

Overview

Seven Generations Ahead

A Midwest Institute Facilitating Sustainable Community Development

While nearly everyone is familiar with the term “sustainability” these days, many community, business, and municipal leaders struggle to determine appropriate strategies to implement while balancing their budgets, delivering core services, and meeting the expectations of their constituents. The dilemma of being without a “sustainability department” to turn to has led many eco-concerned decision-makers toward inaction or piecemeal efforts that in the end yield minimal results.

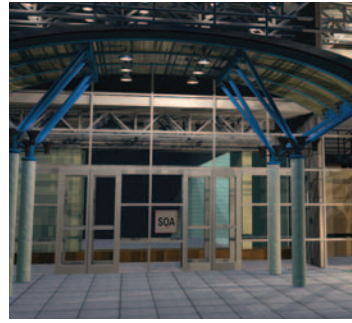
Building upon ten years of research and practice, Seven Generations Ahead supports leaders through education, advocacy, programs, and planning designed to generate environmental results that are economically viable and socially responsible. As more elected officials, municipal staff, and community decision-makers want to identify the best processes and strategies for moving forward, Seven Generations Ahead and partners are equipped to lend the expertise that can take communities from piecemeal activities to strategic planning and implementation. Whether we’re engaging community stakeholders in community-wide green planning, supporting implementation of a school-based zero waste initiative, or connecting town managers with financial resources for green building developments, Seven Generations Ahead serves as a facilitator, content expert, educator, program specialist, and resource connector that is helping Midwest communities save time and money while generating results that lead to a sustainable community.

Seven Generations Ahead functions as an extended community sustainability department through the provision of the following services:

- Design and support facilitation of community-wide sustainability planning and implementation initiatives that incorporate multiple institutional stakeholders, community input, success indicators and measurement, and transparent reporting.
- Support strategic plan development and implementation within specific sustainability content areas and across community sectors.
- Provide program training and support for Seven Generations Ahead programs and initiatives including zero waste, farm to school, energy efficiency, and green building development.
- Support sustainability planning and implementation through linking communities to additional content and technical experts in the fields of renewable energy, water conservation, ecological site restoration, green building design, baseline data aggregation and carbon footprint analysis, green procurement, and more.
- Facilitate the acquisition of funding resources to support specific sustainability projects, building upgrades and new construction, and programs.
- Provide best practices education and research including leading edge sustainable strategies, policies, projects, and programs.



Comprehensive Sustainability Planning



Seven Generations Ahead serves as an extended “sustainability department” for local communities seeking to align environmental and fiscal priorities. We conduct extensive research on sustainable city models and best practices, and leverage our content and facilitation expertise to support business, local government, and community institutions with sustainability planning and implementation.

Seven Generations Ahead’s planning model includes:

- Comprehensive Sustainability Strategy Development
- Diverse Community Institutional Stakeholder Involvement
- Input from the Community At-Large
- Incorporation of Technical Experts to Support Strategy Design
- Baseline Data Aggregation
- Success Indicators
- Short-term Implementation Priorities
- Leveraging of Resources to Support Implementation
- Transparent Reporting and Effective Communications

Community Works Oak Park River Forest

In collaboration with the Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation, SGA is leading the facilitation of an Environmental Sustainability planning process involving Village governments, townships, school districts, park districts, libraries, volunteer commissions, congregations, business associations, hospitals, and community organizations. The process incorporates comprehensive strategy development, recommendations for fundable projects, resource leveraging, data aggregation and indicators, and strategy prioritizing and implementation.

Chicago Metropolitan Area Municipalities

SGA works with local municipalities to support the design and implementation of planning processes that engage multiple community stakeholders. From its work with the City of Aurora, Illinois to design a community-wide sustainability planning initiative to its Zero Waste planning in Lemont, Illinois, SGA leverages its expertise and partners to support sustainability planning and implementation. SGA is developing a multi-municipal learning initiative targeting mayors and managers interested in collaborating to forward mutual sustainability objectives.

Midwest Community Education

Through presentations at mayors’ conferences to forums highlighting sustainable city models at annual GreenTown conferences, SGA and partners provide elected officials and community decision-makers with models on leading edge initiatives which support the transformation toward sustainable community development.

Farm to School



Seven Generations Ahead has implemented its nationally-recognized Fresh from the Farm program since 2004. A formal program evaluation conducted

by Occidental College found that Fresh from the Farm - which combines classroom curriculum, organic farm expeditions, farmer classroom visits, school gardens, chef demonstrations, and local food procurement - had a positive impact on children's healthy eating choices and awareness of where their food comes from. SGA combines direct program implementation in selected schools with training designed to equip teachers and parents to implement Fresh from the Farm curriculum and program activities.

Chicago Schools

SGA collaborates with the Logan Square Neighborhood Association, the Good Food Project, Purple Asparagus, and Chicago Public Schools in the Pilsen, Logan Square, West Town, Uptown, Austin, and Little Village neighborhoods of Chicago to implement Fresh from the Farm in specific Chicago schools. SGA is designing a pilot Fresh from the Farm program training initiative with Chartwells-Thompson Food Service to support schools currently receiving selections of locally grown fruits and vegetables.

Oak Park Schools

SGA successfully transformed the Oak Park school lunch program to a healthy lunch model through parent forums and workshops, implementation of Fresh from the Farm pilot PTO healthy lunches, and district-wide Fresh from the Farm program activities. Teachers and parents continue to implement food tastings curricula, farm expeditions, and school gardens with SGA consultant support. SGA conducted Wellness Policy Implementation Training for all ten District 97 Wellness Teams, and works with school food service to increase the volume and variety of locally grown fruits and vegetables in the school lunch program.

Metro Area Schools

SGA works with suburban school districts and local growers to facilitate local food procurement linkages for school lunch programs and educational programming.

Through a collaboration with the Robert Crown Center for Health Education, the City of Aurora, the Kane County Health Department, Aurora University and Serosun Farms, SGA has designed the Aurora Eats Healthy initiative incorporating community-wide healthy eating planning, programming, local food procurement, and the establishment of a farm-based learning center.



Green Building



SGA promotes green building development and energy efficiency through direct education with elected officials, municipal staff, and business leaders, and through workshops, resources, and programming. Whether it is connecting your community with leading green building experts; navigating the options for renovation, policy, and financing; or designing community energy efficiency strategies and programs, SGA can support your community on the path of creating buildings that achieve economic profitability and environmental sustainability.

Village of Oak Park LEED Policy and Public Works Facility

SGA in collaboration with the Village of Oak Park was the catalyst behind the LEED Silver-certified design of Oak Park's new \$30 million Public Works Facility (the first of its kind to be LEED certified in Illinois) and the achievement of a \$100,000 LEED design grant for the facility. SGA collaborated to create municipal policy incorporating LEED standards into planned unit developments, and educated leaders on green building incentive programs and policy initiatives that aided 2009 policy requiring LEED standards for all public building development. SGA has influenced over \$75 million in public and private LEED-certified building development, with more projects in planning. SGA's facilitation through the Community Works initiative has generated recommendations for fundable energy efficiency projects within Oak Park and River Forest, and is advancing priorities for project implementation and long-term strategy and policies.

Remodel GREEN

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SGA's Remodel GREEN - a 212-page guide to green home remodeling - serves as the foundation for education and advocacy work to promote green building development within the small business and residential sectors.



Green Home Tour

SGA's Green Home Tour showcases high end and "everyday" homes that are leading the way toward making homes ecologically sustainable and healthy. The tour features leading edge products, materials, technologies, and strategies for greening your home, and opportunities to chat with contractors, technicians, and homeowners about green products and services.

GreenTown: The Future of Community



The inaugural GreenTown conference held in Oak Park, Illinois, featured green visionary and renowned architect William McDonough as keynote speaker, whose talk captivated the crowd that packed the historic Frank Lloyd Wright Unity Temple.

“It was truly an historic event to witness perhaps the most influential green architect of our day deliver an address for the ages in this extraordinary house of worship built by one of the greatest architects of all time.” - SGA Executive Director Gary Cuneen



Saving the planet begins at home, and GreenTown: The Future of Community will show you how to begin and accelerate your efforts to create a sustainable community that enhances quality of life for generations to come. Mayors and elected officials, city managers, public works directors, park district directors, school superintendents and principals, planners, developers, engineers, architects, landscape architects, builders—and many others interested in sustainable development—gather to hear from inspiring speakers, learn from been-there case studies and discuss actionable procedures to make communities more eco-effective. GreenTown is co-produced by Seven Generations Ahead and a5 inc.

Whether from an established or a fast-growing community, participants learn about comprehensive sustainable city initiatives, public-private partnerships, and best practices promoting water conservation, climate change mitigation, municipal food residuals diversion and composting, green transportation, LEED-certified buildings, sustainable community development, green roofs, renewable energy, energy efficiency, green schools and universities, green jobs, local sustainable food, and more.

To learn more about upcoming conferences, sponsorship, and partner organization opportunities, or hosting GreenTown in your city, visit www.greentownconference.com or contact SGA.



Zero Waste Communities



SGA works with schools, municipalities, businesses, and community-based organizations to provide training and support for conducting waste assessments and zero waste strategic planning, acquiring funding for zero waste hard costs, and guiding strategy implementation to promote the evolution toward producing zero waste. Zero Waste strategies aim to increase recycling, eliminate waste at its source, and convert food residuals into compost.

Zero Waste Schools

SGA is completing a two-year collaboration with Holmes Elementary School in Oak Park, Illinois to implement a pilot Zero Waste Schools Project, including strategic planning, implementation, educational activities and field trips, and leadership development with 4th grade Zero Waste Ambassadors. Building from this successful initiative, SGA has organized waste assessments, strategic planning, and proposal development with twelve schools from three Oak Park and River Forest districts which will lead toward district-wide implementation during the 2009-10 academic year. SGA is exploring a similar model for a Zero Waste Schools pilot program in Chicago. SGA is working with a Chicago filmmaker to create a 30-minute educational video on Zero Waste Schools.

Community Event Technical Assistance

SGA offers technical assistance for Zero Waste event planning and implementation. Zero Waste events have been implemented with the Chicago Cultural Center, the Paramount Theatre in Aurora, IL, the Downtown Oak Park Association and the IL Craft Brewers Guild, with events in planning for the Village of Lemont, the Oak Park Farmers' Market, and the Union League Club.

Municipal and Community Food Residuals Education

SGA educates Chicago metro area leaders on residential and commercial food scrap collection and composting programs through workshops and forums linked to GreenTown: The Future of Community. SGA provides municipal and community decision-makers with research on food residuals programs toward the goal of developing of a pilot program in the Chicago metro area.