

Report of
The Green Team Advisory Committee
to
Township Council
Washington Township

Addressing
Resolution 55-2016

October 1, 2016



This report has been prepared by the Green Team Advisory Committee to respond to the goal established by Washington Township Council in Resolution 55-2016, to submit a report and recommendations to the Township Council by October 1, 2016, to include suggested best practices for “greener” municipal operations. The recommendations are presented as our proposal for an application to be submitted to the Sustainable Jersey program for certification as a sustainable community. The members of the Green Team Advisory Committee are requesting the Township Council’s endorsement of these recommendations, and continuing support of Sustainable Township endeavors.

Green Team Advisory Committee Members

Administration	Mayor Barbara Wallace
Township Council	Council President Sean Longfellow
Environmental Commission	Vicky Binetti
Planning Board	John Boyer
Public Works Department	Frank Altamuro
Washington Township Municipal Utilities Authority	Matt Mallon
Washington Township School Board	Karen Garrison
Greater Washington Township Chamber of Commerce	Bob Timmons
Public Member	Brooke Evanko

SUSTAINABLE JERSEY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Sustainable Jersey is a certification program for municipalities that want to go green, save money and take steps to sustain quality of life over the long term. The Program was launched in 2009, by the Mayors Committee for a Green Future (New Jersey League of Municipalities), in conjunction with the New Jersey Sustainable State Institute (Rutgers University) and the Municipal Land Use Center (The College of New Jersey, TCNJ). Today the Program operates as a nonprofit organization based at TCNJ, and partners include the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the Board of Public Utilities.

The focus of the Sustainable Jersey program is to reduce waste generation, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve environmental equity in New Jersey communities. The program identifies concrete “actions” municipalities can implement to become “certified” and become leaders on the path to sustainability. The actions encompass three components of sustainability:

Planet – practice responsible environmental management and conservation

People – embrace social equity and fairness

Prosperity – support local economy and use community resources

The program has identified nearly 160 actions overall, each with guidelines and standards to assure that there are verifiable effects. While major objectives of the Sustainable Jersey program are to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption and waste, the range of actions that communities can implement covers a broad spectrum, from cultural resources to health and wellness. All municipalities seeking certification must achieve several mandatory requirements, but there is substantial flexibility that allows each community to tailor its plan to local needs and priorities. The program is free; there are no fees for application, use of program tools or participation in workshops.

The benefits of certification are both tangible and intangible. Communities seeking certification get access to tools, training and resources (including grants) for developing relevant programs. Certified municipalities gain prestige and recognition as forward-looking, livable communities. Finally, through sustainable practices and operations, municipalities conserve resources, protect the environment and save money.

To obtain certification, municipalities must demonstrate that they have achieved established performance levels across a designated number of action categories; there are 19 categories overall. Documentation is reviewed by the Sustainable Jersey program staff at TCNJ. Points are awarded for each action determined to satisfy the program’s criteria.

There are currently two levels of certification:

- Bronze level (150 points) – must establish Green Team, implement 2 of 11 Priority Actions, and complete actions in 6 of 18 categories
- Silver level (350 points) – must establish Green Team, implement 3 of 11 Priority Actions, and complete actions in 8 of 18 categories

Gold level standards are currently being developed, with first emphasis on greenhouse gas and waste reduction. Certification has a three-year life, from date of notification of certification. Communities must re-apply to remain certified beyond that time period. Communities may apply for certification at a higher level at any time.

Nearly 78% (438) of New Jersey towns, including Washington Township, have registered with the program. Of these, 193 have achieved certification (159 Bronze, 33 Silver).

It is expected that Washington Township would submit its certification application in 2017. The following is the general schedule for the 2017 certification cycle:

Early June 2017 – Application submission deadline

Late July 2017 – First-round review comments provided to municipality

Early- to mid-September 2017 – First revised application submission deadline

Mid-October 2017 – Second-round review comments provided to municipality

Mid-November 2017 – Final application submission deadline

Mid-December 2017 – Final decision on pending applications

GREEN TEAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Washington Township Council established its intent to apply for Sustainable Jersey certification by Resolution 64-2014. While the Green Team is largely understood to include the Environmental Commission and the Open Space Advisory Committee and, by extension, all who participate in and assist their activities, Council established the Green Team Advisory Committee (GTAC) by Resolution 62-2015 to encourage both a vision of sustainability broadly across the community and a focus on municipal activities and operations. Designated membership of the GTAC includes representatives of the Administration, Township Council, Environmental Commission, Planning Board, Municipal Utilities Authority, Chamber of Commerce, School Board, Public Works Department, and the Public (at large).

Resolution 55-2016 reiterated Council's recognition of the GTAC, and established a Mission, Goals and Objectives for the GTAC in 2016 (including a report and recommendations by October 1, 2016, to include suggested best practices for "greener" municipal operations). Mayoral appointments filled the positions; the GTAC formally convened in March 2016 and has been meeting monthly since that time.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOWNSHIP

The GTAC has identified a number of existing activities, ordinances and programs within Washington Township that address the Sustainable Jersey goals of reducing waste, saving money, improving the quality of life, and protecting and enriching environmental, social and community resources. Many should meet the standards established by the Sustainable Jersey program for certification (or may do so with some update or minor amendments). The GTAC has also investigated opportunities to implement other initiatives recommended by the Sustainable Jersey program, and has identified several which have the potential to benefit the Township through increased waste reduction, enhanced environmental stewardship, improved energy efficiency, and/or enriched community vitality. Some have already been initiated, a few are planned to begin in the next few months, and still others are being assessed for their feasibility. While a number of these actions will not be complete, or even significantly underway, by the time the Township submits its bronze level certification application in June 2017, the GTAC believes that they should be pursued because we expect we will be striving for Silver Level Certification in the future, and can build our portfolio on a continuing basis, and because the actions are fundamentally good for the Township.

Through this exercise, the GTAC has compiled a set of recommended actions to constitute Washington Township's June 2017 application for certification (Bronze Level) as a sustainable community. Those actions are listed in the table below and further described in this report. They comprise 18 individual actions in nine categories. One action is mandatory (*Create Green Team*), and two are priority actions (*Natural Resource Inventory* and *Prescription Drug Safety and Disposal*). The listed actions could earn 175 points toward certification, surpassing the requirement of 150 points; this will provide an extra measure of flexibility in the event all activities do not proceed as presently planned. We expect that more actions will be added to this list as we continue our efforts. (For example, we are investigating potential actions related to bicycle and pedestrian plans, community forestry management, municipal communications, among other areas.)

We are pleased to submit our recommendations for Township Council's review and endorsement. We look forward to continuing this ***Sustainable Township*** enterprise.

PROPOSED ACTION PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE JERSEY CERTIFICATION

Category	Action	Points	Completed	Underway	Getting Started
Community Partnership & Outreach	Create Green Team^M	10	✓		
Food	Community Garden	10	✓		
Health & Wellness	Smoke-Free/Tobacco-Free Public Places	10	✓		
Innovation & Demonstration Projects	Drinking Water Protection	10	✓		
Local Economies	Buy Local Campaign	10			✓
Natural Resources	Environmental Assessment Ordinance	10	✓		
Natural Resources	Environmental Commission	10	✓		
Natural Resources	Environmental Commission Site Plan Review	10	✓		
Natural Resources	Natural Resources Inventory^P	20		✓	
Natural Resources	Open Space Plans	10		✓	
Natural Resources	Tree Protection Ordinance	10	✓		
Natural Resources	Water Conservation Education	10			✓
Operations & Maintenance	Adopt Behavioral Policies	5		✓	
Operations & Maintenance	Recycled Paper	10		✓	
Public Information & Engagement	Improve Public Engagement in Municipal Government	10		✓	
Waste Management	Community Paper Shredding Day	5	✓		
Waste Management	Grass – Cut It & Leave It	5			✓
Waste Management	Prescription Drug Safety & Disposal^P	10		✓	
Total		175			
M – Mandatory, P - Priority					

CATEGORY: Community Partnership and Outreach

10 points

ACTION: Create Green Team

Mandatory

Washington Township Council established its intent to apply for Sustainable Jersey certification by Resolution 64-2014. While the Green Team is largely understood to include the Environmental Commission and the Open Space Advisory Committee and, by extension, all who participated in and assisted their activities, Council established the Green Team Advisory Committee (GTAC) by Resolution 62-2015 to encourage both a vision of sustainability broadly across the community and a focus on municipal activities and operations. Designated membership of the GTAC includes representatives of the Administration, Township Council, Environmental Commission, Planning Board, Municipal Utilities Authority, Chamber of Commerce, School Board, Public Works Department, and the Public (at large). Resolution 55-2016 reiterated Council's recognition of the GTAC, and established a Mission, Goals and Objectives for the GTAC in 2016 (including a report and recommendations by October 1, 2016, to include suggested best practices for "greener" municipal operations). Mayoral appointments filled the positions; the GTAC formally convened in March 2016 and has been meeting monthly since that time.

The GTAC has compiled a set of recommended "actions" to constitute Washington Township's application for certification (bronze level) as a sustainable community; those actions (described in this report) are submitted for Township Council's review and approval.

Because of its membership, the GTAC has the ability to share information regarding upcoming events, funding opportunities, and community news from multiple quarters. In addition to planning and coordination, GTAC has a key role in fostering community outreach regarding "Sustainable Township" progress and concepts and activities that contribute to an ethic of sustainability. GTAC is pursuing the development of a web page (on Washington Township's website) that will be informative and educational; will explore opportunities to develop additional outreach tools (e.g., videos, speaker presentations, workshops, social, media, etc.) to reach broad audiences; and will work with partners across the community to share information and support community-based functions for mutual benefit.

Needed Action:

- GTAC will develop webpage with information on Sustainable Township, GTAC, progress on Sustainable Township Plan, green tips
- GTAC will pursue outreach to community at large and to specific audiences, using various media and tools
- GTAC will periodically report to Council on Sustainable Township progress
- Council may need to adopt supporting resolution in 2017 to confirm continuing endorsement of GTAC and Sustainable Township activities

CATEGORY: Food

10 points

ACTION: Community or School Gardens

Washington Township's Community Garden opened in May 2016, in Washington Lake Park. Under the leadership of the Open Space Advisory Committee, the garden was developed through the joint efforts of the Committee; student volunteers from Rowan and Rider Universities and St. Augustine's Prep; Public Works staff and Park Rangers; and a local benefactor. Garden plots are available to Township residents to grow vegetables, fruits, herbs and flowers. Produce from a set-aside garden area farmed by Township personnel has been contributed to Mother's Cupboard. During this inaugural year, eighteen 10' x 10' individual garden plots were open; we anticipate that the number of garden plots will be increased in 2017.

The community garden offers residents the opportunity to connect with the land; learn gardening skills; enjoy fresh produce; establish social networks; and benefit by outdoor exercise.

Needed Action:

- Open Space Advisory Committee members and volunteers will document first year accomplishments and "lessons learned" and prepare for earlier start for 2017 season
- Continuing assistance from Public Works staff (e.g., making mulch available, tilling soil, access to greenhouse, etc.) will be appreciated

CATEGORY: Health & Wellness

10 points

ACTION: Smoke-Free and Tobacco-Free Public Places

By Ordinance 28-2007, adopted in 2007 (Chapter 200), all Washington Township buildings and public grounds, including parks, sports fields and recreation areas, are smoke-free. Signs are posted at entrances to public buildings, on internal bulletin boards and in outdoor public areas and parks to remind employees and visitors that smoking is prohibited, with the exception of designated smoking areas (also posted). This protects the community and non-smokers from exposure to harmful effects of second-hand smoke, and reduces smoking-related litter.

Needed Action:

- Survey building entrances and parks periodically to assure signage is prominent and legible
- Assess whether “smoking” applies to e-cigarettes

CATEGORY: Innovation and Demonstration Projects

10 points

ACTION: Drinking Water Protection

All of Washington Township's drinking water is supplied by ground water. Of the 19 community water system wells operated by the Washington Township Municipal Utilities Authority (WTMUA), five are relatively shallow (pumping water from 60 to 120 feet below the ground's surface), and draw water from the Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer. This water table aquifer is sandy and porous, and does not have a protective confining layer, making the ground water especially vulnerable to contamination from pollution on or beneath the ground surface. Once contamination occurs, it is difficult and expensive to remediate ground water pollution, so prevention is the sustainable approach.

In 2002, Township Council enacted the Wellhead Protection Ordinance (codified in Chapter 273), which restricts the kinds of land uses and activities that may occur near these shallow wells. Protective actions, ranging from special storage and containment provisions to ground water monitoring, may be required of site developers and occupants in designated Wellhead Protection Areas. Such controls are established through Planning Board and Zoning Board site plan approvals.

Few communities have taken such affirmative steps to protect their drinking water resources. A safe water supply is fundamental to the sustainability of our community, from perspectives of health protection, economic vitality, and consumers' confidence and sense of well being.

Needed Action:

- Environmental Commission and WTMUA could occasionally share information on status of ground water protection with the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment
- Environmental Commission and WTMUA could undertake proactive educational and outreach efforts on ground water protection for residents

CATEGORY: Local Economies

10 points

ACTION: Buy Local Campaign

A fundamental attribute of a sustainable community is a strong local economy. A vital business sector keeps purchasing power recirculating within the community, strengthens the social infrastructure, and builds the local tax base. The Buy Local Campaign will further cooperation among Township government, the business sector and other civic leaders, with the goal of maximizing the potential of local business.

As an example, the Township can promote the Greater Washington Township Chamber of Commerce Food and Wine Tasting Event (October 23rd), which has been modified this year to feature hors d'oeuvres from local restaurants (in addition to wines from around the world); proceeds benefit the Chamber's Scholarship Fund.

In addition to contributing to the health of local businesses, buying "local first" has further advantages for consumers: they can save time and money by shopping locally, rather than driving distances for shopping. This reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and may even encourage healthy exercise, as residents walk or bike to local destinations. Purchasing services from local non-retail businesses engenders positive community connections and networks.

Needed Action:

- Partners (Township government officials, Chamber of Commerce, Green Team Advisory Committee members, other business and civic leaders) to develop campaign to encourage residents to "shop Township first," including communications, promotions, and participation in public events
- Promote Small Business Saturday (Saturday following Thanksgiving)
- Investigate "Buy Fresh, Buy Local" campaign, focusing on area farms, Jersey Fresh program
- Investigate opportunities to collaborate with the Advisory Board of Economic Development to support the health and growth of existing businesses

CATEGORY: Natural Resources

10 points

ACTION: Environmental Assessment Ordinance

Washington Township requirements for major land development applications include submission of a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), and by virtue of their inclusion on the Land Development Application Checklist, an Environmental Impact Statement and an Environmental Impact Worksheet. The purpose of the Phase I ESA is to identify existing or potential environmental conditions of concern on a property for which development is planned, e.g., known contamination incidents, past land uses which may have contributed to contamination, etc. The contents of the Phase I ESA are explicitly defined by Township Code (Chapter 125, Article IV).

An Environmental Impact Statement, on the other hand, describes existing natural conditions on a site and its environs (including geology, hydrology, topography, vegetation, wildlife, habitat, water resources, air quality, and so on), any anticipated impacts on these as a consequence of site development and subsequent uses, and potential measures to mitigate such impacts. While the contents of the Environmental Impact Statement are commonly understood by professionals, they are not explicitly listed in Township code. The Washington Township Environmental Impact Worksheet is essentially a summary Environmental Impact Statement. It is a structured series of specific questions that request information corresponding to the categories covered by an Environmental Impact Statement.

The Sustainable Jersey certification standards require that the contents of an Environmental Impact Statement are specifically identified in an ordinance. We believe that the aggregate requirements for the Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Worksheet, by reference in Township Code and in the specific itemized questions of the Worksheet, satisfy the intent of the criteria.

Needed Action:

- Develop a crosswalk to demonstrate that the requisite contents of a typical Environmental Impact Statement are satisfied by Township Code and referenced mandatory documents
- Consider preparing an ordinance to explicitly define required environmental documentation

CATEGORY: Natural Resources

10 points

ACTION: Environmental Commission

The Washington Township Environmental Commission was established in 1988 (Chapter 2, Article XV, §2-61), and has maintained a vital role in the Township since that time. The Environmental Commission researches and makes recommendations on natural resource issues, open space preservation, and specific environmental concerns (e.g., oil spills) arising in the community. Particular focal areas of concern are tree protection; wildlife and habitat protection, including threatened and endangered species; and drinking water/ground water protection. The Environmental Commission sponsors Earth Day activities annually, with special outreach events such as lectures, workshops and tree planting; a Community-Wide Clean Up Day each fall; and stream sampling with elementary school students. The Commission also performs site plan reviews of proposed development projects and makes recommendations for reduction or mitigation of environmental impacts. The Commission also partners with the Open Space Advisory Committee on numerous projects.

The Environmental Commission holds regular monthly business meetings, and workshop meetings in intervening periods as necessary to address specific projects.

Needed Action:

- Continuing outreach and education to the community, using web page and videographic technology
- Further collaboration with other environmental organizations, to leverage knowledge and resources

CATEGORY: Natural Resources

10 points

ACTION: Environmental Commission Site Plan Review

Sustainable Jersey recognizes efforts of Environmental Commissions that conduct reviews of site plans for land development projects, as authorized under the Municipal Land Use Law. The Washington Township Environmental Commission reviews major site development projects that are submitted to the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Adjustment, and all site plans within Wellhead Protection Areas. Reviews include special attention to Environmental Impact Statements; Environmental Impact Worksheets; Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESA) and Phase II ESAs, if prepared; Storm Water Management Plans and Reports; special considerations for ground water/drinking water protection, wildlife and threatened/endangered species; and tree protection and compensation plans. Comments and recommendations for the reduction of potential environmental impacts and opportunities for sustainable practices are submitted in correspondence to the Planning and Zoning Boards, and oral testimony is provided at public hearings.

The participation of the Environmental Commission in site plan reviews provides an additional measure of resource stewardship to the process of land development in Washington Township.

Needed Action:

- Institutionalize procedures to assure site plans are provided timely to Environmental commission for review

CATEGORY: Natural Resources

20 points

ACTION: Natural Resource Inventory

Priority

A Natural Resource Inventory (NRI), also known as an Environmental Resource Inventory (ERI) is a compilation of information about the natural resource characteristics and environmental features of the community. It comprises text, maps, tables, figures and other graphics that describe such information, and includes topics such as climate, air quality, geology, geography/topography, soils, hydrology, vegetation, wildlife and habitat, critical areas, land use, transportation, and contaminated sites. The NRI/ERI should serve as a key resource for land use planning and decision-making, and be integrated in the community's Master Plan.

The ERI for Washington Township was completed in 1991, and clearly warrants an update given the changes and growth in our community over the last quarter-century. There is currently no Township policy for routinely updating the ERI, although the authority and responsibility for conducting/updating the ERI falls within the mission of the Environmental Commission (according to both the Municipal Land Use Law (N.J.S.A. 40:56A) and Washington Township ordinance (Ch. 2, Art. XV, §2-61.D). In order to meet Sustainable Jersey certification criteria, the ERI must have been updated within 10 years of submission of our certification application.

While the process of updating the ERI would include active involvement by the Environmental Commission, Open Space Advisory Committee, Planning Board and other municipal officials and the public, skills to best use current research tools and mapping technology are beyond our in-house capacity. Therefore, we recommend that the Township engages competent, experienced external assistance to prepare the ERI.

Needed Action:

- Council to formalize process for regular review and update of ERI
- With approval of Township Council, Environmental Commission to initiate update of Township's ERI, using external professional assistance
- Upon completion of the ERI, Planning Board adopts ERI as component of Master Plan

CATEGORY: Natural Resources

10 points

ACTION: Open Space Plans

Publicly owned open space in Washington Township includes diverse lands, ranging from Washington Lake Park to recreational fields to undeveloped neighborhood parcels to larger expanses of natural meadows and woodlands throughout the Township. Early Open Space plans and inventories were prepared by the Washington Township Environmental Commission, consistent with Commission authorities and responsibilities under the Municipal Land Use Law and Township Ordinance (N.J.S.A. 40:56-A and Chapter 2, Article XV, §2-61, respectively).

Washington Township residents have highly valued open space, appreciating the Township's history as an agricultural community, the tangible and intangible benefits associated with lands dedicated to active and passive recreation and preservation, and the threats presented by the rapid development of the town. In 2001, Council established the Open Space Trust Fund (Ordinance 3-2001) and tax (Ordinance 3-2001), responding to overwhelming voter support by referendum the previous November, and created the Open Space Advisory Committee (Ordinance 6-2001). The Committee was charged with developing an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) for submission to the New Jersey Green Acres Program (qualifying the Township for State cost-sharing). Since 2001, with monies from the Open Space Trust Fund, the Green Acres Program, and Gloucester County Open Space and Farmland Preservation Funds, more than 300 acres of land have been permanently preserved.

While there have been periodic updates of the Recreation and Open Space Inventory (ROSI), the OSRP itself was last reviewed in 2009, but not adopted as an amendment to the Master Plan, so it is timely to once again update the Plan to fully address Green Acres guidelines (every 5 years) and Sustainable Jersey criteria. Numerous elements would be revisited and refreshed: goals and policies, needs analysis, resource assessment, action plan, maps, etc. It is prudent to develop a comprehensive and strategic roadmap in the course of updating the OSRP, to guide the optimal use and management of our existing open spaces for passive and active recreation, natural resource protection, and stewardship, particularly as we undertake an update to the Township's Environmental Resource Inventory. The strategy would enable the Township to better target limited resources, and identify needed financial and technical aid to fill gaps.

The OSRP update would be led by the Open Space Advisory Committee and the Environmental Commission, with participation by the Department of Public Works (including Parks and Recreation), Planning Board and other municipal officials, with public participation. The OSRP would be adopted by the Planning Board as an element of the Township's Master Plan.

Needed Action:

- With approval of Township Council, Environmental Commission and Open Space Advisory Committee to initiate update of OSRP in 2016, using external professional assistance; Planning Board adopts completed OSRP in 2017

CATEGORY: Natural Resources

10 points

ACTION: Tree Protection Ordinance

As an integral part of our living landscape, trees moderate temperature and dampen noise; they provide shelter, habitat and food for wildlife. Trees reduce soil erosion and stormwater runoff, and thus reduce flooding; they enhance soil, air and water quality, and remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Many species provide food and timber for human use; and trees are aesthetically pleasing. Sustaining our tree canopy contributes to a healthier, safer and more beautiful environment.

Washington Township has established Tree Preservation and Maintenance regulatory provisions (Chapter 254, Article II) that prevent the unnecessary sacrifice of trees in the course of site development, and provide for reasonable replacement of trees that must be removed because of site preparation and construction footprints. Site plans must be accompanied by Tree Protection and Removal Plans, which identify all trees on site under pre-development conditions. Protective measures to prevent damage, during site grading and construction, to trees remaining on location are stipulated. Trees that must be removed are so denoted (and tree removal permits must be secured), as are compensatory plantings. If it impossible to plant compensatory trees on the developing site, they may be planted on other public space, or equivalent contributions may be made to the Tree Trust Fund. (The Tree Trust Fund is used to subsidize tree plantings on public space, as well as to defray expenses associated with removal of hazardous/fallen or diseased trees in public locations.)

These measures have contributed greatly to the conservation of wildlife and habitat, protection water and air quality, and to the natural beauty of our environment.

Needed Action:

- None needed

CATEGORY: Natural Resources

10 points

ACTION: Water Conservation Education Program

The Washington Township Municipal Utilities Authority (WTMUA) operates the community water system in the Township, relying on ground water sources. The WTMUA provides millions of gallons of treated water daily to customers, and has storage capacity for 10 million gallons overall, in towers and tanks across the Township. An additional segment of our population relies on private domestic wells for water supply, and many residents have installed irrigation wells for lawn and garden watering with untreated municipal water. Additionally, ground water is tapped for agricultural purposes in and around Washington Township.

All of these uses can place a significant strain on the volume of available ground water for all purposes. Water demand is especially high in summer, and is exacerbated during extended periods of low precipitation or drought. Excessive withdrawal of ground water can adversely affect natural habitats, reduce natural surface water (stream) flows, and even reduce the amount of water available for emergency situations, such as may occur during power failures.

To relieve stress on the water supply during periods of traditionally high water demand, the WTMUA has restricted non-essential water use by its customers, allowing uses such as lawn watering or car washing only on alternate days, according to geographic location in the Township. In addition to environmental benefits, reductions in water use can lower customer bills, and reduce expenses for the WTMUA owing to decreased energy demand associated with pumping and treatment.

An educational campaign regarding the purpose of water conservation, and its beneficial effects, can encourage voluntary water saving behavior and use of water-efficient fixtures and appliances. The WTMUA will work with other parties, including Commissions, Boards, and potentially with the business sector to target educational efforts to selected audiences and to the community at large.

Needed Action:

- WTMUA, Environmental Commission and other partners will identify target audiences, and adapt available resource materials, develop new tools, and optimal media for water conservation education in 2017

CATEGORY: Operations & Maintenance

5 points

ACTION: Adopt Behavioral Policies

A number of sustainable practices informally in use among Washington Township employees have the potential to save energy, reduce waste and reduce costs. This action would engage staff in carrying out these and “green” practices in the office environment and in developing others. Expectations for certain practices would be formalized by including them in the Policies and Procedures Manual. These would include:

- Turning off lights and computers at the end of the workday
- Print documents as little as possible, sharing electronic files by email and using digitized records and documents whenever feasible
- Printing documents in black-and-white, rather than in color, and in double-sided format
- Preferentially using copy paper with high post-consumer recycled content
- Separate recyclables from other trash in appropriate receptacles

The ongoing use of programmable thermostats to control building temperatures and reduce heating and cooling at the end of the workday, significantly reduces energy consumption.

Employee buy-in to and active participation in energy-efficient and waste reduction efforts can be encouraged through establishing an office “green squad,” and use of a suggestion box. Statistics on energy usage, paper consumption, staff “compliance,” etc., could be posted on bulletin boards, and/or reported in periodic emails.

Needed Action:

- Council to adopt ordinance to incorporate selected green practices in Policies and Procedures Manual
- Administration to establish employee Green Squad to encourage staff participation and development of practical sustainable office initiatives, and incentives for ideas that reduce energy use, reduce waste, or conserve resources
- Monitor conformance with lights out/computers off policy
- Track paper/copier usage
- Track energy usage/bills for each building
- Reinforce good office trash-sorting practices; assure recyclable and non-recyclable waste streams are maintained through disposal by housekeeping staff

CATEGORY: Operations & Maintenance

10 points

ACTION: Recycled Paper

Washington Township has changed its standard copy paper order to include a larger portion of recycled paper. Since August 2016, the Township's standing order for copy machines in the Municipal Building, Public Works Building and Police Department Building is predominantly paper containing 30% post-consumer content. This "green purchasing" change will help to protect forests and keep used paper out of the waste stream, saving landfill space. Additionally, it will save the Township an estimated \$1.80 for every case of paper purchased.

Needed Action:

- Monitor paper purchasing to document that at least 25% of copy paper purchased and used has 30% post-consumer recycled content
- Monitor paper usage to document cost savings

CATEGORY: Public Information and Engagement

10 points

ACTION: Improve Public Engagement in Municipal Government

Washington Township has made considerable strides in enhancing access of residents to public governance processes. Township officials understand that residents' sense of engagement is related to their access to information, knowledge of management and decision-making procedures, and ability to participate in the public conversation surrounding policy and direction. Public input can enrich the community dialogue and quality and acceptance of government actions.

These are among the current Township measures that increase the public's access to local government officials:

- Advertising public meeting schedules (Council, Boards and Commissions)—including date, time and location—in the Courier Post and South Jersey Times, posting meeting calendars on the Township website, and posting agendas prior to meetings and minutes afterwards
- Enable sign-up on the Township website for emails or text messages for announcements about public meetings, emergency alerts, etc.
- Preparing Council meeting agendas so it is clear what actions Council may take, including Ordinance and Resolution titles on the agendas
- Recording Township Council meetings and posting on-line so residents unable to attend personally can follow deliberations
- Posting email addresses of elected officials on the Township's website so the public can contact them outside of scheduled public meetings
- Posting substantial information for residents on the Township's website regarding government departments, boards and commissions, their functions, personnel contact information, upcoming events, and important information about government services, budgets, community news and upcoming events
- Making forms and instructions for routine permit applications available on the website

Needed Action:

- Assure audiovisual equipment for public meetings performs well
- Consider whether scheduled opportunities for general public input at Council meetings is the best time for residents
- Post rules for public input at meetings on the Township website, in meeting rooms, in the Clerk's Office, etc.
- Consider how supporting information related to Council actions can be made more easily available to the public (e.g., posting in a "reading room" on the website, available in the Library, etc.)

CATEGORY: Waste Management

5 points

ACTION: Community Paper Shredding Day

Washington Township makes free, convenient paper shredding available to residents at an annual Shred Day event. Residents are invited to bring their confidential documents to a central location (the Municipal Building parking lot), where they are transferred to the shredding service's truck. In addition, Township residents may bring documents for shredding at the vendor's site on three additional dates throughout the year.

Because residents are often reluctant to place confidential documents among recyclable materials collected at the curb, the Shred Day offers an opportunity to safely destroy those materials while keeping them in the recyclable waste stream. The Shred Day event thus helps to reduce landfill waste, protects resources through recycling, and offers a measure of security to Township residents. The Shred Day event in April 2016 garnered 23,150 pounds of paper for shredding and recycling.

Needed Action:

- Continued support of Shred Day and designated alternate drop-off day opportunities

CATEGORY: Waste Management

5 points

ACTION: Grass – Cut It and Leave It

The purpose of this initiative is to educate residents about the benefits of keeping grass clippings on the lawn, rather than removing them for disposal. Grass clippings provide natural fertilizer, and contribute to a healthier lawn by improving the organic content and structure of soil. By cutting grass at a higher level and leaving loose clippings on the lawn, residents can reduce the amount of waste generated, save the effort of bagging clippings, and reduce use of water, chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Educational efforts would be focused in spring and summer.

Needed Action:

- Adapt educational materials available from NJDEP and others for promotional campaign beginning in spring 2017

CATEGORY: Waste Management

10 points

ACTION: Prescription Drug Safety and Disposal

Priority

In March 2016, the Washington Township Police Department established a permanent, secure collection location for the safe disposal of drugs that are no longer needed (expired, not well tolerated, excess amount, etc.). Through "Project Medicine Drop," residents can bring unwanted drugs to a drop-off collection bin in the front lobby at the Police Station at any time (rather than during a specific collection event). Thus, law enforcement personnel oversee the collection of drugs and supervise their removal for ultimate destruction at an approved incineration facility. The opportunity to dispose of drugs in this way reduces the introduction of drugs into the environment by flushing or through solid waste at landfills; reduces the risk of accidental drug ingestion risk in the home; and reduces the potential for drug abuse by eliminating access.

During just the first three months of operation, the Police Department recorded the collection (and transfer for destruction) of 108 pounds of drugs. The availability of this disposal option is advertised on the Department's and the Township's websites, and is publicized at community events.

The Police Department also participates in the semi-annual National Prescription Drug Take Back Day (scheduled for October 22 this fall).

Needed Action:

- Police Department maintains records of quantities collected at the Station and delivered for disposal
- Potential additional outreach in community may further enhance success