

**Local Nonprofit Organizations and the
Pursuit of Sustainability in American Cities:**

A Preliminary Exploration

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Local Nonprofit Organizations and the Pursuit of Sustainability in American Cities: A Preliminary Exploration

Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) and nonprofit organizations have been extraordinarily important in the pursuit of sustainability around the world. In terms of the pursuit of local sustainability, many national and international organizations have been instrumental in serving as catalyst and coordinator of efforts to promote sustainability and environmental protection. By now, the operation of large environmental groups generally (Shaiko, 1999; Berry, 1999) is well documented, and the role of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), through its Climate Change Programme, and its Local Agenda 21 and Local Action 21 programs, is clear. Moreover, in the U.S., the National Conference of Mayors, a nonprofit organization consisting of city and town mayors, has taken up the charge of climate protection with its Climate Change Agreement, now signed by 442 mayors. What is less well documented and understood is the role of the myriad local nonprofit organizations in promoting sustainability in specific cities and towns. A brief look at some specific cities that seem to excel in the pursuit of sustainability, such as Seattle and Portland, suggests that various kinds of nonprofit organizations are of paramount importance. Yet beyond a small number of case studies, there is surprisingly little empirical evidence to facilitate any sort of comprehensive understanding of whether, how, and in what ways local nonprofit organizations do in fact make a difference in the pursuit of sustainable cities.

This paper presents a preliminary exploration into the roles played by local nonprofits. It is preliminary in several senses. First, the information on which it is based is derived from a pilot study of only 14 mid-sized U.S. cities. And even in these cities, this pilot study has not been able to build a complete picture of the local non-profit world, a formidable challenge in any one of these cities. Second, it does not seek to rigorously test any specific hypotheses about these cities or their respective nonprofit organizations. Third, it reports on some patterns of association without making any effort to understand the possible causal connections represented by these patterns. Instead, it seeks to examine whether there are some basic patterns with respect to the kinds of nonprofits that seem to operate in cities that are apparently more serious in their pursuit of sustainability, and to search for differences in these patterns with cities that are far less

serious. It does not offer any compelling or definitive answers; it merely reports the patterns that exist. It does this with the hope of formulating some hypotheses and expectations that can perhaps be examined with a more robust array of cities and data.

Before beginning an investigation into the selected U.S. cities, two issues need to be addressed. First, a brief overview of the landscape of nonprofit organizations in the U.S. will serve as the foundation for understanding local nonprofits and their role in sustainability. Although we tend to use the term “nonprofit” as though it refers to one specific kind of organization, in fact this is a misnomer. Nonprofit organizations, especially local nonprofit organizations, come in lots of different sizes and shapes. They exist for many different purposes, get their financing from many different sources, and serve many different constituencies. So I will review some aspects of this landscape. Second, a brief discussion of what the local pursuit of sustainability seems to mean in the U.S. will demonstrate which cities actually seem to be working toward becoming more sustainable and what they are actually doing to accomplish this. This information will be used to lay the framework for understanding the 14 specific cities that are the subject of this investigation.

The Landscape of Local Nonprofit Organizations in the U.S.

The term “nonprofit organization” is applied fairly broadly in common parlance, yet it has a specific legal meaning in the U.S. Formally, a nonprofit organization is a group that has been granted nonprofit status as a 501(c) organization under the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. It is a status that allows the organization to operate without the burden of federal, state, or local taxation. Depending on the exact type of organization and Internal Revenue Code classification, the group may well be constrained in the kinds of political activities it can engage in. [political activity, lobbying] Although there is a clear legal definition of what constitutes a nonprofit organization, there are many organizations that operate as nonprofits even though they may not have achieved that legal status. In point of fact, in causal observation, most of the groups that appear to be nonprofits may or may not have true nonprofit status. This paper looks at nonprofits, but there is no assurance that the identified organizations actually are legal nonprofits. In short, as will be discussed later, we queried dozens of officials about which nonprofit organizations they had contact with, which advocated sustainability, and which opposed sustainability. If a

survey respondent mentioned the name of an organization as a nonprofit, we accept that group as a nonprofit. No effort was made to ascertain whether it is, in fact, a legal nonprofit.

Allowing for the definition of a nonprofit in legal terms does not do much to ensure that nonprofits have anything else in common. There are many dozens of different kinds of nonprofits – different because of their missions and goals, their strategies, their sources of revenue, and for many other reasons. Space does not permit a full elaboration of the different kinds of nonprofits that might operate at the local level. As discussed later, this paper makes an attempt to distinguish nonprofits based on several criteria. First, is the organization a purely local group, or is it a state or federal group? Second, does it, in some fashion, present people in a geographic area (such as a neighborhood association) or people with an idea or policy position (such as Smoke Free Denver)? And third, is it a group whose mission is decidedly related to the environment or sustainability, or is the mission more broadly defined?

The Local Pursuit of Sustainability in the U.S

Although U.S. cities would probably not be considered among the world's leaders in the pursuit of local sustainability, by now there are at least 45 major cities that have adopted some form of sustainability policies. These policies consist of a general articulation of some form of sustainability as a policy goal, and the creation of specific programs to support the pursuit of that goal. The 45 cities that have sustainability programs vary considerably in terms of how aggressive they are – how many different programs they have adopted and how robust those programs are – but they all share recognition that the pursuit of sustainability is a worthwhile goal.

What kinds of programs have these cities adopted in their pursuit of sustainability? I have focused on 35 different local programs conceptually falling into seven broad categories. It is not possible here to explain them all adequately, but by way of overview here are the categories and the specific programs:

* “Smart growth” programs, includes eco-industrial park development, targeted or cluster economic development, eco-village (urban infill housing) projects or programs, and brownfield redevelopment projects.

* Land use planning and zoning policies and programs includes the use of zoning to delineate environmentally sensitive growth areas, comprehensive land use planning that incorporates

environmental protection, and especially in cities that do not have zoning authority, the use of tax incentives for environmentally friendly development.

* Transportation planning and policies, including mass transit, limits on downtown parking spaces, high-occupancy vehicle lanes on city streets, alternatively fueled city vehicle (“green fleet”) programs, and bicycle ridership programs.

* Pollution prevention and reduction, including solid and hazardous waste recycling, air emissions reduction programs (VOC reduction or climate change programs), recycled product purchasing by city government, hazardous waste site remediation, asbestos abatement, lead paint abatement, and pesticide reduction programs.

* Energy and resource conservation, including green building programs, renewable energy use by city government, residential energy conservation programs (independent of green building), alternative energy (biofuels, windpower, solar, hydroelectric) offered to consumers, and water conservation efforts.

* Sustainable (livability) indicators projects that have been actively utilized in the last five years, including a progress report being issued within the last five years, and a clear action plan.

* Administrative, organizational, and managerial coordination of the environmental protection function. This grouping includes whether there is a single government or nonprofit agency responsible for implementing sustainability programs, whether sustainability is an explicit part of a citywide comprehensive plan, whether there is involvement of a city/county/metropolitan council, whether there is involvement of the mayor or chief executive officer, whether there is involvement of the business community, and whether the general public is involved (through public hearings, visioning process, or neighborhood associations).

Table 1 provides a list of the 45 cities, and Table 2 provides an Index score showing how many of these specific programs each city has adopted.

Table 1: Forty-five U.S. Cities with Sustainability Programs

City	Name of Sustainability Initiative
Albuquerque, NM	Sustainable Albuquerque
Anchorage, AK	Anchorage 2020: Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan
Atlanta, GA	Sustainability Initiative; Greener Atlanta Initiative
Austin, TX	Sustainable Communities Initiative; Sustainability Indicators Project of Hays, Travis, and Williamson Counties
Baltimore, MD	Greener Baltimore Initiative
Boston, MA	Sustainable Boston Initiative
Brookline, MA	Comprehensive Plan
Boulder, CO	The Sustainability Program
Buffalo, NY	Green Gold Initiative
Cambridge, MA	Sustainable Cambridge, Cambridge Civic Forum
Chattanooga, TN	Sustainable Chattanooga
Chicago, IL	Conserve Chicago Together
Cincinnati, OH	Sustainable Cincinnati
Cleveland, OH	Sustainable Cleveland Partnership, EcoCity Cleveland
Columbus, OH	Get Green Columbus
Denver, CO	Greenprint Denver
Grand Rapids, MI	Sustainability Plan
Indianapolis, IN	Indy Greenprint; Indianapolis Insight
Jacksonville, FL	Jacksonville Indicators Project, Jacksonville Community Council
Kansas City, MO	FOCUS Kansas City Plan
Lansing/East Lansing, MI	Sustainable Lansing
Los Angeles, CA	Integrated Resource Plan, Sustainability; Environmental Programs for a Sustainable Future
Milwaukee, WI	Campaign for Sustainable Milwaukee
Minneapolis, MN	Minneapolis Greenprint
New York City	PlaNYC
New Haven, CT	Vision for a Greater New Haven
Oakland, CA	Sustainable Community Development Initiative
Orlando, FL	Sustainable Communities
Olympia, WA	Sustainable City Indicators/Sustainable Community Roundtable
Phoenix, AZ	Comprehensive Plan, Environmental Element
Pittsburgh, PA	The Pittsburgh Downtown Plan
Portland, OR	The Comprehensive Plan
Sacramento, CA	The Sustainability Agenda; Sacramento 2030 General Plan
Santa Monica, CA	Santa Monica Sustainable City Program
San Diego, CA	The General Plan: City of Villages; Sustainable Community Program
San Francisco, CA	The Sustainability Plan
San Jose, CA	Sustainable City Programs (Sustainable City Major Strategy, part of San Jose 2020 Comprehensive Plan)
Santa Barbara, CA	The South Coast Community Indicators Project
Scottsdale, AZ	Scottsdale Seeks Sustainability
Seattle, WA	Toward a Sustainable Seattle/The Comprehensive Plan
St. Louis, MO	St. Louis Five Year Strategy
Tampa, FL	The Tampa/Hillsborough Sustainable Communities Demonstration Project
Tucson, AZ	The Livable Tucson Vision Program
Vancouver, WA	Comprehensive Plan 2003-2023, Environmental Element
Washington, D.C.	Sustainable Solutions, Department of the Environment

Table 2: Rankings of Cities Sustainability Scores Showing the Number of Programs

Rank	City	Index Score
1	* Seattle	31
2	* Denver	30
3	Albuquerque	28
3	Los Angeles	28
3	Minneapolis	28
3	Oakland	28
7	Boulder	27
7	San Jose	27
7	Chicago	27
10	Portland, OR	26
10	Santa Monica	26
10	Scottsdale	26
10	San Diego	26
14	Columbus	25
15	San Francisco	24
16	* Kansas City	23
17	New York	22
17	* Sacramento	22
19	Tampa	19
19	Anchorage	19
19	Vancouver	19
22	Austin	18
22	Cambridge	18
22	Chattanooga	18
22	Tuscon	18
22	* Washington, D.C.	18
22	Grand Rapids	18
28	Baltimore	17
28	Buffalo	17
30	Phoenix	16
31	* Boston	15
31	Jacksonville	15
31	Pittsburgh	15
34	Brookline, MA	14
34	Cleveland	14
34	* Atlanta	14
37	St. Louis	13
38	Orlando	12
39	Indianapolis	11

39	Santa Barbara	11
41	* Milwaukee	9
41	New Haven	9
43	Olympia, WA	8
44	Lansing/E.Lansing	7
44	Cincinnati	7

* Denotes a city that was selected for the pilot study survey

The Local Politics of Sustainability

The Cities (and Data) in this Study

The data on which this analysis is based come from a 2006 pilot survey of local officials in fourteen moderate-sized U.S. cities. These cities all have similar population sizes, ranging on average from 400,000 to 600,000 residents as measured by the 2000 decennial Census. Due to time and resource constraints, we capped the study at fourteen cities, although there are only a handful of additional cities in the U.S. that fall into this population range. In other words, these cities represent nearly the entire universe of U.S. cities in this population range. Although previous research has shown little correlation between the size of cities and their propensity to try to become more sustainable, a practical limit of fourteen cities suggested the wisdom of holding population size relatively constant.

For the purposes of this analysis, eight of the fourteen cities are classified as “sustainable cities,” cities that have explicitly articulated policies aimed at trying to become more sustainable, as designated in Table 2. This does not mean that these eight cities are actually sustainable, but rather that they have adopted specific policies and programs to establish the pursuit of sustainability as a policy goal. These eight cities vary with respect to the degree to which they actually seem to take sustainability seriously in terms of how aggressively they actually pursue their sustainability goals. The cities range from exemplary examples in Seattle and Denver to cities that take the concept only moderately more seriously than the average American city as in Milwaukee and Atlanta. Although Washington, D.C. was included in the original sample of cities, a low number of questionnaire responses led me to omit it from the analysis here, leaving seven “sustainable” cities.

The other six cities serve as controls or comparison cities. None of these six comparison cities have articulated any type of sustainability policies. Both the group of seven sustainable cities and the six comparison cities were chosen to include cities from varied geographical and regional backgrounds. By including only those cities with similar populations and a wide range of geography, we hoped to avoid regional and population biases. Clearly, there are unavoidable regional differences. The comparison group cities are more likely to be in the South and less likely to be in the Midwest; the comparison group contains no cities from the Northeast or West coast.

Table 3 provides a comparison of the basic demographics of the two groups of cities. Here we can see that with respect to population size, median family income, the percent of the population that is African American, and the percent of families below the official poverty line, these two groups of cities are very similar. Clearly, the sustainable cities group, on average, has higher population density and less reliance on manufacturing industries as a source of employment. Even so, there is significant variation even within the groups, with Kansas City having very low population density and Las Vegas having a relatively high density. Milwaukee, a city with a sustainability policy, has the highest reliance on manufacturing among all the cities, and Las Vegas, a city with no sustainability policy, has the lowest. The point of these comparisons is to establish that whether these cities are in the sustainable category or not does not seem to be determined by any of the demographics. With the possible exception of population density and manufacturing employment, these two groups of cities appear very similar.

Table 3: Basic Demographics of the Cities*

Sustainable Cities	Population Size	Median Family Income	Percent African American	Percent Families Below Poverty	Population Density (per sq/mile)	Percent Employed in Manufacturing
Boston	520702	49320	24.6	17.8	5557.9	6.1
Denver	545198	52139	10.0	12	3625	6.5
Seattle	536946	69795	8.2	6.6	6706.8	8.3
Kansas City	440885	50540	30.0	12.9	1420	10.1
Milwaukee	556948	35675	40.2	21.3	6212	18.5
Atlanta	416474	42010	58.6	25.5	3155	7.7
Sacramento	445287	50653	16.3	14.7	4240	6.6

Averages	577073	58355	31.3	18.5	5152.8	9.1
Comparison Cities						
Memphis	642251	40111	63.1	21.1	2327.4	10.2
Las Vegas	538653	57471	11.3	9.7	4222.5	3.3
El Paso	583653	35562	2.8	23.8	2263	13.3
Oklahoma City	515751	49769	14.7	14.9	833.8	10.3
Fort Worth	604538	47064	18.4	15.7	1827.8	14.6
Charlotte	601598	56960	34.3	10.2	2232.4	10.7
Averages	677253	57549	29.3	19.0	3143.3	10.4

* Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *American Factfinder*, August 1, 2007.

In order to investigate the local political and civic landscape that seems most conducive to the pursuit of sustainability, a pilot study was undertaken in the fourteen cities described previously. This study consisted of identifying and surveying the local leaders who would be in the best position to report on that landscape. So in each city, a list of local officials was compiled, consisting of all of the local elected city councilors; the heads of the city planning, economic development, public works, health, and environment departments; the director of sustainability (if there was one); and local business leaders, especially the executive director and public affairs director of the local Chamber of Commerce. Once the list of the names and addresses of these officials was compiled, a questionnaire was sent to each person. The Appendix 1 presents a copy of the questionnaire that was sent to city councilors. The questionnaire sent to other officials was modified slightly so that it would be appropriate for them. The primary purpose of the survey was to ask questions whose responses would help build a picture of some specific aspects of the political landscape.

The questionnaire was sent to a total of 240 potential respondents in the fourteen cities, for an average of a little over 17 questionnaires per city.¹ The total number of completed

¹ The mailing included the questionnaire, a one page letter (on Tufts letterhead, a sample of which can be found in Appendix B) explaining why the respondent was receiving the survey, a prepaid postcard on which they could write their name so as to remain anonymous if so desired, and a prepaid return envelope with Professor Portney's address at the Tufts University Political Science Department. The postcard was also used to determine eligibility to receive the free book and to be entered into the iPod raffle. After two weeks, a postcard reminder was sent to all respondents who had not yet returned a questionnaire. This postcard reminded the respondent that they had received our questionnaire and asked them to complete and return it. If they had not received a questionnaire, we asked them to contact us so that we could send them a replacement questionnaire. About three weeks after this step, we sent a

questionnaires was 64. Calculating the response rate as the ratio of the number of completed questionnaires (64) to the total number of targeted respondents (240) yields an overall response rate of 26.7%. This is a response rate that is generally consistent with those reported for mail surveys in the survey research literature. One city, Washington, D.C., turned out to be more problematic than the others. Only one official from that city responded, making the quality of the information suspect. Rather than making an extra-special effort to stimulate responses there, a decision was made to drop this city from the group of “sustainable cities,” focusing on the seven remaining cities.

Key Questions and Issues

This paper focuses on ?? key questions or issues related to the role of local nonprofit organizations and the pursuit of sustainability. Ultimately, these key questions are really about the relative importance of nonprofits and whether local nonprofits represent an effective voice for sustainability in local governance. The key questions here are meant to open a window into the investigation of this broader issue even if they cannot provide definitive answers. The approach taken here is to define a number of different variables that characterize the nonprofit community in each city, and to see how closely related these variables are to the pursuit of sustainability. In short, do the “sustainable cities,” Seattle, Denver, Milwaukee, Kansas City, Boston, Atlanta, and Sacramento, look different with respect to these nonprofit characteristics than the comparison cities, Memphis, Las Vegas, El Paso, Oklahoma City, Fort Worth, and Charlotte?

Nonprofit Interactions with City Leaders

If local nonprofits serve as effective voices in support of the pursuit of sustainability, then one way this voice can be heard is through contacting local officials for the purpose of

second copy of the questionnaire to those who we believed had still not returned a questionnaire. All of these steps were in accordance with the standard political science literature advising the best methods by which to follow in order to maximize response rates. (Dillman 2000) After speaking with a small number of respective respondents who expressed a preference for answering questionnaires over the Internet, an online version of the questionnaire was subsequently created with the assistance of Thomas McGuiness of the Tufts Office of Institutional Research and Evaluation. Email messages were sent to city councilors and city administrators who had not returned the initial mail questionnaire offering them the option of doing the questionnaire online. The intent of the online version of the questionnaire was to offer an alternative to the mail questionnaire for those who had not returned the latter. The online questionnaire induced six additional responses.

expressing their views. Extensive urban politics literature certainly makes clear that the private sector – leaders of local business and industry as well as representative groups – are not shy about making their views known to local officials. What isn't clear is whether local nonprofits can be equally vocal, and whether when they are vocal, they can have some influence affecting the kinds of policies and programs adopted by their cities. In order to investigate this, the questionnaire asked each surveyed official to report on their contacts with nonprofit and related kinds of groups. Specifically, question 17 asked:

17. Considering all the various kinds of citizen, neighborhood, and nonprofit groups that exist in the City, about how many times **over the last year** have you met with a representative from any of these groups?

Rather than relying on the answers to this question alone, the survey also asked respondents how often they are contacted by business leaders. Specifically, question 11 asked:

11. About how many times **over the last year** have you met with the City's business leaders?

Answers to these two questions were used to compute a ratio of contacts with nonprofit leaders to contacts with business leaders. In this way, officials who happen to have more contacts generally would not skew the results. The expectation is that leaders in the sustainable cities will have much more contact with nonprofits relative to businesses than leaders in the comparison cities. Indeed, if contacting represents an important mechanism for nonprofits to be heard, one would expect it to be reflected in this ratio.

Table 4 shows the ratios for all thirteen cities, and provides group averages. The first two columns report information for all surveyed officials; the latter two columns report information just for the responding city councilors. Officials in the "sustainable cities" have, on average, six times more contact with nonprofit and community organizations than businesses, and leaders in the comparison cities have only two and a half times more contact. This result is heavily skewed by two outlier cities in the sustainability group – Boston and Denver, where officials report being contacted more than ten times as often by nonprofits as by businesses. Even so, nonprofit contacting in three other cities in the sustainability group – Seattle, Sacramento, and Milwaukee – is higher than in any of the comparison cities. This difference is statistically significant,

strongly suggesting that indeed, nonprofit organizations are more active and aggressive in their contacting behavior in the sustainable cities than in the other cities. The results for city councilors show the same patterns, albeit with very small numbers of respondents.

Table 4: Ratio of City Officials Contacts with Nonprofits to Businesses Over the Previous Year

Sustainable Cities	All Officials: Average Ratio of Nonprofit to Business Contacts	Total Number of Officials	City Councilors: Ratio of Nonprofit to Business Contacts	Total Number of City Councilors
Boston	10.5	3	30.0	1
Denver	10.6	7	12.2	6
Seattle	5.0	5	3.3	4
Kansas City	1.6	5	1.7	3
Milwaukee	4.0	5	6.0	3
Atlanta	4.9	4	5.4	3
Sacramento	5.2	4	6.2	3
Average/Total	6.1	33	7.6	23
Comparison Cities				
Memphis	3.6	3	1.3	2
Las Vegas	1.1	3	1.0	1
El Paso	0.6	7	1.0	3
Oklahoma City	4.1	6	3.9	3
Fort Worth	2.2	4	2.7	2
Charlotte	3.4	6	6.8	2
Average/Total	2.5	29	2.8	13
F / Significance	4.1 / .046		2.6 / .114	

Nonprofits and Support for Sustainability

While the contacting information applies broadly to the nonprofit and related sector, it does not show what kinds of nonprofits are doing the contacting or what the purpose of the contacting is. Certainly, most local nonprofit organizations would not be expected to advocate for, or even necessarily be supportive of local sustainability efforts. Especially given the fact

that most institutions of higher education and health providers, including hospitals and health maintenance organizations, are legally defined as nonprofit organizations, there could be a wide array of reasons why nonprofits contact local officials. Among the many ways that the questionnaire sought to get detailed information about the contacts, a series of questions asked respondents specifically to name the groups with which they had contact that promoted sustainability. Question 20 asked:

20. Are there any specific citizen, neighborhood, business, or nonprofit groups that have met with you over the last year that have sought to **promote** specific programs or policies consistent with livability, sustainability or sustainable economic development? If so, what were the names of the groups?

The verbatim responses to this question were recorded, and the analysis here uses these responses to examine the contents of the answer. A list of all the mentioned organizations is found in Appendix 2. Perhaps the most telling piece of information is that a substantial number of respondents did not name any nonprofit that actively promoted sustainability. The absence of any such organization – or at least the lack of respondents’ awareness of any organized interest advocating for the pursuit of sustainability – would certainly seem to make supportive policy makers less apt to take actions. In Table 5, I examine whether respondents in the sustainable cities were more likely to report at least one supportive group than respondents in the comparison cities. Obviously, the fact that respondents did not mention a group does not mean that such a group does not exist. Indeed, in Boston, where none of the respondents report being aware of a group supportive of sustainability, the single largest city-based philanthropic organization, the Boston Foundation, has been advocating for sustainability for at least the last five years. What is important here is that, among the respondents, there is a total lack of awareness of this group’s efforts on sustainability.

Table 5: Respondents Identification of Nonprofit Groups Supportive of Sustainability

Sustainable Cities	Percent of Respondents Reporting at Least One Supportive Nonprofit	Total Number of Respondents
Boston	0.0	3
Denver	28.6	7
Seattle	100.0	5
Kansas City	60.0	5
Milwaukee	40.0	5
Atlanta	75.0	4
Sacramento	25.0	4
Average/Total	47.1	34
Comparison Cities		
Memphis	66.7	3
Las Vegas	33.3	3
El Paso	14.3	7
Oklahoma City	0.0	6
Fort Worth	25.0	4
Charlotte	14.3	7
Average/Total	20.0	30
F / Significance	5.4 / .023	

Here it is clear that respondents in the sustainable cities were much more likely to report knowing of at least one supportive group. In the sustainable cities group, nearly half of the respondents reported knowing of such a group. Yet in the comparison group, only 20 percent said they knew of such a group. Clearly, the nonprofit landscape in the sustainable cities seems to look different than that found in the comparison cities, where sustainability is not a high priority.

Although it was not possible to delve very deeply into what each of the mentioned organizations actually does and how it does it, the analysis here focuses on two specific characteristics of the named organizations. First, is the organization a purely local group, or is it

a state or national group? And second, is it a group whose mission is decidedly related to the environment or sustainability, or is the mission more broadly defined?

21. Are there specific citizen, neighborhood, business, or nonprofit groups that have met with you over the last year that have sought to **oppose** specific programs or policies that are consistent with livability, sustainability or sustainable economic development? If so, what were the names of the groups?

Appendix 1

Sample Questionnaire Used in the Pilot Study

Tufts University

“Governing in Cities” Project

Questionnaire for City Councilors

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. Please answer the questions below to the best of your ability to do so. We understand that some of these questions may be challenging, but all we ask is that you do the best you can. Your answers will be kept confidential and anonymous. As a token of our appreciation for your time in filling out this questionnaire, we would like to offer you a free copy of Kent Portney’s book *Taking Sustainable Cities Seriously* (MIT Press, 2003), and the chance to receive a free iPod Nano.

(Optional) Would you like to receive a free copy of *Taking Sustainable Cities Seriously* and to be eligible to win a free iPod Nano?

- Please send me a free copy of *Taking Sustainable Cities Seriously*
- Please enter me in the drawing for the free iPod Nano

If you checked either box above, please provide your name and mailing addresses, or simply return the included postcard.

Name _____
Address 1 _____
Address 2 _____
Address 3 _____
City and State _____
Zip Code _____

Email address _____
(for notification only)

First, we have a few questions about your personal background.

1. In what year were you first elected to the City Council? _____
 2. How many total years have you served, including prior terms of office, on City Council?
_____ years
 3. Have you ever held any other elective office in the City? If so, what was that office?
-

4. Have you ever held any other position in the City government? If so, what was that position?

5. Prior to becoming a public official in the City, what was your occupation?

6. If you did not mention this above, have you ever worked in the nonprofit sector? If so, what position did you hold and for what organization?

7. If you did not mention this above, have you ever worked in the private sector? If so, what position did you hold and for what company? _____

8. What is your highest level of education? _____

9. If you have a college degree, what was your undergraduate major? _____

10. If you have an advanced degree, in what subject is this degree? (If you have more than one, please list all degrees) _____

Now we would like to ask you a few questions about how you operate as a member of the City Council.

11. About how many times **over the last year** have you met with the City's business leaders?
_____ times

12. Thinking of **the last time** you met with any business leader, did you request the meeting or did the business leader request the meeting?

I requested the meeting _____ Business leader requested the meeting _____

13. What was the purpose of that meeting? _____

14. Thinking of all the meetings you have had with business leaders **over the last year**, what was the most important specific issue addressed and how was this issues resolved (or how was it addressed if it was not resolved)?

Most Important Issue

Outcome of Issue

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

15. About how many times **over the last year** did an ordinary resident of the City contact you or your office about some issue? _____ times

16. Thinking of **the last time** you were personally contacted by an ordinary resident of the City, what was the purpose of the contact?

17. Considering all the various kinds of citizen, neighborhood, and nonprofit groups that exist in the City, about how many times **over the last year** have you met with a representative from any of these groups? _____ times

18. Thinking of **the last time** you met with a representative from a citizen, neighborhood, or nonprofit group representative, what was the purpose of the meeting? _____

19. Thinking of all the times you have met with citizen, neighborhood, or nonprofit group representatives **over the last year**, what was the most important specific issue addressed and how was this issue resolved (or addressed if it was not resolved)?

Most Important Issue

Outcome of Issue

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

20. Are there any specific citizen, neighborhood, business, or nonprofit groups that have met with you over the last year that have sought to **promote** specific programs or policies consistent with livability, sustainability or sustainable economic development? If so, what were the names of the groups?

21. Are there specific citizen, neighborhood, business, or nonprofit groups that have met with you over the last year that have sought to **oppose** specific programs or policies that are consistent with livability, sustainability or sustainable economic development? If so, what were the names of the groups?

22. What is your personal assessment of the City's efforts to become more livable or sustainable? Do you think these efforts are a good idea, a bad idea, an idea that is too expensive, an idea that must be pursued even if it costs the City more money, etc? Please be candid and provide as much detail as you can.

23. Who, in your view, has been **most responsible** for the City's sustainability efforts? Please provide the names of as many people and organizations as you think appropriate.

24. What would you consider the single most difficult to accomplish aspect or component of the City's neighborhood or citywide planning initiatives? Why is it difficult to accomplish? (We are especially interested in knowing whether there is any political opposition to, or general lack of public support for, the difficult aspect).

Most Difficult aspect: _____

Why is this difficult? _____

25. What would you say is your predominant attitude **with respect to costs** of a specific proposal that arises out of the City’s Comprehensive Development Plan? Would you say you would **rarely favor such a proposal regardless of costs**, you would **favor a proposal only if it promises to reduce the City’s operating costs from the outset**, you would **favor the proposal only if it promises to reduce the City’s operating costs after some specified period of time**, or you would **favor the proposal even if it increases the city’s operating costs by a small amount as long as it promises to contribute to making the City more sustainable**?

Rarely favor such a proposal regardless of costs _____

Favor proposal only if it promises to reduce operating costs from the outset _____

Favor proposal only if it promises to reduce operating costs after some specified period of time (what period of time is required for your support?) _____

Favor the proposal even if it increases the city’s operating costs by a small amount as long as it promises to contribute to making the City more sustainable _____

Please use the space below if your answer to this question needs to be qualified or explained.

26. If a proposal came before City Council to **protect a significant amount of open space** from future development, what do you think your initial response would be? Would it be likely or unlikely that you would favor such a proposal?

Likely favor _____

Unlikely to favor _____

Depends on specific proposal _____

Please use the space below to qualify or explain the reasons for your response above.

Finally, we have a few questions concerning Economic Development policies and programs in the City over the last five years or so.

27. Overall, who would you say exercises the most control over Economic Development in the City? Would you say that it is largely the **city government** that controls Economic Development, the **private sector**, a true **partnership** between city government and the private sector, or **someone else**?

City government _____

Private Sector _____

True partnership _____

Someone else (please explain) _____

28. What is your assessment of the prevailing attitude toward Economic Development in the City today? Would you say that the attitude would **accept just about any kind of Economic Development** proposed by the business community as long as there was not significant public opposition, or would **accept Economic Development only under specific conditions**?

Accept just about any kind of proposed Economic Development _____

Accept proposed Economic Development only under specific conditions _____

Proposed economic development **MUST:** (Check any that are absolute requirements)

- be consistent with the City's Comprehensive Development Plan
- promise to generate significant new tax revenue for the City
- improve the quality of life for an identifiable segment of the City's population
- promise to improve the quality of life for the residents of the City as a whole
- be **cost-effective** for the City as a whole

(Please describe any other conditions under which Economic Development proposed by the business community would be considered acceptable)

29. Over the last five years or so, how involved has the **business community** been in formulation of the City's Economic Development policies and strategies? Would you say that the business community has been **highly involved** in the formulation of the City's Economic Development policies, the business community has **operated at arms length**, or has been **largely uninvolved**?

Highly involved _____ Arms-length involvement _____ Largely uninvolved _____

30. What is your **personal** political party affiliation or identification? Do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, a member of another political party, or an Independent?

Republican _____ Democrat _____ Independent _____ Other party (specify) _____

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.

Please place the questionnaire in the postpaid return envelop and drop in the mail.

Return address is: Professor Kent Portney
Department of Political Science
Tufts University
Medford, MA 02155

Appendix 2

Verbatim Responses to Question 20

Names of Organizations Promoting Sustainability

\$Groups Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Groups Supporting Sustainability(a)	Sierra Club	8	4.2%	12.5%
	Clean Air Coalition	1	.5%	1.6%
	Commonwealth housing group	1	.5%	1.6%
	Rocky Mountain climate org	1	.5%	1.6%
	green cities project Denver	1	.5%	1.6%
	ASPO-USA/ENVCO/Western Reserve Assoc	1	.5%	1.6%
	Various nhood block watch groups	1	.5%	1.6%
	parents against lead	1	.5%	1.6%
	Layton Blvd West neighbors	1	.5%	1.6%
	Greater KC LISC	1	.5%	1.6%
	Communities Creating Opportunity (CCO)	1	.5%	1.6%
	Realtors	1	.5%	1.6%
	landlords assoc	1	.5%	1.6%
	People for Puget Sound	3	1.6%	4.7%
	Futurewise	2	1.0%	3.1%
	Smokefree Denver	1	.5%	1.6%
	Sustainable Seattle	1	.5%	1.6%
	Washington League of Conservation Voters	1	.5%	1.6%
	Northwest Coalition	1	.5%	1.6%
	Chamber of Commerce	2	1.0%	3.1%
	Green Builders of America	1	.5%	1.6%
	EDC	1	.5%	1.6%
	Walk Sacramento	1	.5%	1.6%
	Environmental Council of Sacramento	1	.5%	1.6%
	Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partners	1	.5%	1.6%
	Buckhead Coalition	1	.5%	1.6%
	various religious organizations	1	.5%	1.6%
	Airport-Gateway Assoc	1	.5%	1.6%
	27 Business District Assoc	1	.5%	1.6%
	13 District Assoc	1	.5%	1.6%
	Economic Strategy Group (union reps)	1	.5%	1.6%
	Cherokee	1	.5%	1.6%
	Centro Salud Familiar la Fe	1	.5%	1.6%
	neighborhood associations	2	1.0%	3.1%
	Save the Mountain Coalition	1	.5%	1.6%
	Arlington Hgts neighborhood	1	.5%	1.6%
Lake Como Res Council	1	.5%	1.6%	
Streams and Valleys; Rails to Trails	2	1.0%	3.1%	
Green Guard	1	.5%	1.6%	
Art and Film District Assn in west downtown	1	.5%	1.6%	

ECOS	1	.5%	1.6%
KC Area Development Council	1	.5%	1.6%
Life Science Institute	1	.5%	1.6%
regional transit authority	1	.5%	1.6%
juvenile justice	1	.5%	1.6%
various organizations	2	1.0%	3.1%
LULAC	1	.5%	1.6%
Paso del Norte group	2	1.0%	3.1%
La Mujer Obrera	1	.5%	1.6%
Citizen Peak Oil concerns	1	.5%	1.6%
OKC Beautiful	1	.5%	1.6%
Greater OKC Chamber of Commerce	1	.5%	1.6%
Transportation Choices Coalition	1	.5%	1.6%
Waterfront for All	1	.5%	1.6%
Office of Sustainability	1	.5%	1.6%
Catawba Land Conservancy	1	.5%	1.6%
AIA	4	2.1%	6.3%
Outdoor Nevada	1	.5%	1.6%
Lied Institute for Real Estate Studies	1	.5%	1.6%
DC environmental coalition	1	.5%	1.6%
anti-tobacco alliance	1	.5%	1.6%
McMad Against McDonalds	1	.5%	1.6%
Gathering Place women's shelter	1	.5%	1.6%
Atlanta Development Authority	1	.5%	1.6%
Central Atlanta Progress	1	.5%	1.6%
Public Service Board	1	.5%	1.6%
Alchemists	1	.5%	1.6%
Sacramento Area Council of Governments	1	.5%	1.6%
Cooper-Young community dev corp	2	1.0%	3.1%
Memphis Area Chamber of Commerce	2	1.0%	3.1%
Memphis Historic Neighbors	1	.5%	1.6%
Cooper-Young Business Assoc	1	.5%	1.6%
Atlanta Planning Advisory Board	1	.5%	1.6%
neighborhood planning unit	1	.5%	1.6%
Carolina Ecocrescent	1	.5%	1.6%
East Ballard Community Association	1	.5%	1.6%
Peoples' Waterfront Coalition	1	.5%	1.6%
Fenway Civic Association	1	.5%	1.6%
Center City Partners	1	.5%	1.6%
Greenville Homeowners Assoc	1	.5%	1.6%
Walmart	1	.5%	1.6%
Southeast Fort Worth Inc	2	1.0%	3.1%
Greater Fort Worth Black Chamber	1	.5%	1.6%
Near Southeast CDC	1	.5%	1.6%
No group mentioned	87	45.3%	135.9%
Total	192	100.0%	300.0%

