

The background image shows a scenic view of a park. In the foreground, there is a green lawn with a black metal picnic table. A metal railing runs across the lower left. In the middle ground, a concrete dam with water cascading over it is visible. Behind the dam, there are several buildings, including one with a white cupola, and blue umbrellas. The sky is blue with some light clouds. Green trees frame the top and right sides of the image.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT SUSTAINABILITY LEADERSHIP IN MUNICIPAL MANAGEMENT

Authored By: Samuel Howard

Department of Political Science

College of Arts and Sciences

Eastern Michigan University



GRAHAM
SUSTAINABILITY INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

This material is based upon work supported by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy and the Michigan Energy Office (MEO) under Award Number EE0008653 as part of the Catalyst Communities program. Find this document and more about the CLC Fellowship that supported this project at graham.umich.edu/clcf.

Acknowledgments

Catalyst Leadership Circle Fellow: Samuel Howard

Department of Political Science, College of Arts and Sciences, Eastern Michigan University

Mentor: Thad Beard

City Manager, City of Rockford

Mentor: Mindy Miner

Sustainability Committee Chair, City of Rockford

Mentor: Cheryl Scales

City Councilperson, City of Rockford

Technical Advisor: Jan Culbertson

Leadership Chair, Ann Arbor/Washtenaw 2030 District

Special thanks to:

Sarah Lee, Jean Sadler, Fatimah Bolhassan, Nina Mendelson, and other CLC Fellows

Table of Contents

Overview	4
Sustainability Coordinator Job Options	5
Option Worksheet.....	5
Advantages and Disadvantages.....	8
Full-Time.....	8
Part-Time.....	9
Combined with Established Position.....	10
Volunteer Sustainability Committee.....	11
Regional Sustainability Coordinator (Interlocal Agreement).....	12
Sustainability Consultant.....	13
Duties and Responsibilities.....	14
Full/Part-Time.....	14
Compensation for Full/Part-Time.....	14
Combined Position.....	15
Volunteer Sustainability Committee.....	15
Discussion	16
Conclusion	17
References	18
Appendix	19
Sample Job Posting.....	19
Sample Interlocal Agreement.....	22

Overview

As environmental protection and sustainability become an ever-increasingly vital duty of government, municipalities are working to address these aspects while accounting for various limitations. While all municipalities face challenges in addressing sustainability, small communities are disadvantaged even more. Although Michigan is home to several larger municipalities, a vast majority of the municipalities in our state have populations of under 6,000 residents. These communities, as well as larger ones, are met with numerous issues surrounding capacity.

1

Budgetary Restraints

Municipalities with smaller populations do not have the revenue stream to budget for many of the larger municipalities' services and departments. Instead, smaller municipalities must prioritize the most essential services: emergency services, roads, and utilities while often still struggling to fund these services. This, in turn, hinders the municipality's ability to work toward sustainability initiatives. Traditional revenue sources may help fund sustainability initiatives and provide the funds to hire a sustainability manager. Larger municipalities, such as Ann Arbor, have passed millage rates, however, smaller municipalities may not receive the same amount of public support. Another funding form would be to seek grant funding for initiatives. Both the federal and state governments have grant funding opportunities to help fund sustainability-focused programs and may offer a grant to help fund the position of a sustainability manager. Although grants may help, smaller municipalities may also struggle to acquire these funds, creating another issue.

2

Staff Capacity

Primarily, small municipalities may not have the staff needed to dedicate time to sustainability. Instead, employees are tasked with performing essential services with little or no time to dedicate to other causes. As mentioned earlier, small municipalities may struggle to acquire grant funding, due to a lack of staff capacity. When staff members are unable to dedicate sufficient time to grant writing, the municipality is at a disadvantage. This lack of time may also hinder the municipality's ability to work towards the environmental and sustainability goals it wants to achieve. To overcome part of this gap, municipalities have relied on volunteer sustainability committees that may also have the same time constraints. However, having a dedicated sustainability manager would allow the municipality to address time limitations and better promote sustainability.

3

Community Support

This includes issues with community support and involvement, staff buy-in, and support from elected officials. Although the community may be supportive of sustainability initiatives when accomplished through volunteer work, community members may be less supportive if the municipality makes staffing and budgeting decisions to include sustainability leadership. While these challenges may be present, municipal leaders can help mitigate them by educating and training the various community stakeholders and having honest conversations with residents and taxpayers. Doing so may also promote sustainability at both a business and individual level, helping to achieve sustainability goals on a larger scale.

This project aimed to help the City of Rockford develop plans to implement sustainability leadership by providing structural recommendations for a municipal position while also helping other communities in Michigan develop plans to implement sustainability leadership by providing an options guide for a sustainability manager position. This report provides details of each option.

Sustainability Coordinator Job Options

Option Worksheet

Position	Responsibilities	Compensation	Department	How to Fund Position
Full-Time	40 hr./wk. The Position can be contracted to other communities. See below for detailed responsibilities.	\$60,000 - \$80,000. Full benefits as offered to other staff. This position may also be considered a union position dependent on the Municipalities union structure.	Works with all departments. This position could be part of the City Manager's Office, the Department of Public Works, the City Planners Office, or the Municipality can develop a Sustainability Department	Multiple funding options: - Appropriations of budget away from other departments - Special Millage Rate - Opt-In Fee - Fundraising - Grant/Foundation Funding - Sustained savings may help mitigate costs - Contract for services agreements can help mitigate costs
Part-Time	20-30 hr./wk. (avg). Managers may work more hours during certain weeks depending on event or project requirements. See below for detailed responsibilities	\$31,000 - \$41,000. Any benefits as offered to other part-time staff. This position may also be considered a union position dependent on the Municipalities union structure.	Works with all departments. This position could be part of the City Manager's Office, the Department of Public Works, the City Planners Office, or the Municipality can develop a Sustainability Department	Multiple funding options: - Appropriations of budget away from other departments - Special Millage Rate - Opt-In Fee - Fundraising - Grant/Foundation Funding - Sustained savings may help mitigate costs - Contract for services agreements can help mitigate costs

Position	Responsibilities	Compensation	Department	How to Fund Position
Combined with Current Position	4-5 hr./wk. Within 40 hr./wk. full-time position. Reallocate current responsibilities to include sustainability responsibilities.	Reasonable increase in salary (\$5,000). Current benefits as offered to all full-time positions.	Employees would stay in their current department. However, work on sustainability would be completed in collaboration with all departments.	Minimal additional funding needed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appropriations of budget away from other departments - Fundraising - Grant and Foundation Funding - Sustained savings may help mitigate costs
Volunteer Sustainability Committee	Variable volunteer hours. The committee chairperson will, assumingly, perform the bulk of the responsibilities and work hours. See below for detailed responsibilities.	Volunteers would not receive compensation. The Committee would, however, benefit from having a budget to help pay for events and initiatives.	The Committee would be under the supervision of the City Commission. The City Commission may require a staff member to function as an administrative liaison as well as a commissioner to function as a liaison between the Committee and the Commission.	Minimal funding is required. Funding for initiatives can come from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Donations - Fundraising - Grant and Foundation Funding - Sustained savings may help mitigate costs

Position	Responsibilities	Compensation	Department	How to Fund Position
<p>Regional (Interlocal Agreement)</p> <p>*Out of House Position</p>	<p>40 hr./wk. Split time between participating communities (on average, an equal amount of time per week). See below for detailed responsibilities.</p>	<p>\$70,000 - \$85,000. Full benefits as laid out in the Interlocal Agreement. The Agreement would also lay out specifics for compensation.</p>	<p>Would collaborate with the Chief Executive Officer (or appointed liaison) of each participating community.</p>	<p>Funding for the position would be split between all participating communities. The Interlocal Agreement contract would further specify the cost-sharing mechanism. Grant and foundation funding, donations, and sustained savings also provide financial help to the regional position.</p>
<p>Sustainability Consultant</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Independent Contractor</p> <p>*Out Of House Position</p>	<p>Hours determined by contract. The consultant would oversee making their schedule. The contract for services will also lay out the specific responsibilities of the consultant.</p>	<p>Compensation determined by contract. The Municipality and the consultant would work together to discuss compensation including salary and benefits.</p>	<p>Consultant would be independent from the Municipality. The consultant will collaborate with the Chief Executive Officer (or appointed liaison) of each participating community.</p>	<p>Reappropriation of budget is the main funding for a consultant. The municipality can, however, mitigate costs through fundraising, grants, and through sustained savings.</p>

Advantages and Disadvantages

Full-Time Sustainability Manager

Advantages

- Provides the most dedicated time to sustainability initiatives/goals.
 - Allows dedicated time to research, create, implement, and evaluate programs.
- Employees are more likely to stay long-term.
 - Less turnover, more engagement
 - The employee may be able to develop deeper connections to the municipality.
- Greatest productivity and availability
- Sustained savings brought on by initiatives may help mitigate costs.
- Would serve the Sustainability Committee in a role like DDA Director.
 - Reports to the Sustainability Committee and its Chairperson.
- Position would take over planning and implementation of the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan.
- Allows the organization to decide the structure of the position more easily.
- Could be within the City Manager/Mayor's Office, Economic Development Office, Department of Public Works, or other office as determined by the organization.
- May also serve as a position that can be contracted to other communities (Details Below).
 - This can help mitigate costs.
 - Contract between municipalities would lay out the terms of the job.

Disadvantages

- Would require more funding.
 - Full-time salary and benefits packages
- Harder to justify as a position in the city structure.
 - Money could be better spent on other positions deemed more essential to the operation of the government.
- Depending on the initiative, the position may not need to be 40 hrs./week.
- May need to bring in someone new with little connection to the city, its residents, and its employees.
 - Employees would not, assumingly, have relationships with other city employees.
 - Employees would also not, assumingly, know about the initiatives already started by the municipality.

Part-Time Sustainability Manager

Advantages

- Less funding is needed than a full-time position.
 - Lower salary and the possibility of a different benefits package
- May be easier to justify the position in the city structure.
 - While the same criticism (money could be better spent) could be used, the lower compensation could mitigate some of those concerns.
- Position could transition to full-time based on workload and sustained savings.
- Would serve the Sustainability Committee in a role similar to DDA Director.
- Creates a position focused solely on sustainability.
 - Allows for dedicated time to research, create, implement, and evaluate programs.
- Allows the organization to decide the structure of the position more easily.
 - Could be within the City Manager/Mayor's Office, Economic Development Office, Department of Public Works, or other office as determined by the organization.
- Position would take over planning and implementation of the Sustainability and Climate Action Plan.
- Similar to how small communities have addressed other capacity issues.
 - Fire chief, assessor, planner, etc.

Disadvantages

- Depending on the initiative, the position may require more or less than 20 hrs./week.
- Recruitment may be harder.
 - May be challenging to find qualified and interested job candidates due to the part-time nature of the position.
- Employees are less available in the city.
 - May be hard to oversee programs and manage grant money on a part-time basis.
- May need to bring in someone new with little connection to the city, its residents, and its employees.
 - Employees would not, assumingly, have relationships with other city employees.
 - Employee would also not, assumingly, know about the initiatives already started by the municipality.

Combined with Established Position

Advantages

- Least amount of funding needed.
 - Benefits would remain the same, and employees would receive a raise to reflect the added responsibilities.
- Overall, it is easiest to justify the position.
- Position could transition to full- or part-time based on workload and sustained savings.
- Employees may be able to stay in their current department.
 - Position could be within the City Manager/Mayor's Office, Economic Development Office, Department of Public Works, or other office as determined by the organization.
- Would serve as a staff liaison to the Sustainability Coordinator.
- Could allow a current part-time position to become full-time.
- Employees would, assumingly, already have relationships with other city employees.
- Employees would also, assumingly, know about the initiatives already started by the municipality.
- Internal Green Team
 - Representatives from each department would meet quarterly to determine goals for each department and evaluate progress presented in an annual report.
 - Volunteers can perform additional research and special projects.

Disadvantages

- Would depend heavily on the employee's capability to take on more responsibilities.
 - May need to shift existing roles and responsibilities.
- Chosen employees may have little to no experience or interest in sustainability, leading projects, or other aspects of the job.
- The part-time nature of the position may harm goals and initiatives.
 - Less time to write grants, record and report data, and work with the community.
- Employees may focus on issues that impact their department rather than others.
- Work on sustainability issues may begin to overtake daily tasks.
 - Grant-writing process, reporting, and other aspects may demand more time.
 - Employee may have to sacrifice sustainability initiatives in the interest of accomplishing goals for "primary job."

Volunteer Sustainability Committee

Advantages

- No staff-related costs
 - Volunteers would not receive salary or benefits.
- Allows for the greatest amount of public participation.
- Allows enthusiastic individuals to participate in the municipality's sustainability efforts.
- A representative from the City Commission and administration can sit on the board to help facilitate a conversation between all the entities.
- Can receive city funds, if needed.
- Focus solely on the needs and goals of the municipality.
- Functions as an official part of the municipal government under the city commission.
- May better address social issues.
 - Homelessness, poverty, food insecurity, etc.
- Personal development of volunteers
 - Volunteering allows citizens to gain skills, explore interests, and gain practical experience.

Disadvantages

- Dedicated hours would be severely limited due to volunteer nature.
- The chair of the committee would, assumingly, take over many of the more formal duties and responsibilities.
 - This individual would need to be initiative-taking and able to take on those duties.
- May be harder to receive some grant funding.
 - Grants may want a dedicated individual rather than a volunteer commission.
- City administration may need to dedicate time to more formal duties.
 - Grant reporting, Program Evaluation, etc.
 - Volunteers may not be as highly educated on sustainability and environmental protection.

Regional Sustainability Manager (Interlocal Agreement)

Advantages

- Helps split costs amongst participating communities.
- May allow for more grant opportunities.
- Sustainability ideas and initiatives can be more easily shared.
 - A regional coordinator can develop ideas and programs in one community, and then easily share and implement them in the other participating communities.
- Can develop into permanent positions in each community.
- Allows local governments to address climate impacts and solutions at scales beyond its boundaries.
- Leveraged local, state, and federal resources
- Expanded convening power
- Increased capacity
- Platform for mainstreaming
- Regional coalitions can be created using several common factors.
 - Geographic location
 - Size in budget or population
- Similar to how small communities have addressed other capacity issues.
 - Fire chief, narcotics units, assessor, planner, etc.

Disadvantages

- The coordinator would have to split time between each participant and may be less available.
 - Initiating community may not take as much time as desired.
- Interlocal agreement includes the need to have lawyers write up a contract approved by all participating communities.
 - The process may be long and costly due to legal requirements.
- Pay and benefits structure may be confusing or difficult to achieve.
 - Establishing a “primary employer” that directly pays the employee and receives reimbursements from other participating communities.
- If a community decides to withdraw from the interlocal agreement, the remaining communities may have an unexpected increase in expenses.
- May be difficult to attract and recruit other communities to join the coalition.
- Residents may believe the individual should only work for their city.
- Depending on the number of participating communities, more than one individual may be needed representing a larger cost.

Sustainability Consultant

Advantages

- Predictable cost
- Consultant may cost less money.*
 - An independent contractor may cost less than a consulting firm.
- Individuals would be highly trained in sustainability and environmental protection/justice.
 - More expertise on programs and initiatives
 - Broader knowledge of rules and regulations regarding the environment
- This would allow the individual time to dedicate to sustainability.
- Would work closely with the City Manager and City Commission
 - Like the role of a city attorney who acts as a consultant and helps when needed.
- Could open the municipality to a network of other municipalities to share ideas and practices.
- May be more neutral in the advice they give.
 - Free from existing preferences
- Consultant/Contractor can have more flexible hours.

Disadvantages

- Consultant may cost more money.*
 - Municipality would need to pay the consulting fee but would save on salary and benefit costs.
- Individuals would need to split time between all the municipalities/organizations they are consulting.
 - Primary municipality may not get as much dedicated time.
- Residents may believe the individual should only work for their city.
- May need to bring in someone new with little connection to the city, its residents, and its employees.
 - Employees would not, assumingly, have relationships with other city employees.
 - Employees would also not, assumingly, know about the initiatives already started by the municipality.
- Some work may still need to be done by municipal staff.
- Would need to go through the formal processes for a Request for Proposal or a Request for Qualifications

*Dependent on consultation firm fees

Duties and Responsibilities

Full/Part-Time*

- Develop, implement, and oversee sustainability initiatives and strategies within the municipality to reduce environmental impact, conserve resources, and enhance sustainability practices.
- Engage with the local community, visitors, and partner organizations to promote sustainability awareness and encourage sustainable behaviors through educational programs and outreach efforts.
- Identify opportunities to improve energy efficiency and resource conservation in municipal facilities, such as lighting, heating, cooling, and water usage. Recommend and implement energy-saving measures.
- Develop, implement, and expand current and new initiatives in conjunction with the Municipality's Sustainability Committee.
- Research and apply for grants and funding opportunities to support sustainability projects and initiatives within the city.
- Collect and analyze data related to sustainability metrics and performance indicators. Prepare regular reports on progress and achievements.
 - Communicate data analysis to municipal staff, Sustainability Committee members, and community members.
 - Knowledge of commonly used sustainability databases and software to ensure data is up-to-date and accurate.
- Assist in the implementation of the Municipality's Climate Action Plan. Ensure compliance with the plan, local sustainability regulations, and goals.
- Provide training and education to department staff, volunteers, and the public on sustainability best practices.
- Foster partnerships with local environmental organizations, government agencies, and community groups to leverage resources and expertise to advance sustainability goals.
- Other duties as assigned.
- May also serve as a position that can be contracted to other communities.
 - The municipality can form contracts for services with surrounding municipalities to provide sustainability consultation through the coordinator position.

Compensation Packages for Full/Part-time

Full-Time: Salary would be between \$60,000 and \$80,000 depending on education and experience (this is reflective of industry averages and the employer can change at their discretion), benefits would include those given to employees with similar job status.

Part-Time: Salary would be between \$31,000 to \$41,000 depending on education and experience (this is reflective of industry averages and the employer can change at their discretion), benefits would include those given to employees with similar job status.

Combined Position*

- All duties and responsibilities assigned to the original role.
- Additional duties and responsibilities as Sustainability Coordinator:
 - Attend and document sustainability meetings.
 - Serve as a liaison between the Sustainability Committee and municipal staff.
 - Dedicates a specific amount of office hours a week to sustainability (recommended 4-5 hours/week).
 - Leads and assists implementation of the municipality's Sustainability and Climate Action Plan, ensuring compliance with the plan, local sustainability regulations, and goals.
 - Develop, implement, and expand current and new initiatives in conjunction with the municipality's Sustainability Committee.
 - Engage with the local community, visitors, and partner organizations to promote sustainability awareness and encourage sustainable behaviors through educational programs and outreach efforts.
 - Research and apply for grants and funding opportunities to support sustainability projects and initiatives within the municipality.
 - Other duties as assigned.
- Internal Green Team (one representative from each department)
 - Establish departmental goals and meet quarterly to discuss progress and work.
 - Provide an annual report to both the Sustainability Committee and the City Council.
 - Encourage research and special projects performed with volunteer help.

Volunteer Sustainability Committee*

- Attend and document sustainability meetings.
- Advise city officials and staff while promoting commitment to sustainability.
- Assists implementation of the municipality's Sustainability and Climate Action Plan, ensuring compliance with the plan, local sustainability regulations and goals.
 - Develop, implement, and expand current and new initiatives.
- Engage with the local community, visitors, and partner organizations to promote sustainability awareness and encourage sustainable behaviors through educational programs and outreach efforts.
- Research and apply for grants and funding opportunities to support sustainability projects and initiatives within the municipality.
- Identify opportunities to improve energy efficiency and resource conservation in municipal facilities, such as lighting, heating, cooling, and water usage. Recommend and implement energy-saving measures.
- Foster partnerships with local environmental organizations, government agencies, and community groups to leverage resources and expertise in advancing sustainability goals.
- The municipality's elected body would determine the number of seats on the Committee. The Committee should be made up of at least one elected official, appointed by the entire elected body, and one member of the municipality's administrative team. The remaining members would be members of the community such as residents, business owners, and other community stakeholders.

*Duties and Responsibilities are suggested and can be revised to match the goals and needs of the community.

Discussion

Hiring a sustainability manager as a full-time position may be an ideal situation, but municipal leaders should consider other options to help mitigate the cost of employment. The municipality may benefit from having a sustainability manager position that is part-time in nature as laid out in the other options presented in this report. These options include a traditional part-time structure, as well as others that would effectively serve as a part-time position. Although a non-full-time position may present disadvantages when compared to a full-time position, it also allows the municipality to incur fewer costs while achieving sustainability goals.

Although the municipality contemplating the hiring of a sustainability manager should focus on its goals and objectives with sustainability, many of these options can be utilized by surrounding communities to achieve goals on a larger, more regional scale. Having a position that impacts a larger geographical area may allow for greater grant funding opportunities and provide for larger-scale initiatives. A shared sustainability manager may also help mitigate some costs, either through contractual agreements or a regional authority. A municipality would benefit from considering the option of entering into agreements to provide sustainability management services for a larger region.

Having a sustainability committee without a dedicated role may also help promote sustainability within the municipality without the additional costs of hiring a manager. A volunteer sustainability committee could promote sustainability and help achieve the various goals of the municipality while increasing community engagement and awareness. Volunteer sustainability committees can also perform many of the functions of a sustainability manager, with these responsibilities delegated to committee members. The municipality, in establishing a sustainability committee tasked with staff functions, must make sure to account for the volunteer nature of the position and the time constraints involved with volunteers.

Hiring a consulting firm or an independent contractor may be an inexpensive option for municipalities seeking to hire a sustainability manager. Consultants provide expertise and can bring in past experiences that help further the municipality's goals. By contracting with the firm or directly with the independent contractor, the municipality may be able to incur fewer costs than if the manager was hired as a city employee. The municipality would need to go through a formal Request for Proposal/Request for Qualifications and bidding processes to determine the firm or contractor. For a sustainability manager, an RFQ may be more appropriate because it would allow the municipality to focus more on the community's needs rather than the lowest bid. Municipal leaders should decide on the process they believe is more appropriate for their community. A Sustainability and Climate Action Plan may help guide municipal leaders when deciding which process would better achieve the goals of the municipality.

The most feasible option, however, may be to combine sustainability management responsibilities with an already established role in the municipality's structure. This process would include evaluating and restructuring staff positions to accommodate increased responsibilities regarding sustainability, providing training for all staff members, and developing achievable goals for the position. To understand the feasibility of combining a sustainability manager role with an already developed position, municipal leaders must focus on the capacity of municipal staff. Interviews can be conducted to gauge staff members' interest, education, and ability to determine their capacity to take on additional duties. It is also important to conduct analyses of the job descriptions and roles in the organization to determine which position may be best equipped to handle the additional responsibilities. Because sustainability is such an all-encompassing topic, many roles can be combined into a sustainability manager position, however, the municipality must consider what role would be

best for its organizational structure. Many communities utilizing a combined role have found success by combining a sustainability manager position with their director of public works, director of parks and recreation, or city planner positions. These positions are typically chosen due to their general impact on the environment in a community. Smaller municipalities without these positions in-house should consider the positions available and how they can impact sustainability. Municipal leaders wishing to implement a combined position must also consider the balance between the two roles and if they want to specify a set time management schedule. As noted in the Options Worksheet, the municipality may structure a specific amount of work hours a week for the individual in the position to focus on sustainability initiatives, however, this decision should be made with input from both the employee, the municipality's specific sustainability goals, and the Sustainability Committee, if applicable. If the municipality chooses to develop a combined role, it must also consider how the role may impact the structural hierarchy of the organization. Regardless of the established role chosen to be restructured, it is important to note that the role of a sustainability manager requires interdepartmental collaboration, and the municipality may benefit from choosing a role that already has a prominent level of collaboration.

Within the option of a combined role, the municipality may also consider creating an internal Green Team. This team would consist of one staff member from each department who works together to implement sustainability initiatives and programs throughout the organization, sharing the time commitments. This team would meet quarterly or more, if necessary, to help accomplish this goal. At the first meeting of the year, the team should focus on determining annual sustainability goals for every department. The representative would then be tasked with helping the department achieve those goals and providing updates to the Green Team during regularly held meetings. At the end of the calendar year, the Green Team should compile an annual report detailing each department's goals, the work done to achieve them, and preliminary goals for the next year. This report should be compiled for both the volunteer sustainability committee and the municipality's governing board, and the Green Team should be available to answer any questions and provide insight into the annual report. The municipality, and the Green Team, may also consider designating a member as the project lead to perform duties and conduct research on specific projects. The team may also ask for volunteer help to perform these tasks to help address limited staff time. Having an internal Green Team would allow the municipality to meet its goals while also accounting for staff time constraints.

Conclusion

Implementing sustainability leadership is a complex decision that must be made with the limitations of the municipality in mind. Municipal leaders should consider the limitations of the budget and staff capacity when discussing whether to hire a sustainability manager and, if so, the structure of the position. Structurally part-time positions, particularly combining sustainability management responsibilities with a current position, may help municipalities reach goals while allowing flexibility to adjust to a full-time position based on sustained savings and community support. For many municipalities in Michigan, a combined position may be the most feasible structure. We encourage you to conduct feasibility studies of each option to hire a sustainability manager in your community to advocate for greater sustainability at a municipal level.

References

- Brandofino, S. (2023, November 1). *The benefits of volunteerism for local governments: Strategies to engage volunteers with govpilot*. govpilot.com.
<https://www.govpilot.com/blog/volunteerism/strategy/local/government>
- Interlocal Agreement to Establish an Upper Peninsula State Fair Authority*. menomineecounty.com. (2009, June 29).
https://www.menomineecounty.com/departments/page_544b6f0b2db3/?department=5b3a9ef5e19c&subdepartment=4fd9c8fba6d3
- Lupher, E., Schneider, R., & Thiel, C. (2023, October). *Michigan's path to a prosperous future: Public Sector Challenges and Opportunities*. <https://crcmich.org/>. chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/<https://crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2020s/2023/prosperous-future-public-sector.pdf>
- Request for proposals/request for qualifications*. Michigan Municipal League. (2023, March 7).
<https://mml.org/resources-research/information/request-for-proposals-request-for-qualifications/>
- Routt, S. (2023, December 12). *Is sustainability consulting better than an in-house team?* Green Business Bureau. <https://greenbusinessbureau.com/blog/is-sustainability-consulting-better-than-an-in-house-team/>
- Scorsone, E. (2023, March 15). *Challenges facing Michigan local governments*. Center for Local Government Finance & Policy. <https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/challenges-facing-michigan-local-governments>
- Evans, L. O., Paez, R. (2022, January 19). *Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact* [PowerPoint Slides]. <https://southeastfloridaclimatecompact.org/>

Appendix



CLCF Sustainability for Small Communities - Rockford, MI Sample Job Posting - Samuel Howard, Fellow

MUNICIPALITY NAME

Position Description

Title: Sustainability Coordinator

Department: DEPARTMENT NAME

Employment Status: Part-time/Full-time

GENERAL PURPOSE

The Sustainability Coordinator will play an essential role in the organization, responsible for overseeing the development, implementation, and management of sustainable initiatives in all city departments and functions. The Sustainability Coordinator will collaborate with various stakeholders to develop and implement sustainable strategies and programs.

The Sustainability Coordinator will work with all city departments, community organizations, the municipality's Sustainability Committee, as well as grant funders. The ideal candidate is innovative, meticulous, organized, and possesses excellent communication, grant writing, and project management skills.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED

Works under the supervision of INSERT DEPARTMENT HEAD.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Develop, implement, and oversee sustainability initiatives and strategies within the municipality to reduce environmental impact, conserve resources, and enhance sustainability practices.
- Engage with the local community, visitors, and partner organizations to promote sustainability awareness and encourage sustainable behaviors through educational programs and outreach efforts.
- Identify opportunities to improve energy efficiency and resource conservation in city facilities, such as lighting, heating, cooling, and water usage. Recommend and implement energy-saving measures.
- Develop, implement, and expand current and new initiatives in conjunction with the municipality's Sustainability Committee.
- Research and apply for grants and funding opportunities to support sustainability projects and initiatives within the municipality.
- Collect and analyze data related to sustainability metrics and performance indicators. Prepare regular reports on progress and achievements.

- Communicate data analysis to municipal staff, Sustainability Committee members, and community members.
- Knowledge of commonly used sustainability databases and software to ensure data is up-to-date and accurate.
- Assist in the implementation of the Municipality's Climate Action Plan. Ensure compliance with the plan, local sustainability regulations, and goals.
- Provide training and education to department staff, volunteers, and the public on sustainability best practices.
- Foster partnerships with local environmental organizations, government agencies, and community groups to leverage resources and expertise in advancing sustainability goals.
- Other duties as assigned.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

Education and Experience:

- Graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with a bachelor's degree in environmental science, sustainability, public administration, or a related field.
- Grant writing and project management experience required.
- Three to five years of experience in the field of sustainability, working professionally in the government, business, consulting, nonprofit, and/or academic sectors.
 - Experience in the government sector is preferred.

Necessary Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

- Knowledge of current models and programs for urban sustainability, including federal and state policies and measurement/monitoring of sustainability.
- Knowledge of climate change science, principles of energy and environmental management, social behavior change, and economic development.
- Knowledge of public administration and public policy development, including government financing mechanisms and intergovernmental relations.
- Ability to effectively analyze and develop programs, policies, and initiatives.
- Ability to manage projects, administer programs, and coordinate programs with other administrative offices.
- Ability to develop positive relations with other departments and agencies, and elected officials, and to facilitate collaborative planning processes.
- Ability to develop performance measurement systems and initiate continuous improvement processes.
- Ability to learn new skills quickly and problem-solve.
- Strong knowledge of environmental issues, conservation practices, and sustainability principles.
- Excellent communication and people skills for community engagement and partnership building.
- Ability to collect and analyze data, prepare reports, and track progress toward sustainability goals.
- Passion for environmental sustainability and a commitment to promoting eco-friendly practices.

SALARY AND BENEFITS

Depends on the city's ability and limitations, as well as the employment status.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to sit, talk, hear, and use hands and arms. The employee is occasionally required to stand, walk, and kneel in performing daily office work.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Work is primarily performed in a standard office environment that includes exposure to computer screens. The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate.



**CLCF Sustainability for Small Communities - Rockford, MI
Sample Interlocal Agreement - Samuel Howard, Fellow**

**INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT
TO ESTABLISH A [INSERT NAME] SUSTAINABILITY AUTHORITY**

This Agreement is made by and between the Participating Municipalities as defined herein.

**SECTION I
PURPOSE**

The Participating Municipalities desire to create a legal entity to be known as the “[INSERT NAME] Sustainability Authority,” hereinafter referred to as the “AUTHORITY,” which will be responsible for managing, implementing, and evaluating a variety of projects and initiatives related to the environmental protection and sustainability goals of the Participating Municipalities.

Without limiting the AUTHORITY’s activities, the following is a list of related activities in which the AUTHORITY might engage in:

- 1.1 Promoting environmental protection and sustainability practices in Participating Municipalities;
- 1.2 Conducting research and providing information to Participating Municipalities regarding energy and water conservation, fleet electrification, and other sustainability-related initiatives;
- 1.3 Implementing and evaluating sustainability initiatives in Participating Municipalities;
- 1.4 Conducting community outreach and education activities for residents of Participating Municipalities;
- 1.5 Applying for and securing grants, contributions, donations, and loans to provide financial support for and assist the existence of the AUTHORITY.

SECTION II **DEFINITIONS**

As used in this Agreement, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

- 2.1 “AUTHORITY” refers to the separate legal entity created herein.
- 2.2 “Board” refers to the Governing Board as described in this Agreement.
- 2.3 “Budget” refers to the annual fiscal plan regarding the anticipated expenditures and revenue as duly adopted by the Board at a properly convened meeting.
- 2.4 “Fiscal year” refers to the period in which the Budget shall be effective and shall be **[INSERT DATES]**.
- 2.5 “Legislative body” refers to the governing body of each Participating Municipality.
- 2.6 “Participating Municipalities” refers to all cities, villages, townships, and counties whose legislative bodies have approved this Agreement and whose legislative bodies have not withdrawn from this Agreement pursuant to paragraph 8.4.
- 2.7 “Properly convened meeting” refers to a Board meeting where a majority of the appointed or elected members are present as specified in its By-laws and which is subject of proper notice to each member as provided in the AUTHORITY’s By-laws.
- 2.8 “Proper vote” refers to votes of the Board members at a properly convened meeting, which results in a simple majority of those members present and voting. The AUTHORITY's By-laws may require voting requirements in excess of a simple majority for all or certain subjects.

SECTION III **GOVERNANCE**

3.1 STATUS

Through its Board, the AUTHORITY shall be a legal entity separate and independent from the Participating Municipalities, as authorized by Michigan’s Urban Cooperation Act, being MCL §124.501, et seq, which serves as the enabling law for this Agreement and for the AUTHORITY. The

AUTHORITY shall have the right to sue and be sued in its name and its goals, objectives, and actions shall be in pursuit of its unique interests. The AUTHORITY is not a joint venture and none of the Participating Municipalities shall be liable for any of the AUTHORITY's legal or equitable obligations.

3.2 ADMINISTRATION

3.2A GOVERNING BOARD

3.2A (1) Composition

The general policies governing the AUTHORITY shall be established by a Governing Board ("Board") to be composed of [INSERT NUMBER] member[s] of each municipality that is a Participating Municipality. Each representative shall be appointed or elected by its respective legislative body and must be a resident or representative of the Participating Municipality. All terms on the Board shall be [INSERT NUMBER] year[s] terms, although a term shall terminate if the member retires, quits, or is removed from his or her appointment. In their first appointments or elections to the Board, the Participating Municipalities may set shorter terms, in order to stagger the expiration of terms in the future. Other than reimbursement of expenses, all Members shall serve without compensation provided by the AUTHORITY, although nothing herein shall prohibit the Participating Municipality from offering per diems or other compensation to the member consistent with its policies on service to the Participating Municipality. Each member upon their proper appointment or election under this Agreement shall be deemed appointed or elected by all Participating Municipalities and shall serve with the best interests of the entire AUTHORITY in mind regardless of the particular body appointing or electing him or her.

3.2A (2) Powers

In addition to general policy-making authority and other powers conferred herein, the Board is authorized to perform the following functions for the AUTHORITY in order to facilitate the purpose of this Agreement:

- (a) enter into contracts;
- (b) acquire, hold, or dispose of property owned by the Authority;
- (c) construct, manage, or operate buildings or improvements;
- (d) promulgate and approve By-laws that are consistent with this Agreement;
- (e) contract to provide manpower, equipment, management, or fiscal/administrative services;
- (f) receive and administer gifts, bequests, or assistance funds;
- (g) incur debts and liabilities;
- (h) approve the AUTHORITY's annual Budget;
- (i) approve the AUTHORITY's expenditures;
- (j) as stated and limited in Section 4.1 below, to hire, employ and terminate personnel, management agents and/or fiscal agents;
- (k) appoint committees pursuant to its By-laws; and
- (l) exercise such other authority as is necessary for the operation of the AUTHORITY not inconsistent with the Urban Cooperation Act, and other applicable Michigan law or this Enabling Agreement.

Notwithstanding the above, the powers of the Board shall be limited to the AUTHORITY and its funds, and the Board shall not have the power to bind, commit or encumber the funds of the Participating Municipalities.

3.2A (3) Exercise of Authority

The Board shall meet [INSERT NUMBER] time[s] a year with a mandatory meeting in the first month of its fiscal year. The Board may meet more frequently at its discretion. At the first meeting of its fiscal year, the Board shall elect a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary from its membership. The Board shall post an annual meeting schedule after its first meeting of the year. The By-laws may provide for Board member meeting participation by telephone, video, or other data hook-up as long as the meetings are in compliance with the Open Meetings Act. No later than the last month of its fiscal year, the Board shall adopt a budget for the ensuing fiscal year. Powers shall be exercised upon a proper vote at a properly convened meeting. Each member shall be entitled to one (1) vote.

3.2B BOARD CHAIRPERSON

The Board Chairperson, elected at the first meeting of the Board, shall preside over meetings of the Board, serve as the public spokesperson for the AUTHORITY and will coordinate activities of the Board and cause minutes of each Board meeting to be kept and distributed to each member. The Board Chairperson, however, shall not exercise any authority independent of the Board or its express authorization.

3.2C BOARD VICE-CHAIRPERSON

The Board vice-chairperson, elected at the first meeting of the Board, shall exercise the powers of the Chairperson at the request of the Board chairperson and in the latter's absence.

3.2D TREASURER

The treasurer, elected at the first meeting of the Board, shall supervise the collection and disbursement of funds as directed by the Board and this Agreement. A

treasurer's report shall be presented and/or distributed to each Board member prior to each regular Board meeting.

3.2E SECRETARY

The secretary, elected at the first meeting of the Board, shall be responsible for authorizing and distributing minutes of each Board meeting and for carrying on the normal administrative duties necessary to the Board's functions.

SECTION IV **OPERATIONS**

4.1 PERSONNEL

The AUTHORITY shall have the authority to employ its own personnel. Hiring and firing decision-making may be delegated by the Board through a written resolution to the AUTHORITY Director or other Board designee, although any agreement to hire any employee for a term other than “at will” must be expressly approved by the Board. Additionally, or in the alternative, the AUTHORITY may contract for the assignment of personnel to the AUTHORITY. If convenient and feasible, the AUTHORITY and a Participating Municipality may agree to include the AUTHORITY personnel in the Municipality's health, pension, or other benefits plan.

4.2 LIABILITIES

The AUTHORITY shall secure and maintain adequate insurance considering its operations, as determined by the Board. The AUTHORITY may contract for all appropriate insurance with an insurance company or may contract for inclusion by a Participating Municipality in the municipality's insurance coverage.

The AUTHORITY must indemnify any Participating Municipality and Participating Agency against any general losses, damages, or liabilities due to the service and activities of the AUTHORITY or participation in the AUTHORITY up to the AUTHORITY's liability insurance policy limits.

SECTION V

FISCAL ADMINISTRATION

5.1 BUDGET

For each fiscal year, the Board shall adopt a Budget, which shall generally segregate anticipated revenues into accounts designed to cover expected expenditures. The Budget shall balance anticipated revenues with expected expenditures and contingency accounts. No expenditure may be authorized if it will result in an actual budgetary account deficit or is at a rate that may eventually lead to an actual budgetary account deficit prior to the end of the fiscal year. The Board shall amend the Budget to meet deviations in expected revenues or authorized expenditures. The AUTHORITY Director or management designee is delegated the maximum discretion permissible to a public entities' chief financial officer under the Uniform Budgeting and Accounting Act to transfer funds from one line-item appropriation to another in order to balance the AUTHORITY's Budget without prior approval. Notwithstanding this authority, the Director or management designee must report all line-item transfers to the Board at its next meeting and the Board shall have the final authority to ratify or reverse all or parts of such transfers.

5.2 DEPOSITORY

The Board shall designate a depository which shall be a federally or state-regulated bank or savings institution and establish therein accounts wherein the treasurer shall deposit all AUTHORITY revenues. The Board may contract with a Participating Municipality to be included within that Municipality's depository, provided that a separate accounting is maintained by the Municipality for all AUTHORITY funds. The AUTHORITY shall comply with all applicable Michigan laws regarding the investment, holding, and reporting of funds. The treasurer's signature and that of at least one other person designated by the Board shall be required before the depository may release any AUTHORITY funds.

5.3 EXPENDITURES

The Board must approve all AUTHORITY expenditures. In its By-laws, the Board may delegate authority to the AUTHORITY Director or management designee to approve expenditures for the AUTHORITY's operations in an amount not to exceed [INSERT AMOUNT] ("Pre-authorized per expenditure Ceiling") prior to Board approval, provided there are existing appropriations in the Budget, including the specific line-item if relevant, to cover the expenditure. The Board may increase or decrease the Pre-authorized Ceiling of [INSERT AMOUNT], provided it does so by an amendment to its By-laws and any change in the Pre-authorized Ceiling is recorded in its minutes. At each Board meeting, the AUTHORITY must present for ratification all expenditures made under the Pre-authorized Ceiling since the last Board meeting.

5.4 ANNUAL AUDIT

All AUTHORITY finances and expenditures shall be subject to an annual independent audit, which will include an unqualified audit opinion to be performed by an independent certified public accountant. If the AUTHORITY has contracted with a Participating Municipality to use its depository, it may be included in that Participating Municipality's annual audit. The chief fiscal officer of each Participating Municipality may review the documentation and utilize work papers generated in each annual audit. A copy of the annual audit shall be submitted to the legislative body of each Participating Municipality. The legislative body of each Participating Municipality shall also have the right to request other financial information regarding the AUTHORITY's Budget, funds, and expenditures. The information will be provided in accordance with the provisions and requirements of the Michigan Freedom of Information Act.

SECTION VI **DISSOLUTION**

In the event this Agreement is terminated, and the AUTHORITY is dissolved after reasonable wind-up expenses are deducted, the AUTHORITY will be dissolved by resolution of all Participating



Municipalities or the withdrawal of any number of Participating Municipalities that leaves no more than one (1) Participating Municipality as a party of this Agreement. Assets shall be distributed at the discretion of the AUTHORITY and under applicable laws.

SECTION VII **PARTICIPATION AND ANNUAL MEETING**

7.1 ANNUAL MEETING

The AUTHORITY shall hold an annual meeting for all Participating Municipalities to discuss the general operation of the AUTHORITY.

7.2 ADDING LOCAL OR OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES

7.2A Modification

This Agreement may be modified at any time to permit any city, village, township, or county to become a member of the AUTHORITY if such modification is adopted by resolution of the governing body of each such municipality proposing to become a member, and if such modification is adopted by resolution of the Board.

7.2B Funding Requirements

If a municipality becomes a voting member of the Board, that municipality shall be obligated to pay a proportionate share of any costs as determined by the Board and other Participating Municipalities. If there is no cost-sharing mechanism for Participating Municipalities, newly added members would incur no mandatory costs as part of its membership in the AUTHORITY.

7.2C Contractual Agreements

Nothing in this Agreement prevents the AUTHORITY from entering into a contract with any city, village, or township to provide sustainability consultation services. Any such contract shall require approval by the Board.

SECTION VIII
MISCELLANEOUS

8.1 MERGER

This Agreement constitutes the complete expression of the agreement between the Participating Municipalities on these subjects and there are no other oral or written agreements or understandings between the entities concerning the AUTHORITY. Any prior agreement or understandings on the matters addressed in this Agreement are hereby rescinded, revoked or terminated.

8.2 SEVERABILITY

This Agreement shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with applicable law. If any portion is held to be illegal, invalid, or unenforceable, the remainder of the Agreement shall be deemed severable and shall remain in full force and effect.

8.3 TERM

This Agreement shall become effective when the legislative bodies of two Participating Municipalities have approved it, may be executed in counterparts, and shall remain in effect [INSERT AMOUNT OF TIME], unless terminated by resolution approved by two-thirds of the Participating Municipalities, or as provided in Section 8.5, or if only one of the Participating Municipalities has not withdrawn according to Section 8.4, below.

8.4 WITHDRAWAL

Any Participating Municipality may enact a resolution to withdraw from the AUTHORITY and terminate its participation in this Agreement, provided it gives all remaining Participating Municipalities written notice [INSERT AMOUNT] days in advance of its withdrawal, although the Board shall have the discretion to release the withdrawing Participating Municipality and effect its withdrawal before the [INSERT AMOUNT] day notice period has expired.

8.5 AMENDMENT

This Agreement may be amended if two-thirds of the Participating Municipalities adopt a resolution approving the amendment provided that if the Agreement is amended, such amendment shall not become effective until **[INSERT AMOUNT]** days after the two-thirds approval was obtained.