEAM STRATEGIC PLAN

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BACKGROUND

The municipality of Ewing, NJ established a Green Team (EGT) under the auspices of the Environmental Commission and authorized participation in the Sustainable Jersey Program in April of 2009. In just over 4 years the Team created a number of programs that led to a Bronze level certification through the Sustainable Jersey program in 2013. Through the creation of a number of sub-committees the Team has already improved sustainability in Ewing in a variety of ways including, but certainly not limited to, increased and improved community garden space, energy audits of municipal buildings, installation of LED lighting in the municipal parking lot, maintenance and improvement of Township trails and open space, and numerous waste recycling efforts.

With success in achieving Bronze level certification, the EGT was looking to maintain this momentum. In order to continue moving forward, the EGT recognized the need to increase organizational capacity by attracting new members, training volunteers and working more closely with the Township's staff and elected officials. They also sought ways to expand the programmatic capacity of the group based on a community established vision for sustainability. The EGT is striving to achieve either Bronze level recertification or Silver level certification through the Sustainable Jersey program in 3 years. More importantly, the Green Team is working to create a strategic plan that establishes achievable goals and actions that are appropriate for Ewing and based on the needs of the community. The goal of the plan is to identify areas for programmatic expansion and include a roadmap for increasing organizational capacity to complete the actions identified within these new programmatic areas.

The Ewing Green Team applied for, and received, a grant from the Sustainable Jersey Small Grants program to conduct a community visioning and create a strategic plan that would help guide the team toward Sustainable Jersey certification and achieve that certification through actions that reflected the priorities of the community. The Green Team hired Maga Sustainability, LLC to conduct the visioning and draft the strategic plan that will be the culmination of input from the visioning, Green Team meetings, online surveys, and interactions with the Township administration and other Township boards.

After a number of initial meetings with members of the Green Team the following project goals were established:

- Overall Project Goals:
 - Build organizational capacity
 - Create Strategic Plan with actions that may coordinate with Sustainable Jersey actions to help Township achieve Bronze re-certification or Silver Certification
- Visioning 1 Goal:
 - Identify community values
 - Increase community engagement
 - Identify future engagement arenas
- Strategic Plan
 - Develop realistic goals for the Sustainable Ewing Green Team
 - Identify actions necessary to achieve goals (Sustainable Jersey overlap)
 - Develop strategies for continuing to grow organizational capacity

VISION AND MISSION

Part of the process of creating a strategy for action also included developing the vision and mission of the group. The Township convened the Team as part of the requirements for the Sustainable Jersey Certification, but many of those who volunteered to participate on the board have a broader vision for the Team and are seeking to create a vision and mission that goes beyond certification. Having a vision and mission in place will help provide direction for the Green Team and it will help members of the community connect with and understand the role and purpose of the Green Team.

After the first Visioning and the follow up Community Conversations, as well as meetings with Green Team members the following initial vision and mission statements have been created.

VISION: The Ewing Green Team envisions a Ewing Township that incorporates sustainability into the actions and decision-making processes of community members and municipal offices. Ewing will be a community that leads in efforts to:

- create and maintain sustainable ways of living;
- build strong and diverse economic opportunities; and
- cultivate a community that welcomes people from all walks of life.

MISSION: To achieve our vision, the Ewing Green Team will:

- Respectfully engage with and respond to the needs of community members to raise awareness of the many issues related to sustainability.
- Lead, educate, and empower the community to create, together, paths to a sustainable future.
- Improve the quality of life in Ewing and our surrounding communities for this and future generations through education, cooperation, and action.

The Vision and Mission statement are fluid ideas; just like the strategic plan is a fluid document and should be revisited at least once a year, so should the vision and mission to be sure they are still reflective of the groups' goals.

VISIONING PROCESS

The first Visioning was held on Saturday, June 7, 2014 at The College of New Jersey in Ewing. The Visioning, titled *Community Conversations: Preserving Our Past, Transforming Our Future* was attended by over 50 members of the Ewing community. These attendees were selected through a vigorous stakeholder identification process and although many invitees could not attend, many asked to be included in future correspondence about the visioning and strategic planning process. In order to elicit responses from those invitees that could not attend the visioning, the Green Team drafted a survey consisting of the questions posed to the attendees at the event. The responses from these surveys are identified separately since those responding to the survey did not have the benefit of direction from the facilitators and participation in the group conversations.

Prior to engaging in any conversations, attendees were given a brief primer on sustainability to provide some context for the questions they were about to discuss. A representative from Sustainable Jersey also gave a brief presentation about the Sustainable Jersey program and its role in helping communities like Ewing across the

state of New Jersey establish sustainable practices.

Participants then spent the rest of the visioning having conversations in groups of 5 to 7 people, recording their conversations on paper and reporting on their conversations to the rest of the group at allotted times. Based on these conversations, key



1 - June 7 Community Conversation at TCNJ

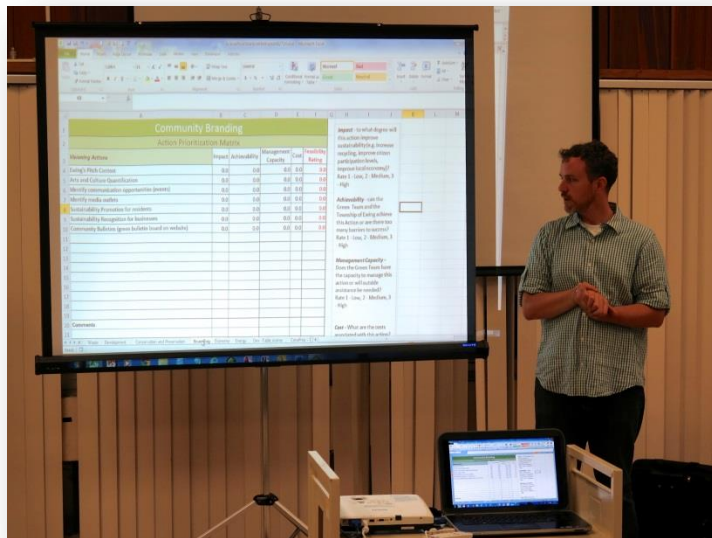
performance areas were established and conversations about potential actions for the Green Team were discussed within the context of the performance area. For a complete summary of the Visioning please see the document “Ewing Township Sustainable Green Team Visioning Summary”.

Following the initial Visioning, the Green Team dedicated their next three monthly meetings to continuing the conversations started at the Visioning with the goal of fine tuning the action ideas developed at the visioning and ranking the actions with members of the community. Ranking of the actions was based on the achievability of the action, the impact of the action, the capacity of the Green Team and the community to complete the action and the potential cost of the action. After the ranking of all



2 - Summer Monthly Meetings Refining the Vision

the actions from all the categories was completed the Green Team went back and chose the top three actions from each group as the actions they would focus on for this strategic plan. However, the top three actions were not necessarily the three actions with the highest ranking. In some cases actions were further refined so a higher ranking action would include a lower ranking action or one of equal ranking. In other cases, while the overall ranking was high one element of the ranking such as the capacity of the Green team to complete the action was low or upon further reflection at the time of decision making the action was seen as inferior to other options included in the top three.



3 - Working on the Action Prioritization Matrix

of each action, a list of potential sub-actions, a timeline for each action and progress indicators to help the green team track successes. The document was reviewed and edited by members of the Green Team and is included in the document in the Actions section.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

While a complete summary of the Visioning is not included within this document the following is a description of the conversations used to reach the identification of the key performance areas based on the values held by the Ewing Community.

It is important to note, that while not all of the actions are included in this strategic plan it does not mean that they will not be considered in future activities for the Green Team or shared with the Township as potential actions for the Township to consider implementing. Many of the actions simply fell outside of the Green Team’s mission or scope. Other actions were not included at this time because of the cost or difficulty in implementation due to capacity. However, as the Green Team continues to grow their outreach efforts into the community it is possible that the capacity to achieve these other actions may improve and these actions may then be included in future updates to the Strategic Plan. All of the actions identified are included as Appendix 1 as well as the ranking completed by the community.

Once the top three actions were chosen a summary document was prepared for the Green Team with a description

CONVERSATION 1: A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY IS

What are the attributes of a healthy, sustainable community?

The intent of this conversation was to have participants create a shared definition of community sustainability. Participants were not asked to speak specifically about what a Sustainable Ewing would look like, only to imagine what sorts of physical, social, and economic characteristics might be present in a community that they considered sustainable.

CONVERSATION 2: COMMUNITY SCAN

What are Ewing's assets? What are Ewing's challenges?

This conversation asked participants to shift their focus to think specifically about Ewing and discuss assets and challenges in Ewing that may impact the Green Team's efforts to build a healthy, sustainable community. Participants were guided by questions such as: What are the things about Ewing that make it a great place to live? Are there strong organizations in town that are succeeding in their missions? Are there strong sustainability efforts in the schools? Is there a lack of political will or community interest in sustainability?

CONVERSATION 3: PRESERVATION/TRANSFORMATION

Where are your values as a community?

The purpose of this conversation was to begin to combine the two prior conversations to identify what characteristics of Ewing are valued by the community. For example, participants identified a connected and transparent community as a characteristic of a sustainable community and then noted that this characteristic seems to be a challenge in Ewing. In this conversation then participants would identify communication as a community value that should be transformed in the future. They also identified supportive and welcoming neighborhoods as an indicator of a sustainable community and then noted that while individual neighborhoods seem to be strong there is very little interaction between neighborhoods and it is difficult for newcomers to the town to get involved. The value identification would then be to preserve the strength of existing neighborhoods and transform the interaction across neighborhoods and with new residents.

This conversation was also intended to guide participants towards the creation of Key Performance Areas. While participants were discussing their community values they were asked to identify themes. For example, if the values identified included preserving historic sites, maintaining and developing conservation areas, providing better access to existing open space and reduction of use of pesticides on township owned properties the overarching theme might be Conservation and Natural Resource Management. If the values identified were improving facilities for alternative modes of transportation, encouraging use of alternative energy vehicles, providing transit to seniors, the theme might be Transportation and Transit.

CONVERSATION 4: KEY PERFORMANCE AREAS

Project Ideas, Goal Setting, Outreach



4 - Visioning 1 Conversation

In the last conversation participants were permitted to self-select into the key performance area that was of the most interest to them. In these groups they had the opportunity to suggest project ideas, do some goal setting, and recommend outreach and education topics. In just a short period of time these groups came up with a number of ideas for the Green Team to consider for implementation.

ACTIONS

The following is the list of the Key Performance Area Actions to be implemented by the Green Team. As noted at the start of this document, the purpose of this Strategic Plan in regard to actions to be implemented was to have actions that reflected the desires of the community and where possible these actions should also aid the Green Team in achieving the Silver Level Sustainable Jersey Certification, since one key responsibilities of the Ewing Green Team (EGT) is to catalyze and document actions that will bring credit to Ewing under the Sustainable Jersey program. With this in mind, where possible the EGT should hone citizen ideas to adhere as closely as possible to the required criteria for any efforts that would receive certification through the Sustainable Jersey Program. For all of the actions that follow a corresponding Sustainable Jersey action has been identified. Some of the Ewing actions match the Sustainable Jersey actions exactly while others may require some additional development in order to receive points towards certification. In some cases there is no corresponding Sustainable Jersey Action so the potential for the project to receive points as an Innovative Community Project has been indicated. However, the Team may only submit three actions as innovative community projects. Completion of this plan is eligible for Sustainable Jersey points under Sustainability Planning: Sustainable Community Plan.

For further research: <http://www.sustainablejersey.com/actions-certification/actions/>

COMMUNITY

Strong communities are based on the ability of its members to transcend their differences to work together toward common goals. Strong communities communicate more openly and effectively leading to more effective development and implementation of policies.

Community building is a process. Engaging thoughtfully in that process can lead to deeper, more authentic communication. The following actions were developed to engage more members of the Ewing community in the Green Team's efforts to develop a sustainability program that addresses the needs of all Ewing residents.

IDENTIFY NEIGHBORHOODS

Asset mapping is a process used to identify resources within a community. The goals of this activity can be to identify a specific resource (e.g. parks) or to identify a more robust number of resources with the goal of creating an inventory of multiple capacities within the community. As part of the visioning in Ewing Township, asset mapping was identified as a way to mark boundaries of existing neighborhoods in order to facilitate the promotion of neighborhood associations. Along with the identification of these boundaries, further investigation will be necessary to identify more specific assets such as parks, schools, businesses, institutions, and others. The goal of the asset mapping is to be able to share with the community the diverse amenities available to Ewing residents within their own municipal boundaries.

The following are potential sub-actions needed to complete this goal:

- Assemble a committee of residents willing to collect data
- Review current and historic maps of Ewing Township to identify neighborhood boundaries
- Identify any additional resources that may contain information about Ewing neighborhoods
- Create a list of existing civic associations and interview leadership to identify what geographic boundaries they represent.
- Translate collected data to digital format

Timeline for action: 6 to 15 months

Progress Indicators:

6 months:

- Committee developed
- Mapping of neighborhoods has begun

12 months:

- A digital mapping layer of neighborhood boundaries has been created
- Committee is moving on to consider future asset identification

15 months:

- Map has been publicized and made available to the community

Sustainable Jersey Action: Sustainability Planning: Community Asset Mapping

PROMOTE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

BUILD VOLUNTEER NETWORK

One of the issues identified during the visioning was the lack of a coherent community identity felt by many of the residents in attendance. Rebuilding those communities was a primary focus of this visioning and drew a large number of people to subsequent meetings about this topic. Helping existing Neighborhood Associations increase their active membership and helping neighborhoods that lack Neighborhood Associations establish them were made top priorities of the Green Team. In addition, building a volunteer network with the help of these neighborhood associations would be a way to add value to the associations while providing assistance to other community members in need and the municipality in general.

The following are potential sub-actions needed to complete this goal:

- Identify Neighborhood Associations (see Asset Mapping)
- Hold educational events about benefits and development of Neighborhood Associations (speakers could be residents that are part of existing civic associations)
- Develop specific tasks for volunteers in your community network (raking, shoveling for elderly or disabled, upkeep of landscaped islands)
- Develop a way to manage the program (online, through the township...)
- Create a pilot program in one neighborhood
- Expand to other neighborhoods and design and conduct an outreach campaign

Timeline for action: 9 – 15 months

Progress Indicators:

9 months:

- Neighborhoods identified and contacts for each of those neighborhoods established
- Educational program developed and scheduled

12 months:

- Volunteer network in development
- One neighborhood pilot complete

15 months:

- One new neighborhood association established or existing neighborhood civic association more active
- Volunteer network program expanded to two to three additional neighborhoods

WELCOMING COMMITTEE

Welcoming new residents to the community was identified as a way to help new residents feel connected to their new community right from the start and to get these new residents engaged in the activities within the municipality. Many of those attending the first community visioning meeting and subsequent community meetings felt that this action should be at the top of the Green Team's list because it was a way to build community engagement among the newest residents of the community. The goal of the committee would be to develop a welcome package that provides resources and builds connections with existing community resources (e.g. coupons to local restaurants and stores, calendar of school events, calendar of municipal events).

The following are potential sub-actions needed to complete this goal:

- Assemble committee of residents willing to build the network
- Reach out to local businesses and encourage them to provide new resident welcome coupons
- Build relationships with local real estate agents and companies to inform them of the program
- Determine what community information to include in the package and what form the package will take
- Create and assemble welcome packet for distribution
- Begin the program and request follow up from new residents for ways to improve the welcome program to future residents

Timeline for action: 6 – 12 months

Progress Indicators:

6 months:

- Committee developed
- Minimum of three businesses have agreed to provide support
- Minimum of three real estate companies have been contacted and agreed to provide support

9 months:

- Format for package has been created and community information for the upcoming months has been collected

12 months:

- Welcome package is ready
- A process for updating the packet has been established
- A feedback mechanism has been developed

Sustainable Jersey: Innovative & Demonstration Projects: Innovative Community Project

WASTE

Waste is one of the most prevalent issues facing our communities when it comes to sustainability. From creating waste, to disposal of all types of wastes, to recycling, the impact of waste on our environment and our economy is enormous. Providing accurate and useful information to our communities can have impacts locally and globally and help to combat the negative impacts that waste can have. Through discussions at the Visioning and follow up community conversations the Green Team has established the following actions as most relevant to their mission and the needs established by the community.

WASTE EDUCATION

Educating the community about waste, its impacts and its proper management is the first step in changing the community's approach to consumption, reuse, recycling and disposal of the materials they use every day. An aggressive campaign around waste education was a top priority to the residents of the community. This campaign should include educational events, flyers, and partnerships with local institutions and businesses.

The following are potential sub-actions needed to complete this goal:

- Identify topics to be covered at educational events, e.g. Recycling, Material Reuse, and Life Cycle Assessment, which basically follows the garbage, i.e. what happens to our waste.
- Develop informational brochures and create new website to educate and update about the 3Rs of recycling and share/link on the EGT and Township website and with Neighborhood Associations, schools, and businesses that will disseminate through their websites.
- Work with the schools to incorporate an educational program that can either be incorporated into a class or through an assembly

Timeline for action: 6 months – ongoing

Progress Indicators:

6 months:

- Have held at least one educational event related to waste
- Two informational flyers have been developed and posted to the website of the Green Team and the municipality
- Basic Recycling website - new recycling website- ready for public dissemination

9 months:

- Two Partner organizations (neighborhood associations, schools) have posted a link or the flyer itself on their website or have shared the information in some other form.
- Enhanced recycling information website ready for public dissemination

12 months:

- Have held at least two educational events related to waste
- Have established a methodology and program to integrate with schools
- Hold 2nd Annual Scarecrow contest for recycling awareness with enhanced promotion and identified sponsors

Sustainable Jersey: Waste Management: Waste Reduction: Recycling Education and Enforcement

Sustainable Jersey: Community Partnership and Outreach: Community Education and Outreach

BIODEGRADABLE WASTE PROGRAMS (COMPOST AND FOOD WASTE EDUCATION)

Many people in the community had an interest in waste related specifically to food. Since food waste is bio-degradable and transformed into useful materials such as compost the visioning participants wanted a special focus given to composting and food waste. Educational events for residents, food waste options for the schools, restaurants and other local food related businesses, and other ways to minimize food waste or reuse food waste were all part of the programming discussed.

The following are potential sub-actions needed to complete this goal:

- Develop an educational outreach effort related to biodegradable waste – including composting at home, developing a neighborhood compost program, etc.
- Identify food related local businesses and reach out to determine how they handle food waste
- Develop educational materials about commercial food waste and share with local businesses
- Develop educational materials to place on website about minimizing food waste, composting, and other methodologies to keep food waste out of the municipal waste stream.

Timeline for action: 6 months - ongoing

Progress Indicators:

6 months:

- At least one educational event has been held
- Information about food waste has been posted to the Green Team, new ET Recycling Info Depot website and municipal website

9 months:

- A list of food related businesses in Ewing has been created and an outreach campaign has begun
- Neighborhood Association network has been leveraged to reach out to the community to identify home composters and to share information about educational events and training about home composting

12 months:

- Use the Neighborhood Associations to track any potential increase in home composting

Sustainable Jersey: Waste Management: Backyard Composting Program

COMMUNITY FREE CYCLE

Many of us are familiar with the concept of free-cycling through websites such as FreeCycle [<http://freecycle.org>] where items can often be given away or obtained for free from other local residents. Many members of the Ewing community were interested in promoting this sort of concept on a hyper-local level with a local drop off/pick-up depot. There are logistical issues to be worked out with this program such as hosting and staffing, but participants in the visioning felt that it could have a significant impact in diverting items from the waste stream. Ideally this could be located at the Township’s Municipal Recycling Depot.

The following are potential sub-actions needed to complete this goal:

- Develop best approach to implement this program
- Develop marketing program to local residents
- Develop methodology for tracking exchanges

Timeline for action: 12 months - ongoing

Progress Indicators:

12 months:

- Specific plans for implementation have been established and activity towards implementation the ground site has begun
- Marketing materials have been developed and are ready to be distributed to community

18 months:

- Site is active and a methodology for tracking materials coming and going has been established

24 months:

- Tracking is being used to determine if this program is being used by residents

Sustainable Jersey: Waste Management: Materials Reuse Program

PRESERVATION/CONSERVATION

Preservation and Conservation of community assets such as open space, forests, wetlands and historic sites are important elements of any approach to community sustainability. Making reference to both the social and environmental elements of sustainability, actions in this category focused on protecting natural resources, developing opportunities for residents to engage with the outdoors and preserving Ewing’s rich history in the region.

TREES

Preserving a community's tree canopy, both forest stands and street trees, is extremely important in combating climate change but also in creating a community that is aesthetically appealing and that provides opportunities for residents to be closer to nature. Trees provide shade for houses, streets and parking areas, sequester carbon produced by cars and buildings, stabilize steep slopes, and add aesthetic value to our neighborhoods. Community members were passionate about taking stock of and protecting this great community resource.

The following are potential sub-actions needed to complete this goal:

- Create a tree committee in partnership with the Ewing Environmental Commission and solicit citizen participation.
- Develop a Tree Inventory (iTree Assessment Tool)
 - This can be done by a professional or through a community program that empowers residents to participate in identifying and protecting the trees in their own neighborhood and the Township at large. [The Girl Scouts have already identified all the trees in Banchoff Park.]
 - Identified legacy trees should have identification tags affixed.
- Identify which trees are the best for various uses in the township according to growth shape and root needs.
- Identify source of trees for local installations for both resident and municipality. Check out grant options.
- Sponsor educational workshops about trees including, care, disease, identification, and the important role that trees play in the environment.
- Provide information and links on the EGT website about trees including the *Tree of the Month* articles written for the Ewing Observer.

Timeline for action: 6 to 24 months

Progress Indicators:

6 months:

- Have posted information about the importance of trees to the community and how homeowners can care for trees on their own property
- Have established an approach to completing the Tree Inventory

12 months:

- Work with the schools to have students identify the trees on school properties
- Have held at least one workshop on trees

18 months:

- Have completed the Tree Inventory in the Township's fifteen municipal parks

Sustainable Jersey: Natural Resources: iTree Assessment of Municipal Trees

Sustainable Jersey: Natural Resources: Tree and Woodland Management: Tree Planting Programs

BIKING/PEDESTRIAN TRAILS

Providing safe and accessible trails for the residents of Ewing is one of the best ways to connect residents with the natural world around them, encourage healthy habits like taking walks and rides, and to add to the overall value of the community. Developing a trail network that provides access for hikers of all levels and that provides access to off-road bicycles is no small task. A strong partnership with the municipality will need to be established in order to engage in work on public property and do so in a manner that will be consistent with Township policies regarding the use of open space.

The following are potential sub-actions needed to complete this goal:

- Develop and publicize the newly formed Ewing Bike Advocacy group (a Green Team subcommittee) to recruit more members
- Find an existing inventory of trails in the region and work to ground truth their location and condition, such as the Lawrence Hopewell Trail - <http://lhtrail.org/>
- Work off Ewing's Conservation Element of the Master Plan to identify potential areas for trail connections.
- Identify trails that need improvement, signage, etc. and develop a plan with the Township to address improvement and upgrades
- Work with other local organizations such as the Boy and Girl Scouts to implement improvement plan
- Create trail maps using e.g. QGIS open source software in coordination with Google Maps Engine

Timeline for action: 9 months - ongoing

Progress Indicators:

9 months:

- Bike Advocacy Group operates as autonomous group and has a Green Team liaison
- Inventory of Trails completed and ground truth process has begun
- Identify the trail surface material and condition

15 months:

- Have developed an improvement plan in partnership with municipality
- An integrated and systematic effort to improve trails and provide signage is underway.

STREETS/SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS FOR SAFE PEDESTRIAN/BIKE TRANSIT

Safer roadways encourage residents to walk and bike more often, which can greatly improve their health and mobility. We have to remember that not all residents have access to motor vehicles. Most students also do not have the choice to drive. They must walk or bike to schools, parks and community centers. Providing sidewalks and bike lanes assure that all residents have safe non-motorized ways to get to their destinations. There are many places in Ewing where sidewalks just stop at an intersection. Many of Ewing's busiest roads do not have sidewalks or bike lanes and are too narrow to ride in the street.

The following are potential sub-actions needed to complete this goal:

- Identify where there is a need for safe routes to schools, parks and community centers. Make sure there are paths or sidewalks for students to travel.
- Conduct a Bike/Pedestrian audit to assess current conditions for biking and pedestrians in town.
- Develop network of volunteers along with the newly formed Ewing Bike Advocacy group willing to perform Bike/Pedestrian Audit in town.
- Identify major interest hubs/destinations in town.
- Use existing studies to determine the most favorable routes in town for biking.
- Develop training materials for participants
- Perform bike/pedestrian audit on those routes
- Complete and publish bike/pedestrian audit
- Transform collected data to digital format
- Conduct a Bike Tour in Ewing in 2015 to reach out to and build a community of Ewing biking enthusiasts and publicize Bike Advocacy committee work.
- Encourage Planning Board and Zoning Board to require sidewalks for new sites and/or improving sites.

Timeline for action: 6 months - ongoing

Progress Indicators:

6 months:

- Audit training materials completed.
- Webpages with info published on Green Team website.
- Bike/pedestrian audit pilot studies completed with preliminary reports submitted to Township
- Data transformed into digital format
- Preliminary planning for Bike Tour and committee underway – date selection needed - fundraising and partnerships developing

9 months:

- Bike Advocacy Group operates as autonomous group and has a Green Team liaison.
- Review condition of sidewalks within one mile of all schools
- Audits continuing – data transformed into digital format
- Hold Bike Tour of Ewing

12 months:

- Most favorable routes audit complete and submitted to Township in digital format

15 months:

- Completion of selected areas of town of bike/pedestrian audit
- Have developed an improvement plan in partnership with municipality

Sustainable Jersey: Land Use & Transportation: Bicycle and/or Pedestrian Audit

Sustainable Jersey: Health & Wellness: Safe Routes to School

HERITAGE TOURS AND HISTORIC SITES (INCLUDE REVOLUTIONARY) MARKING

Preserving and celebrating a community's history helps people to establish a link to the past as well as to develop a desire to leave the same legacy and connection for future generations. Ewing has a rich history worthy of recognition and preservation. The benefits this can bring to building a strong community are undeniable if the process of identification, celebration, and preservation of historic sites is inclusive of all interested community members.

The following are potential sub-actions needed to complete this goal:

- Update list of all local historic sites (currently available at <http://ewinggreenteam.org/committees/sj-certification/ewing-township-historic-sites/>)
- Identify the sites that are publicly marked
- For sites that are not marked find out if there is a process to have these sites marked by the state or the municipality
- Develop a tour program – tours can take on many forms, they can be self-guided, a map provided through the website, a guided bus tour
- Encourage owners of historic properties to have them placed on the Township's Historic Registry
- Work with the schools to incorporate an educational program that educates and celebrates the historic sites throughout the Town

Timeline for action: 9 to 18 months

Progress Indicators:

9 months:

- Complete inventory of sites and markers
- Complete historic sites community asset map

- Have a clear sense of how to provide markers and historic locations in town that are not marked

12 months:

- Have decided on a tour process and have begun implementation

18 months:

- Tour program is running
- Schools have been involved in developing a local history celebration program

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community development in Ewing was a large part of the conversation at the Visioning. With changing demographics and a couple of large parcels of land in the process of redevelopment near a transportation hub, changes in the Township are likely to accelerate. Managing existing infrastructure and concerns over future development led to a number of recommendations that related to zoning and tax programs that do not fall under the purview of the Green Team. Those recommendations have been included later in this document to provide further insight to the municipality regarding the concerns of the residents of Ewing related to sustainability that are not actions that the Green Team can address but that other interested groups in Ewing might be encouraged to undertake the leadership for. Two of the ideas regarding development in the community that the Green Team can address include Beautify Ewing and Volunteer Groups to maintain roads.

BEAUTIFY EWING CAMPAIGN

Our location along the Delaware River, midway between Philadelphia and New York, with a regional airport, rail lines and interstate highways altogether position Ewing as an attractor. Most people involved in this visioning process felt that, to take full advantage, Ewing could use some beautification particularly along some of its major commercial corridors. A Beautify Ewing Campaign would bring volunteers together to clean up litter from commercial corridors and install and maintain landscaped installations in places identified by a committee of local residents. Funding to purchase supplies may be available through NJ Clean Communities grants [see <http://www.njclean.org/GrantGuidelines2014ver3.pdf>].

The following are potential sub-actions needed to complete this goal:

- Assemble a Beautify Ewing committee headed by a member of the Green Team and incorporating members of active neighborhood associations and local business owners.
- Identify appropriate locations for landscape installations (these do not need to be permanent – consider the use of large baskets for flowers)
- Reach out to local businesses, especially those that would benefit directly from beautification for support through in-kind or monetary donations
- Create a plan to install and manage landscape improvements
- Organize at least two clean up days per year (partnerships with other organizations and neighborhood associations important)
- Extend program to homeowner competition.

Timeline for action: 6 to 24 months

Progress Indicators:

6 months:

- Committee has been created and has been meeting for approximately 3 months
- Locations for landscaped installations have been identified
- One community clean-up day has been held

(See NJ Clean Communities program at <http://www.njclean.org> and Green Hands USA website at <http://www.greenhandsusa.com/eventguide>).

12 months:

- A management plan has been developed
- Businesses have been contacted regarding supporting the committee's efforts and funding to purchase materials has been secured
- One community cleanup day has been completed

24 months:

- Landscaping has been installed
- At least two community cleanup days have been held

Sustainable Jersey: Innovative & Demonstration Projects: Innovative Community Project

ADOPT A ROAD PROGRAM

In addition to a beautification program for commercial corridors, there are many smaller roads in the community that would benefit from a dedicated group of volunteers to keep the roads free from debris. Debris in roadways is both unsightly and can cause major complications to storm water management as more and more debris fills up in storm water infrastructure like grates and culverts. A roadway maintenance volunteer cleanup program would be a great way to engage those neighborhood associations that the Green Team is looking to support as well as other community service organizations in town.

The following are potential sub-actions needed to complete this goal:

- Identify collector and local roads that are prone to litter build up
- Identify the neighborhoods closest in proximity to these roads
- Reach out to the neighborhoods to find volunteers to keep these roadways clean
- Reach out to local community service organizations such as the Kiwanis, Lions, Elks, West Trenton Garden Club...
- Establish a regular cleanup schedule

Timeline for action: 6 months - ongoing

Progress Indicators:

6 months:

- Roads needing regular cleanups have been identified as have those neighborhoods closest to the roadways.

9 months:

- Neighborhood Associations and other groups have been contacted about an ongoing cleanup program for those roads and a network of volunteers has been identified (this can be the same network identified as part of the Community Volunteer Network – no need for two separate groups)

12 months:

- A regular maintenance schedule has established and materials for cleanups have been provided to NA leaders (gloves, garbage bags, litter pickers – the same purchased for the Beautify Ewing Campaign)
- Signage for roadway maintenance such as used for the Adopt a Highway program has been erected.

Sustainable Jersey: Innovative & Demonstration Projects: Innovative Community Project

BRANDING

Providing a strong identity for a community has multiple benefits. Branding goes beyond a simple logo that is recognizable to invoking a perception or idea about a community. Many attendees at the visioning noted that it would be beneficial if Ewing developed a stronger appeal to outsiders in order to attract additional businesses, residents, and organizations to the community. Creating a strong brand for the community can help economic development, community engagement and bring recognition to the positive changes that Ewing is making to become a more sustainable community. Much of the work of branding must be done through the municipality, not just the Green Team. However, there were a few actions that the Green Team felt could help add value to the Ewing brand.

SUSTAINABLE RECOGNITION FOR BUSINESSES

Many communities across the US have developed recognition programs for local businesses that have undertaken efforts to “Go Green.” These programs have been also strongly linked to Buy Local programs that encourage residents to shop at local stores and engage the services of local businesses (see Support Local Business in Economic Development following). They take time, strong management, and good marketing to be successful, but the success of these programs is undeniable in their benefits in reducing environmental impact, boosting economic efficiency, improving the quality of life, as well as encouraging greater business participation.

The following are potential sub-actions needed to complete this goal:

- Develop a committee made up of EGT members, representatives from the municipality, and the business community to design the program
- Develop a list of requirements necessary to be considered a sustainable business (see Sustainable Jersey program for guidance)
- Determine support mechanisms that will assist companies in the adoption of green practices, and specify any financial or regulatory incentives that will be offered to green businesses.
- Create program materials, solicit companies for participation, and implement the marketing campaign.
- Accept applications and conduct business inspections (if applicable). Once the first round of participants has been identified, distribute Green Business certificates and window decals.
- Publish a directory of these Green Businesses in print and online. Implement an ongoing advertising campaign to inform consumers about the program.

Timeline for action: 12 to 36 months

Progress Indicators:

12 months:

- Committee has been developed and a sustainable business checklist has been created

18 months:

- A Sustainable Business Hero campaign has been developed with logo, marketing initiatives, and is ready to be implemented
- Green businesses have been solicited for participation

24 months:

- Applications have been accepted and business inspections (if applicable) have been conducted.
- Green Business recognition has been awarded to qualifying businesses.
- Preparations for a second round has begun and recertification of first round businesses

36 months:

- Sustainable Business Recognition program is fully operational and there are systems in place to maintain the programs long term

- Green business directory has been created and published.

Sustainable Jersey: Local Economies: Green Business Recognition Program

ARTS AND CULTURE INVENTORY

Arts and culture have long been seen as ways to improve the quality of life in communities and to bring businesses and visitors to the community. Improving and increasing the number of arts and culture events and venues can be accomplished by taking stock of what is currently available and then seeking out local artists and cultural organizations to join the Ewing community.

The following are potential sub-actions needed to complete this goal:

- Create an inventory team (In order to be eligible for Sustainable Jersey points this should be characterized as the Sustainable Jersey Creative Team. These should include members of and might be led by the Arts Commission.)
- Hold an open public meeting to solicit recommendations to include in the inventory – be sure to reach out across a wide group of stakeholders that represent the diversity of your community. Assets should include arts-related associations, organizations, community gathering spaces, environmental assets, cultural activities, arts organizations and individual artists.
- Verify assets to complete list
- Determine the format(s) that would be the most useful to the community for publication – a map, text report or a spreadsheet and publish.

Timeline for action: 6 - 12 months

Progress Indicators:

6 months:

- Inventory team has been established and open public meeting dates have been set

12 months:

- Meeting has been held and assets on the inventory have been verified as still active

Sustainable Jersey: Arts & Creative Culture: Creative Assets Inventory

Sustainable Jersey: Arts & Creative Culture: Establish a Creative Team

SUSTAINABLE RECOGNITION FOR RESIDENTS

While celebrating businesses is a great way to help improve the brand of your community, it is just as important to recognize those residents of the community that are going above and beyond in helping Ewing to become more sustainable. Recognizing local residents in the community helps create opportunities for sharing ideas and improving community cohesion. It also helps those outside the community see the value that is placed on supporting and celebrating those that live in Ewing.

The following are potential sub-actions needed to complete this goal:

- Assemble a Sustainability Hero recognition team
- Identify recognition areas – e.g. community composter, local artist, community caregiver and how often you will recognize (monthly, quarterly...)
- Develop marketing/publicity materials for print/web...
- Market program and request nominations
- Place article about the resident in local newspaper, municipal website and EGT website

Timeline for action: 3 months - ongoing

Progress Indicators:

3 months:

- Recognition areas have been established and the program has been shared through website and newspaper

6 months:

- First community honorees have been chosen and an article about their contributions to the community has been posted on the municipal and EGT website and in the newspapers.

Sustainable Jersey: Innovative & Demonstration Projects: Innovative Community Project

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development in Ewing played a significant role in at the Visioning. Local businesses appeared to lack a sense of cohesion, having largely outside ownership and no active business associations. A redevelopment plan along major roadways had not taken hold. Four initiatives (including one moved from Community Development as logically interrelated) were considered priorities to foster more healthy economic development in the community.

SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES

Research into the benefits of supporting locally owned business indicate that communities benefit by improving economic multipliers (meaning your local dollar is spent again locally), improving opportunities for entrepreneurship, getting better service and improving community identity. Many of the previous actions already identified have indicated that these are all goals that are important to the residents of Ewing and that undertaking a Buy Local campaign is just the beginning in supporting local businesses.

The following are potential sub-actions needed to complete this goal:

- Assemble a Local Business Support Task Force (this can be the same as the Sustainable Business/Buy Local Group). People to draw from might include Mid Jersey C of C Ewing branch, Kiwanis, Zoning, Planning, the Planner, Redevelopment, etc.
- Meet with local businesses and create an inventory of their concerns and brainstorm ways that the community can help support them
- Implement innovative ideas that support local businesses beyond marketing and branding such as municipal recognition for community service, monthly business column on municipal website, Ask the Business column in newspaper, etc.

Timeline for action: 3 months - ongoing

Progress Indicators:

3 months:

- The committee has been established and a date is set to meet with local business owners (this should be concurrent with SB recognition and Buy Local initiative)

9 months:

- Meeting with businesses have been held and at least two new initiatives are being developed

12 months:

- New initiatives are being implemented

Sustainable Jersey: Local Economies: Support Local Businesses

VIBRANT EVENTS FOR BUSINESSES

Enticing local residents to buy from local businesses sometimes requires special events to introduce community members to the businesses located in your community, especially those businesses that may not have a retail store front. Holding events in the community that showcase local businesses is one way to make the connection.

The following are potential sub-actions needed to complete this goal:

- Using an established business task force (SB Recognition, Buy Local, Support Local, Business Incubator) identify types of events that would benefit local businesses
- Identify existing local events that businesses can partner with
- Market the campaign to residents and hold events
 - Ideas for events
 - “Meet Your Local Business Owners” or “Ask Your Local Business Owner” nights –Meet the Farmer, Meet the Contractor, Meet the Financial Consultant, etc.
 - Ewing Night out – sponsored by a local business (movies in the park, neighborhood barbecue, Holiday Celebrations, Taste of Ewing – i.e. restaurant night out...)
 - Local Green Fair
 - Community Fest

Timeline for action: 3 months - ongoing

Progress Indicators:

3 months:

- Concurrent with previous Business Initiatives, Business Committee/Task Force convened

6 months:

- Ideas for events have been brainstormed and Committee is in the process of organizing the first event

12 months:

- Committee has held at least one event sponsored by or showcasing local businesses

Sustainable Jersey: Local Economies: Support Local Businesses

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Perhaps the simplest way to connect local residents to local businesses is through the development of a local business directory. Though the development of a directory is fairly straightforward there are multiple formats that a directory can take including a paper distribution, online, and/or within other community outreach mechanisms (local calendar, for example). The job of those EGT members and community volunteers involved with this project will be finding the best way to distribute the directory to the greatest number of people.

The following are potential sub-actions needed to complete this goal:

- Develop sub-committee of Business Committee focused on creating the directory.
- Populate directory through various methods (online searches, business network, local or regional chamber of commerce listings)
- Decide on best distribution formats (multiple formats will reach the largest number)
- Timeline for action: 6 to 18 months
- Progress Indicators:

6 months:

- Sub-Committee of Business Group established
- Collection of businesses has begun

12 months:

- Distribution mechanisms have been identified
- Formatting of list has begun (decide what information to include and the design of the entries)

18 months:

- The directory is available online and in print

Sustainable Jersey: Local Economies: Support Local Businesses

BUSINESS INCUBATOR

A business incubator is a program that provides support to small start-up businesses. The concept of business incubators dates back to the late 1950's in the United States though the concept did not truly begin to catch on until the 1980's. Since the 1980's this framework has been used by communities across the United States as part of a strategy to build economic diversity and provide opportunity for local businesses to succeed. The Green Team and those participating in the Visioning saw this as an area where the Green Team could take the lead in developing an incubator program in partnership with other local entities. While ongoing management of the incubator cannot be an activity for the Green Team, acting as the catalyst to developing an incubator program is an action they feel has a lot of value to the community. Developing an incubator will require development of significant funding sources and a long-term commitment of people truly invested in seeing this process through and maintaining a commitment to the organization established to manage the incubator. The development of Campus Town at TCNJ and the redevelopment of the GM site provide two excellent opportunities as locations that may be a great home to a startup incubator site. (Visit the National Business Incubation Association website at <http://www.nbia.org/> for guidance).

The following are potential sub-actions needed to complete this goal:

- Develop a committee made up of EGT members, representatives from the municipality, business community and TCNJ
- Lead this committee in exploring potential funding options, visiting other incubator sites, and building a relationship with the New Jersey Business Incubation Network
- Determine focus, if any, for incubator – e.g. technology firms, sustainable business firms, social entrepreneurs, etc.
- Identify a location for the business incubator and work with municipality and property owner to explore options for using property (consider tax relief for reduced rental cost)
- Establish an independent incubator non-profit to manage program

Timeline for action: 12 to 36 months

Progress Indicators:

12 months:

- An exploratory committee has been developed and has established a mission and vision for developing an incubator
- The committee has researched the establishment and management of a business incubator and has begun to put together a process for developing a non-profit organization to manage the incubator

24 months:

- Committee has decided on incubator focus, has reached out to existing incubators for support and guidance and is in the process of attaining 501(c)3 status

36 months:

- Incubator visioning committee has been replaced by a 501(c) 3 non-profit or other entity that has taken the vision of the incubator to reality.

Sustainable Jersey: Innovative & Demonstration Projects: Innovative Community Project

ENERGY

Energy generation and consumption is perhaps the most crucial issue to be addressed in regard to global climate change. Despite the urgent need to address this issue it was not identified as one of the Key Performance Areas during the Community Visioning. However, a few members of the Green Team have already been working diligently in this area and came together to add these actions to the Green Team’s Strategic Plan. Without these efforts to reduce consumption and shift to more renewable forms of energy, it is possible that little can be done to reduce carbon emissions and slow the increase in global temperatures that can have extremely damaging effects to our global community.

ENERGY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Educating the public about how energy works is the first step towards shifting consumptive behavior. The average homeowner probably only knows how much their electricity costs but not how it is generated and transmitted. Teaching homeowners about where electricity comes from, its environmental costs, and simple ways to reduce consumption could lead to significant carbon emission reductions. The Home Performance with Energy Star program should be incorporated into the Education and Outreach programming to get Ewing residents started in examining energy usage in their own homes.

The following are potential sub-actions needed to complete this goal:

- Identify topics to be covered at educational events, e.g. Where does electricity come from, how to reduce consumption, primer on renewables...
- Develop informational brochures to be posted on the EGT and Township website and shared with Neighborhood Associations, schools, and businesses that will disseminate through their websites.
- Help the schools to find an educational program that can either be incorporated into a class or through an assembly

Timeline for action: 6 months – ongoing

Progress Indicators:

6 months:

- Have held at least one educational event related to energy
- An informational flyer has been developed and posted to the website of the Green Team and/or the municipality
- Link to NJ Office of Clean Energy Home Performance with Energy Star program has been provided through EGT and/or municipal website.

9 months:

- Two Partner organizations (neighborhood associations, schools) have posted a link or the flyer itself on their website or have shared the information in some other form.

12 months

- Have held at least two educational events related to energy

Sustainable Jersey: Community Partnership & Outreach: Energy Education and Outreach

OUTREACH CAMPAIGN TO LOCAL BUSINESSES

New Jersey has made it simple for businesses to take part in reducing energy consumption in the state of New Jersey and offers a number of programs to help businesses through the process. Despite the success the state has had in implementing these programs many businesses are still unaware of the incentives offered through the State to upgrade equipment and reduce energy costs. The Green Team will assist Ewing’s administration and council to promote the BPU’s “Direct Install” program for small and medium size businesses, and to coordinate such activities with the officially appointed audit company

Timeline for action: 6 months – ongoing

Progress Indicators:

6 months:

- Have worked with a vendor to mail a letter to local businesses about the state program
- Have scheduled an outreach event with a representative from the State program
- Link to NJ Office of Clean Energy commercial business program is available through EGT and municipal website.
- Marketing to businesses about outreach event has begun (work with Business Committee to market)

12 months:

- Have held an outreach event
- Have at least two businesses in Ewing that have scheduled energy audits

Sustainable Jersey: Energy Efficiency: Direct Install: Outreach to Local Business Community

HOME PERFORMANCE WITH ENERGY STAR – MUNICIPAL PROGRAM

The same program developed for businesses through the state has also been adapted for NJ municipalities. Starting with an energy audit, a plan for upgrading equipment, changing lighting and reducing overall energy consumption is prepared for the municipality. After receiving the plan the municipality can apply for grant funding to implement recommendations in the plan.

Timeline for action: 6 months – 24 months

Progress Indicators:

6 months:

- Energy Committee has met with municipal officials along with a representative from the State program to discuss the energy audit and process for applying for State funds to upgrade facilities.

12 months:

- Audit has been completed

24 months:

- Audit report has been received and the municipality is creating a plan to address the findings in the audit.

Sustainable Jersey: Energy Efficiency: Home Performance with Energy Star: Municipal Program

HOME ENERGY AUDIT PROGRAM

In addition to the outreach as indicated above, the Ewing Green Team will meet with commercial energy auditing companies to develop a low cost residential energy audit offer for township homeowners. The results of these home energy audits will give residents specific plans and costs for upgrades designed to reduce their energy consumption, and thereby reduce the community's carbon footprint.

Timeline for action: 6 months – 24 months

Progress Indicators:

6 months:

- Complete interviews with interested energy audit companies, and select a winner through a standard bidding process.

12 months:

- Interview participating homeowners to determine the cost effectiveness of the program.

24 months:

- Monitor ongoing program with both the audit company and participating homeowners.

Sustainable Jersey: Energy Efficiency: Home Performance with Energy Star: Outreach

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TOWNSHIP

The following is a list of actions that were suggested at the visioning but that do not fall under the purview of the Green Team. However, the actions were identified as having value to the community and should be shared with the municipality as potential programs for implementation or ideas to explore. If it is possible to receive Sustainable Jersey points for the action, it has been included.

COMMUNITY

Community Activities

Residents of Ewing were seeking more ways to come together in informal fun settings to promote community relationships. Many were seeking more community activities like a ***Movies on the Green*** night or local concerts that bring people together. Due to the fact that there was little to no concern as to whether or not these events had a sustainability focus, the overall consensus was that this activity should be provided as a recommendation to the Township rather than implemented through the Green Team.

New Township Website

Access to information and transparency of government were also a desire of participants. Creating an enhanced, user-friendly, newly branded website as is currently underway with access to added value information for the community was recommended. This might include information on and for businesses (business directory), community organizations, a community calendar, fillable forms, etc. A content management website that allows for entities with approved logins to enter their own events and updates would help in assuring that desired added value content gets posted.

Community Bulletin Board

While improving the website was important to participants, they also felt that a community bulletin board, both physical and virtual, should be created to promote events within the community that are not necessarily part of the municipality, such as county and state events, local fairs and festivals, music shows, etc.

Mini-grants to promote neighborhood and commercial corridor aesthetics

An innovative suggestion was to develop a mini-grant program, potentially funded through local businesses that would help both residents and businesses find low or no interest financing to improve the aesthetics of their homes and businesses.

LAND USE

Mixed Use Zoning

The development of the suburban model of land use has led most uses to be restricted to specific areas in the community. Many members of the community were interested in exploring the potential to incorporate mixed use zoning back into the local zoning ordinance as to reduce reliance on automobiles, make transit more feasible and promote the future development or redevelopment of sites in Ewing to include more mixed use options.

Retail Zoning in neighborhoods

Participants were interested in the potential to include the opportunity for retail and office business within neighborhoods to promote the development of community stores and home occupations.

Development of a Transit Village

Many participants were eager to promote the development of a transit village as currently envisioned for the former GM site to promote increased use of transit as well as higher density development around transit areas.

ECONOMY

Economic Incentives such as TIF, BID

In order to promote redevelopment of underutilized commercial corridors, residents were interested in the potential to use economic incentives such as Tax Increment Financing or Business Improvement Districts as a way to entice new businesses to these underutilized areas.

Reprise Ewing Economic Development Committee

Economic Development was a major concern of participants and it was suggested that the Ewing Economic Development Committee should be reprised so members of the community can work closely with the municipality and business owners in Ewing to bring new economic opportunity to Ewing that align with the values of the residents.

Market Ewing to businesses within specific business sectors (non-retail)

Along with the reprisal of the Economic Development Committee was the suggestion that the municipality be more proactive in working with existing business owners and residents to create a marketing campaign to targeted business sectors.

Workforce development – business and skill training

With the incredible asset of The College of New Jersey in Ewing the recommendation was made to create a partnership between the municipality, the college, and local businesses to develop business and skill training programs designed to meet the needs of local businesses so they can have a skilled workforce available right in Ewing.

TRANSPORTATION

Roadway Restriping to include Bike Lanes

While the best case scenario would be a comprehensive Bike and Pedestrian Plan that would guide the future installation of alternative transportation infrastructure, many residents simply asked that when roadway restriping is being done that the roadway be examined for the potential to include a bike lane.

Develop Pedestrian Friendly intersections

Many residents were concerned with the difficulty in getting across many intersections within the Township. Many intersections have constant vehicle traffic due to turn lanes that make it difficult to cross the street safely even when they cross with the green light. Residents were interested in the implementation of pedestrian friendly intersections where all traffic stops while pedestrians are allotted time to cross the street.

Improve Transit network

In general, there was concern that there was insufficient transit service within the community. It was suggested that the Township work with SEPTA and NJ Transit to review existing service and potentially develop additional routes.

Ewing Shuttle between Activity Centers

Residents were interested in the development of a small (potentially free) transit program that provided a shuttle between major activity hubs in the community. The value in this would be reducing the number of vehicles on the road while also potentially providing transit for the elderly and economically disadvantaged in the community.

Traffic Calming Measures in neighborhoods and in busy commercial areas

Again, concerns about pedestrian safety brought participants to suggest additional traffic calming measures in busy neighborhoods and commercial corridors such as bump outs, raised crosswalks, and landscaping to slow traffic through these areas.

ENVIRONMENT

Waterway and Flood Management – Planning for climate change impacts

It is suggested that global climate change will impact the northeast with more intense storms and flooding. Participants were concerned that a management plan be put in place to mitigate the impact of these potential threats to the health and welfare of Ewing residents.

BRANDING

Brand Ewing – hold Ewing Pitch Contest

There was much concern about the perception of Ewing from outside the municipality. Developing a strong brand for the Township which included developing a marketing plan and motto were high on the list of those concerned about outside perceptions. It was suggested that the Township hold a Ewing Pitch Contest to allow residents to submit a slogan for consideration. Winners could receive any number of awards.

Work with schools to promote quality of education in Ewing to outside

As part of the branding effort participants recommended working closely with the schools to better represent the high quality of education found in the Ewing Public Schools

CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity building for an organization is really the art of building relationships, both internally and externally. Throughout the visioning process the Green Team has been practicing this art, working together to develop a plan that is built on consensus with each other as well as with the community. So far through this process the practice of capacity building has been a secondary effect of the efforts to create this plan with community involvement. Moving forward, however, we are offering a number of recommendations to undertake capacity building as a more intentional process.

To begin this process we had all members of the Green Team complete the Green Team Rubric. The rubric provides a number of capacity categories and each



category has four levels of relative strength (1 being the lowest level of capacity and 4 being the highest). Members of the Green Team indicated where they believed the Green Team fell within each of these capacity categories. We then reviewed those responses and formulated the following recommendations to address the areas where a more intentional focus should be put on building that capacity.

The rubric and responses have been included as Appendix 2. For the purposes of this plan, the rubric has been consolidated into four major categories: Clarity of Purpose, Strategic Planning, Leadership and Organizational Structures, and Communication and Connection.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CLARITY OF PURPOSE

Members of the Green Team rated this area with a great deal of variation. As part of this process we have developed a vision and mission statement for you based on all of the input we have received from the Green Team and the members of the community that we have worked with so far. This is the first step towards developing a shared motivation for the Green Team and the community and should help all of the members of the Green Team feel that they are on the same page as far as the purpose of the Green Team is concerned.

Moving forward we recommend the Green team:

- Revisit this vision and mission at a yearly strategic planning meeting to be sure that the vision and mission are at the forefront of the work that the Green Team is engaging in and to be sure it still suits the purpose of the Green Team.
- Make the vision and mission statement front and center on the website and other documents (such as letterhead) so that everyone in the community and other partners are aware of the purpose of the Green Team.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Team has obviously taken the first step towards successful Strategic Planning. However, the process of Strategic Planning does not stop when the plan is done. The purpose of the plan is to develop a set of actions with short and long term goals that will help the Green Team continue moving forward and not get stuck in a rut of uninspired programming. It also is intended to excite interest in the community and hopefully engage others to participate in the implementation process.

Implementation can feel like a daunting task, but it is important to remember that the plan is not written in stone and timelines and goals can be adapted to meet the changes and challenges we face. It is also important to remember that you are not in this alone; look to each other, the community, and partnerships with other organizations for support.

Moving forward we recommend the Green Team:

- Continue to reach out into the community to involve others in the implementation of the plan. Attend community fairs, farmers' markets, rotary club meetings, school environmental club meetings to share the plan and ask for their involvement. Reach out to other organizations that may share your vision or have a vision that interconnects with yours.
- One member of the Green Team should take the lead on each performance area of the plan. In order for implementation of the plan to be successful everyone must take ownership of the responsibility of implementation.
- At every meeting revisit each performance area and the actions that you are taking. Some months there may be not be a lot to report. Do not be discouraged! Developing programs and achieving Silver level Certification will take time just keep moving forward and engaging with the process.
- Review the entire plan at least once per year and organize community conversations to update this strategic plan once every three to five years. The timeline for updating the strategic plan will be dependent upon implementation of the

actions in this plan. If actions get implemented more rapidly than anticipated or only some of the actions are getting implemented, than three years would be appropriate. If most of the actions are getting implemented and running smoothly but more time is needed for completion than four to five years may be more appropriate.

LEADERSHIP AND STRUCTURE

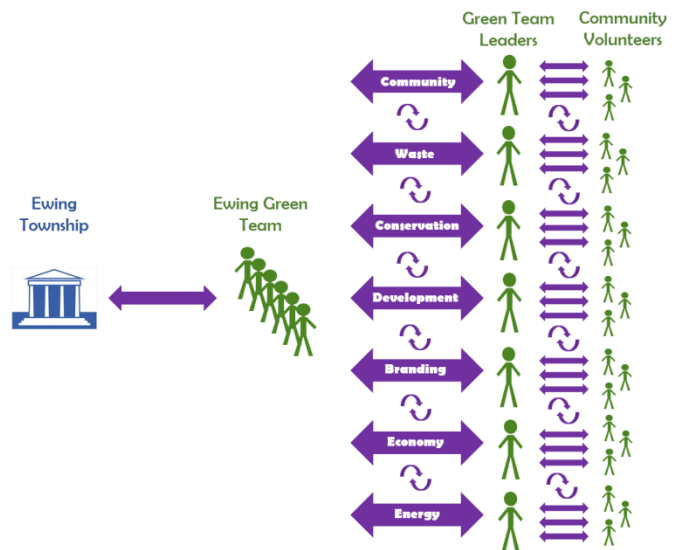
The Green Team has benefited from very strong leadership prior to and throughout this process. However, it is important to plan for the future and develop leaders that will be able to continue the work of current leaders without too much disruption to the activities of the Team. It is also important to leverage the different leadership styles that Green Team members bring to the group so that each member's strengths are being used in the way the best serves the Green Team.

It is also important to consider the structure of the Green Team. Green Teams across the state of New Jersey have taken on many forms. In Ewing, the Green Team is a municipal board with appointments coming from the Mayor. This may make developing a pipeline of strong leaders more difficult, but not impossible. Work with your municipality when identifying new appointees. Knowing the strengths of the current members of the Green Team may help you make a stronger case for a particular appointment if you lose a member with a particular skill set, requesting that a community member with similar abilities be asked to join the Team. In addition, developing successful programs that engage the community and bring recognition to the community may help the Team show that they are most successful when they are able to build a Team that works well together instead of having random community members appointed to the board that may (or may not) disrupt the effectiveness of the Team.

Finally, providing opportunity for members of the community to more fully engage with the Green Team in a less formal setting is important. Scheduled meetings can be intimidating to some and may not give members of the public a great opportunity to reach out and work closely with the Team. While regular meetings are absolutely necessary and should be maintained it is important to consider alternative ways for the community to participate. In addition, getting the community involved and active with the Green Team may require some reconsideration of the structure of the Green Team and some flexibility on the part of the Team itself and the municipality. The following illustration is intended to show the ideal structure for a Green Team whether it is a municipal board or an independent organization working closely with the municipality. Currently, the members of the Green Team have really been the only people involved in organizing activities and actions to help the municipality attain the Bronze level certification (just the left side of the illustration). In order to reach the Silver Level the involvement of the community will have to expand, especially if the capacity of municipal employees is limited. Ideally, the structure of the Green Team will reflect the entire illustration.

Moving forward we recommend the Green Team:

- Develop a Team structure and provide trainings to create a pipeline for future leaders. This might involve developing term limits for specific roles like the Chair and Vice-Chair. It may also involve developing a co-leadership model that leverages both the municipal and community sides of the Team to most effectively engage with municipal officials and within the community.



- Divide the work appropriately. As noted in the Strategic Planning recommendations, all members of the Green Team must take ownership of their role in the implementation of this plan. That role should be based on both the interest of the member and their individual leadership strengths. Take some time at a meeting to do a personal skill and network assessment of the individuals of the Green Team and ask questions to help identify skills and connections. There is an

overwhelming about of information available online that can help guide you in identifying skills that may be transferable to the work of the Green Team.

- Provide opportunities for members of the Green Team, and members of the public that show interest, to attend trainings, like NJ Learns, to hone their leadership skills and improve their knowledge about sustainability issues.
- Look for redundancies in the system. Is there work that you are doing now that is not necessary? Review the legal requirements for what the Green Team must do to remain compliant with state law (if there are any). Consider ways to make regular activities, like updating the website or creating flyers for events more efficient through the use of templates.
- Consider the structure of your meetings. Do they all need to be formal meetings? You may need to check on the legal requirements of being a municipal board. However, if there is nothing requiring you to meet formally once a month consider having a networking event every third meeting to give members of the public the chance to come together and engage with the Green Team in a less formal setting and give them a chance to meet other members in the community with similar interests. This can also be done in conjunction with an educational event. The excitement that develops within the community with events like this can spur interest in other programming and in potential volunteers to participate in developing and implementing programming.
- Finally, be clear about how decisions are made. If members of the Team or members of the public feel as if they are not being involved in the decision-making progress, feelings can get hurt and potential power struggles can ensue. The group's by-laws should have a clear process for voting requirements and consensus building.

COMMUNICATION AND CONNECTION

Communication and connection are integral parts of successful implementation and required if Silver Level certification is going to be achieved. With so many actions needing to be completed and documentation of all of those actions required for certification, managing the process will require a skilled communicator. Certification aside, communication and connection will be necessary just to put on successful, well attended events and to manage all of the initiatives of the Green Team (even if they are not helping you achieve certification).

A successful communication strategy will reach out across multiple platforms. It should consider the diversity of the populations you are serving and seek to be as inclusive as possible. Developing an extensive network that includes individuals, businesses, and other organizations will be important. Use these networks to reach out to audiences that you may not have reached before. Constant communication with this network to inform them about events is important but you must also remember to use this network to celebrate success and inspire others to action. Also, remember that building this network is not just to connect these groups or individuals to you but to connect them with each other and build community.

Moving forward we recommend the Green Team:

- Continually examine who is coming to your meetings and events. Discuss at Green Team meetings and try to identify groups in the community that you may need to do a better job reaching out to.
- Consider the Green Team itself and try to identify gaps in representation. Use the Stakeholder Network map to identify potential Green Team members that may bring a new perspective to the Team.
- Develop a strategy for engaging municipal staff. Elected officials are helpful representation on the Green Team but will not be the ones engaged in the day to day activity of the municipal offices. The Green Team will need someone on the staff dedicated to working with them if Silver Level certification is going to be achieved.
- Set a regular monthly meeting with municipal staff to keep up to date on Sustainable Jersey actions and documentation. Ongoing documentation of activities will make the process of submitting for certification much easier.
- Network with other community organizations. Agree to share information about their events in return for the same action on their part. Ask for a table at the events of other organizations to reach out to new audiences in the community.
- Create a list of other local or regional organizations and do a survey of Green Team members to determine if there are any existing relationships.

- Develop a communication and outreach plan to expand your reach into the community.
- As with all the recommendations in this plan, divide up the work to avoid burn out of individual members. There are events year round where the Green Team could table, but it is impossible for the same person to do it all. Use volunteers to table but be sure to train them well in regard to your vision, mission, and activities and how to contact the Team before you send them out.
- Attend communication strategy trainings. Sustainable Jersey offers a number of trainings every year that can provide valuable information about creating successful communication strategies. You can also find a great number of free online trainings regarding communication strategies.

CONCLUSION

The Ewing Green Team has put forth an extraordinary effort to engage their citizenry, municipality, and county to elicit thoughtful discussion and actionable ideas to improve the future of their community. After taking a deep breath, the work will continue through implementation of the many wonderful programming ideas, continued partnership with the municipality towards Silver Level Sustainable Jersey Certification, and expanded engagement with the residents of Ewing and other community partners. This plan is a guide on that path, a compass pointing the way. Adjustments will be made along the way, but with a shared vision of the future and the energy to see that vision fulfilled the actions contained herein can be accomplished.

APPENDIX 1

Community					
Action Prioritization Matrix					
<i>Visioning Actions</i>	Impact	Achievability	Management Capacity	Cost	Feasibility Rating
Community Activities (e.g. outdoor movie nights...)	3	2	2	3	10
Develop a Volunteer Network	3	3	1	3	10
Map of Neighborhoods/Places of Interest	3	3	2	1	9
Communications of Activities	3	2	2	2	9
Welcoming Committee/Center	2	2	1	3	8
Promote Neighborhood Associations	3	1	1	3	8
School Programs	3	1	1	3	8

Waste					
Action Prioritization Matrix					
<i>Visioning Actions</i>	Impact	Achievability	Management Capacity	Cost	Feasibility Rating
Community Free Cycle	3	3	3	3	12
Hazardous Waste Education	3	3	3	3	12
Consolidate Trash Pickup	3	3	3	3	12
Education of recycling and trash practices (medical waste included)	3	3	3	3	12

Compost Education	3	3	3	3	12
Food Waste Collection	3	3	3	3	12
Graywater Retrofitting Education	3	3	3	3	12
Pervious surface education	3	1	1	3	8
Business Waste and Food Recycling Education	3	1	1	3	8
Water Conservation Education	2	2	1	2	7
Rain garden and Rain barrel education	3	1	1	1	6

Preservation and Conservation

Action Prioritization Matrix

<i>Visioning Actions</i>	Impact	Achievability	Management Capacity	Cost	Feasibility Rating
Improve trail marking Crossroads of the Am Revolution (GW Trail) ⁴	2.2	2.7	2.5	2.5	9.8
Trees ³	2.8	2.5	2.3	1.8	9.5
Increase number of community gardens	2.2	2.7	2.3	2.2	9.3
Heritage Tours to historical sites	2.7	2.2	2.0	2.3	9.2
Connect to the canal trail	2.3	2.5	2.0	2.0	8.8
Bike transit connectivity	3.0	2.0	1.7	1.7	8.3
Waterway and flood mgmt.	3.0	1.6	1.6	1.8	8.0

Make all sidewalks continuous ¹	3.0	1.5	1.5	1.7	7.7
Improve trail connectivity	3.0	2.0	1.5	1.0	7.5
Increase number of trails in town ²	2.8	1.8	1.3	1.2	7.2

Community Development

Action Prioritization Matrix

<i>Visioning Actions</i>	Impact	Achievability	Management Capacity	Cost	Feasibility Rating
Business Maps for Community Services	3.0	2.8	2.2	2.7	10.7
Revise zoning to require mixed use	2.8	2.3	2.2	2.7	10.0
Volunteer Groups to assist with maintenance	3.0	2.5	1.7	2.8	10.0
Investigate the use of Economic Tools - TIF, BID	2.7	2.5	1.7	2.2	9.0
Explore Road Restriping including bike lanes	2.8	2.3	1.5	1.8	8.5
Business incubator space (live-work-play)	2.8	2.2	1.5	2.0	8.5
Pedestrian friendly intersections	3.0	2.2	1.2	1.7	8.0
Development of quality pedestrian spaces	2.7	2.0	1.7	1.6	7.9
Ewing Shuttle between activity centers (free is best)	2.8	1.8	1.5	1.7	7.8
Traffic calming measures	3.0	2.2	1.2	1.3	7.7

Community Branding

Action Prioritization Matrix

<i>Visioning Actions</i>	Impact	Achievability	Management Capacity	Cost	Feasibility Rating
Ewing's Pitch Contest -- I am Ewing... ¹	2.8	3.0	2.4	2.7	10.9
Sustainability Promotion for residents ³	2.2	2.8	2.8	3.0	10.8
Identify media outlets	2.5	2.8	2.2	3.0	10.5
Sustainability Recognition for businesses ⁴	2.2	2.8	2.8	2.7	10.5
Arts and Culture inventory	2.6	2.8	2.0	2.7	10.1
New township website ⁶	3.0	2.6	1.8	2.3	9.7
Identify communication opportunities (events) ²	2.6	2.6	1.6	2.7	9.5
Branding process ⁷	2.8	2.6	1.6	1.7	8.7
Township School promotion ⁸	3.0	2.3	1.3	2.0	8.5
Community Bulletins (green bulletin board on website) ⁵	2.8	2.0	1.6	2.0	8.4

Local Economy

Action Prioritization Matrix

<i>Visioning Actions</i>	Impact	Achievability	Management Capacity	Cost	Feasibility Rating
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Ewing economic development committee - reprise	2.2	2.8	2.4	3.0	10.4
Retail zoning in neighborhoods with an expedited process ⁶	2.6	2.8	2.0	2.6	10.0
Create vibrant events for businesses	2.4	2.6	2.2	2.6	9.8
Chamber of Commerce revitalized in Ewing	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.6	9.5
Support local businesses - buy local, communication, local directory ³	3.0	2.4	1.2	2.8	9.4
Market Ewing to businesses	2.6	2.6	2.2	2.0	9.4
Encourage more retail variety ¹	2.4	2.4	1.4	2.6	8.8
Township target specific business sectors - non retail ²	2.6	2.0	1.4	2.4	8.4
Development of Transit Village	3.0	2.3	1.5	1.0	7.8
Mini grant program for aesthetics - promote ⁵	2.3	1.8	1.3	2.5	7.8
Business incubator space	2.4	2.0	1.2	1.8	7.4
Workforce development - business and skill training ⁴	2.8	2.0	1.0	1.6	7.4
More developed transit network	3.0	1.5	1.5	1.3	7.3

Energy					
Action Prioritization Matrix					
<i>Visioning Actions</i>	Impact	Achievability	Management Capacity	Cost	Feasibility Rating
Outreach campaign to local businesses with Sandra Torres - Direct Install	2	3	3	3	11

Home performance with Energy Star – Outreach - Create an online clearinghouse for information about the Home Performance Program. The site should identify the basic elements you recommend residents should demand in their audits, and a list of auditors in the area	2	3	3	3	11
Audit of Township Building	3	2	3	3	11
Energy Education and Outreach - Environmental Insights series with panel discussion of energy experts	1	3	3	3	10
Home performance with Energy Star – Municipal Program - Select a single energy audit contractor and launch a municipal wide “Energy Audit and Upgrade Program.”	2	2	3	3	10

APPENDIX 2

GREEN TEAM RUBRIC

	Actions	Point Scale				Score
		4	3	2	1	
Resolution		<p>Your community is registered with Sustainable Jersey and has passed a resolution of support.</p> <p>A resolution has been passed to establish your Green Team.</p>	<p>Your community is registered with Sustainable Jersey and has passed a resolution of support. Green Team members have been identified and the general concept of the team has been approved. The resolution has not yet been written.</p>	<p>Your community is registered with Sustainable Jersey and has passed a resolution of support.</p> <p>Green Team is in the initial stages of development.</p>	<p>Your community is not registered with Sustainable Jersey. There is some level of interest/commitment for green initiatives in the town to support the concept.</p>	
Sense of Purpose		<p>Everyone involved has a clear sense of purpose and the roles and responsibilities of the group are clearly delineated, as evidenced by an official mission statement.</p>	<p>The group is unified in its understanding its purpose. Plans to create a mission statement are underway.</p>	<p>The group is engaged in meaningful and productive conversation to determine its purpose. Members generally feel positive about the direction of the team and are committed to working out the process.</p>	<p>The group is not unified in its understanding of its purpose. Members express frustration with the process and drop-outs are common.</p>	
Leadership		<p>There is a clearly defined leader of the Green Team, whose role and responsibilities have been determined and documented.</p>	<p>A member of the Green Team has been acting unofficially as the leader with positive results.</p>	<p>There is no defined leader, but multiple members have divided up the roles/responsibilities with adequate results.</p>	<p>There is no defined leadership of the Green Team or it is under dispute, with conflict in evidence during meetings.</p>	

	Actions	Point Scale				Score
		4	3	2	1	
Plan		The group has written long and short term goals, as well as a detailed plan for achieving goals.	The group has informally set long and short-term goals and is working toward a specific level of certification, but has not formally documented the goals and plan.	The group is working towards the general goal of becoming "certified", but has not determined specific long and short-term goals or created a detailed plan for achieving goals.	The group is working towards the general goal of becoming "certified", but has no clear path for achieving that goal.	
Schedule		Yearly meeting schedule has been established and communicated to members.	The group meets regularly, but the scheduling is not consistent.	Meetings are scheduled on an as needed basis.	No formal meetings have been scheduled.	
Roles/Responsibility		Specific group members have been identified to schedule meetings, create agendas, arrange rooms, send out emails, take minutes, update spreadsheets, upload documents, do communications, etc.	The designated group leader holds most or all of the roles listed at right, resulting in a lack of distribution of effort and potential burnout.	These roles/responsibilities are inconsistently addressed, resulting in potential disorganization and frustration.	. These roles/responsibilities are not addressed, resulting in disorganization and frustration.	
Procedures		Meeting and decision making procedures are clearly defined and understood by the group.	Meeting and decision making procedures are informally understood and generally functional, although there are occasional misunderstandings or frustrations.	Meeting and decision making procedures are made by municipal representatives with little input from the rest of the group, resulting in potential misunderstandings or frustrations.	There are no procedures for meetings and decision making, resulting in misunderstandings and frustrations.	

	Actions	Point Scale				Score
		4	3	2	1	
Communication		Regular, formal communications go out to Green Team members, municipal leadership and community about the goals and progress of green initiatives.	Regular, but informal communication goes out to Green Team members, municipal leadership and community about the goals and progress of green initiatives.	Occasional communication goes out to Green Team members, municipal leadership and community about the goals and progress of green initiatives.	. Rare or no attempts are made to communicate with Green Team members, municipal leadership and community about the goals and progress of green initiatives.	
Membership		Membership of Green Team consists of representatives from municipal government (staff, elected officials, volunteer boards), residents, businesses, faith groups, schools, etc. Membership reflects overall demographic (race, income, age, etc.) of the town.	The group recognizes a need and efforts are underway to increase the diversity of its members in terms of demographics and stakeholder groups.	The group does not recognize the need to diversify its members in terms of demographics and stakeholder groups or does not wish to be more representative.	The Green Team has only a few members and is just starting to address issues of representation and diversity.	
Municipal Support		The Green Team has stated and provided support of municipal leadership. Partisan issues rarely, if ever, influence decisions or progress of the group. Green Team has access to municipal staff or consultants in areas such as planning, engineering, attorney, purchasing, as needed.	The Green Team has the general support of municipal leadership. While partisan or control issues may arise, they are not impeding the productivity of the team's efforts.	The Green Team does not have the explicit support of municipal leadership. There may be others in the local government who facilitate green initiatives, allowing progress to be made.	The municipal government has expressed a lack of support for the green initiatives, either verbally or through lack of tangible support and access. Partisan or control issues are present, likely resulting in frustration and lack of progress.	

	Actions	Point Scale				Score
		4	3	2	1	
Recognizing Existing Resources/Programs		Existing initiatives, resources and programs in municipality/ community have been recognized, celebrated and documented.	The Green Team has identified existing resources and programs in the municipality/community, but has not yet celebrated or documented them.	The Green Team has begun the process of completing a formal or informal inventory of existing resources and programs in the municipality/community.	The Green Team has not completed a formal or informal inventory of existing resources and programs in the municipality/community.	
Community Organizing/ Support		The community at large is aware of and supports the efforts of the Green Team. A community outreach plan is defined and documented, which includes building email lists, sending out regular communications using digital/social media/print media, hosting at least 2 education/outreach events per year. Has hosted or is planning a community visioning event.	An informal community outreach plan has been in place with a resulting increase in community awareness and support of the Green Team. Plans are underway to define and expand the outreach plan.	Initial efforts have been made to reach out to the community. Most of the Green Team's efforts are focused the municipal side.	The community at large is unaware of or does not support the efforts of the Green Team. There are no plans to develop a community outreach plan.	
Partnerships		Community partners, resources and assets have been identified and contacted in order to build networks that support the work of the Green Team.	Community partners, resources and assets have been identified, but not yet contacted in order to build networks that support the work of the Green Team.	The Green Team recognizes the importance of building networks and has made initial efforts to identify community partners, resources and assets.	No efforts have been made to identify community partners, resources and assets.	

EWING GREEN TEAM RUBRIC RESPONSES

Highlighted rows indicate wide range of responses.

	John H.	Joe Mir.	Joe Mur	Mark W.	Dave B	Jo M.	Pete B	MJ	Mary C.	Jenn	Lisa	Val	Avg.
Resolution	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4		4
Sense of Purpose	3	4	4	3	4	3.5	2	1	2	3	2		3
Leadership	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3.75	4		4
Plan	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	2	3.5	3.75	4		3
Schedule	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4		4
Roles/Responsibility	4	4	3.5	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	3		4
Procedures	3	4	3	4	4	3	3	3		3.5	4		3
Communication	3	4	3.5	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	4		4
Membership	3	3	3	4	3.5	3	3	3	3.5	3.5	3		3
Municipal Support	4	4	4	4	3.5	4	3	3	4	3.5	3		4
Recognizing Existing Resources/Programs	4	4	3	4	4	1	4	1	4	3.5	2		3
Community Organizing/ Support	3	4	2.5	4	4	3.5	4	2	3.5	3	2		3
Partnerships	2	3	3	3	3	3.5	4	2	2	3.5	2		3