Municipal Sustainability Assessment and Roadmap (variable length, typically 2 months)

The Need

If your municipality is considering its next steps towards sustainability or has recently completed a long-term, broad based sustainability plan and is trying to figure out how to integrate sustainability into your operations, decision making and services, then the **Municipal Sustainability Assessment and Road Map** is right for you.

In particular, you:

- want to integrate sustainability into your governance systems and decision-making;
- want to align your community sustainability plan with your corporate strategy;
- want to build a strong culture of sustainability in your organization so that it is part of internal decision making and governance processes;
- want your municipal organization to foster a more integrated approach to governance and decision-making, breaking free from a tendency to think and operate in silos;
- want to build capacity within your municipal organization to address the challenges of the future; and
- want to be part of the global sustainability solution.

Description

A **Municipal Sustainability Assessment and Road Map** is designed to enhance the understanding of sustainability within your team. It consists of an internal scan to take stock of an organization's current initiatives and gauge "organizational readiness" for sustainability-driven change, as well as an external scan of stakeholder expectations. This information is leveraged in a workshop to co-create a road map with senior leaders that is tailored to your municipality's unique culture and current circumstances. A go/no-go decision with regards to the roadmap is made at this point.

In addition to working with our experienced advisors, you will also benefit from access to a growing network of municipal, community and corporate leaders who are all tackling the sustainability challenge.

Key Outcomes

By the end of the **Municipal Assessment and Sustainability Road Map** your municipal organization will have accomplished the following key outcomes:

- Identified **key internal factors** (e.g. governance and decision making, culture, knowledge management, etc.) relevant to the development and implementation of a sustainability road map and engagement plan.
- Identified **key external factors** (e.g. regulatory, best practices, etc) relevant to the development and implementation of a sustainability road map.
- Created or reviewed a draft **vision** for a sustainable future for your municipal organization - including strategic goals - integrated with your overall visions, objectives and core values (this draft vision is designed as an engagement tool and will be refined via subsequent internal stakeholder engagement as a way to build shared intention and increase awareness).
- Identified **strategies** to achieve the vision of sustainability integrated into the overall corporate strategies of your municipal government.
- Identified **early wins and early opportunities** to engage internal stakeholders to build momentum for sustainability.
- Create a **sustainable development "road map"** that outlines the next 12 to 18 months of your sustainability initiative outlining how to engage internal and external stakeholders in the development and implementation of the vision and strategy.
- Developed a **shared understanding and language** for sustainable development (using the Natural Step Framework)

Process

The Natural Step will work with staff to develop a suitable process to create a Sustainability Roadmap. The following tasks are recommended and can be modified to suit your municipal organization's specific circumstance:

1. **Organizational Review**
   a) **An internal scan,** will assess your municipal organization from a governance, organizational learning and sustainability perspective, including learning from lessons of successful change initiatives. This scan will be completed via the following steps:
   - **Review of strategic documents** - TNS will review key strategic documents to better understand the governance system of your municipal organization and compare it to best practices in other municipal organizations. Examples of documents may include those that outline your community vision, official plan, strategic plans, annual plans, council priorities, employee training, etc.
   - **Interviews with key staff-** TNS will interview members of the sustainability team (if applicable) and senior management to learn more about factors such as governance, knowledge management, organizational culture, etc. as a means to inform the creation of the road map.
   - **Internal survey to staff –** TNS will create and analyze a survey that will be sent to municipal staff to gauge impressions and understanding on the

topic of sustainability and best practices in governance, sustainability and change, based on the best practices report that can be found here: http://www.thenaturalstep.org/sites/all/files/Best%20Practices%20Study%20Saskatoon_July09.pdf.

- **Internal best practices** – With assistance from municipal staff, TNS will compile a list of internal best practices from a sustainability perspective. The purpose is to recognize and celebrate the work that has already taken place.

b) **An external scan**, will find relevant best practices at similar leading organizations as well as identify key stakeholders that may help and/or hinder your sustainability initiative.

- **Review of best practices –** TNS will conduct an on-line scan of sustainability related best practices at leading municipal organizations to draw relevant lessons and initiatives to inform your sustainability initiative.

- **Review of external opportunities and threats –** TNS will conduct a scan of external forces relevant to your municipal organization's sustainability initiatives, such as changing provincial and federal regulations, and other economic and social trends that may impact your path forward. The purpose of the external scan is to determine potential drivers and challenges that may impact and inform the development of the sustainability road map and the business rationale for transitioning towards sustainability.

c. **Recommendations on the Sustainable Development Road Map**. TNS will take the lessons from both the internal and external scans, as well as lessons from working with other organizations to draft a roadmap for your municipal organization. The road map will provide recommendations on how to successfully integrate sustainability into your organization and will be used as a key discussion piece at a planning and visioning workshop. The report will outline:

- Key success factors, commitments and guiding principles for your sustainability initiative.
- Recommendations on how to integrate sustainability across the organization and within your municipal government's sphere of influence, including:
  o Building shared intention and awareness of sustainability throughout the organization
  o Developing a corporate vision of sustainability and a baseline analysis of sustainability performance,
  o Identifying early wins/demonstration projects to create momentum for sustainability in your organization,

- o Engaging internal stakeholders to identify and prioritize innovation and actions to achieve the (corporate vision,
- o Collaborating with stakeholders on cross-cutting sustainability solutions,
- o Embedding sustainability performance measures into governance and decision making systems, and
- o Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of sustainability performance.

2. **Planning and visioning workshop.**
   Upon completion of the Organizational Review, TNS will facilitate a two-day planning and visioning workshop with your sustainability or senior leadership team. By the end of the workshop the participants will have:
   a) Shared and discussed the **key findings** of the internal and external scan.
   b) Created a draft (**corporate) vision** for a sustainable future for your municipal government and discussed how to integrate sustainable development with the overall vision, objectives and core values.
   c) Refined a **Sustainable Development Road Map** for your municipal government to engage internal and external stakeholders in the development and implementation of a strategy to achieve the vision.
   d) Developed a **shared understanding and language** for sustainable development using the Natural Step Framework.

3. **Sustainable Development (SD) Vision, Strategy and Road Map Document.**
   Upon completion of the workshop, TNS will take participants' input on the vision and the SD Roadmap and refine these with support from the sustainability team. This document will consist of:
   a) A vision statement integrated into the overall (corporate) vision and strategic goals that will be used to engage internal and external stakeholders, this statement should be considered a solid draft that can be refined. The statement will also be used to engage stakeholders in identifying early wins.
   b) SD strategies that are incorporated into overall (corporate) strategies.
   c) Demonstration projects ("early wins") for sustainability that can be implemented on the ground to build momentum.
   d) A SD Road Map that outlines the next 12 to 18 months of your sustainability initiative with projects for capacity building, communications, developing key performance indicators, possible external stakeholder engagement, and other topics relevant from a governance, organizational change and sustainability perspective.

Contact us for pricing and availability at info@naturalstep.ca.