

The Evolution of Sustainable Cities

Vertical and Horizontal Intergovernmental Relations



Prepared by: E. Rey Garcia, Master of Public Administration Candidate
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University of Texas – Pan American (UTPA) / University of Texas - Rio Grand Valley (UTRGV), Graduate School

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Downtown Houston, Texas, Metro Rail

What is Sustainability?

- ▶ Sustainability is a new value in public administration, pushing public managers and policymakers to think about the “short-run” and “long-run” consequences of human action on human and environmental welfare.
- ▶ Sustainability emphasizes the pursuit of economic, social, and environmental prosperity for both current and future generations.



Austin, Texas

Brief History: The Agenda 21 Report

Initiatives to advance sustainability at the local level grew in the wake of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992.

- ▶ Outlines strategies for governments to advance sustainable development.
- ▶ *Relies heavily on local governments.*
- ▶ *Lacks tracking methods on a national level.*



Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Why Sustainability?

- ▶ Monitor and reduce greenhouse gases.
- ▶ Promote resource recovery and recycling.
- ▶ Invest in public transportation systems.
- ▶ Modify land-use plans to be environmentally friendly.
- ▶ Train and educating the community on the importance of sustainability.
- ▶ Promote across jurisdictions, such as:
air, community, development, energy, transportation and waste resources.



Dallas, Texas

Vertical and Horizontal Relations

- ▶ To achieve sustainability, public managers must engage in both vertical and horizontal interactions with state and federal governments and neighboring communities in metropolitan areas.



Corpus Christi, Texas

Vertical Relations and the Challenges

A vertical government is one that relies on managers to command and control the workflow with clear roles and responsibilities. Challenges include:

- ▶ Coordination problems due to limited or non-exclusive authority.
- ▶ Overlapping authority of multiple layers of government.
- ▶ Local capacity or the lack of interest among policymakers or the perceived expense of sustainability programs.



Houston, Texas

Horizontal Relations and the Challenges

A horizontal government promotes teamwork and cross-functional or process-oriented, bringing interlocal and intrametropolitan cooperation on policy issues, formal and informal agreements, and regular communications between public managers. Challenges include:

- ▶ Planning processes which provide opportunities to debate and discuss future investments.
- ▶ Identifying the boundaries of the metropolitan area that may not match the boundaries of the ecological and social problems.
- ▶ Coordinating with the complex array of actors and stakeholders.



San Antonio, Texas

El Paso, Texas

A Sustainable City



The “Livable City Sustainability Plan” is the result of a collaborative City-wide effort to define an integrated, strategic framework for sustainability.

- Build a *strategic vision* for sustainability and capture it in the city’s statement. *“In El Paso, we balance what we have, what we use and what we want for today and tomorrow.”*
- Include *sustainability* in mission statement: *“By 2014, El Paso will be a model of sustainability and smart growth by building on its roots as an international hub, promoting sustainable enterprises and wisely using natural resources.”*
- Apply the *three City-wide key issues* to make vision and mission a reality.

El Paso, Texas

A Sustainable City



Three City-Wide Key Issues

- 1) Stakeholder Engagement & Education: Educate and engage the community and government employees.
- 2) Triple Bottom Line (TBL): Processes and procedures must employ a triple bottom line approach – *economic, environmental, and social*. (Fig. 1).
- 3) Leadership and Workforce: City leadership and the workforce must have the knowledge and skills necessary to support sustainability.

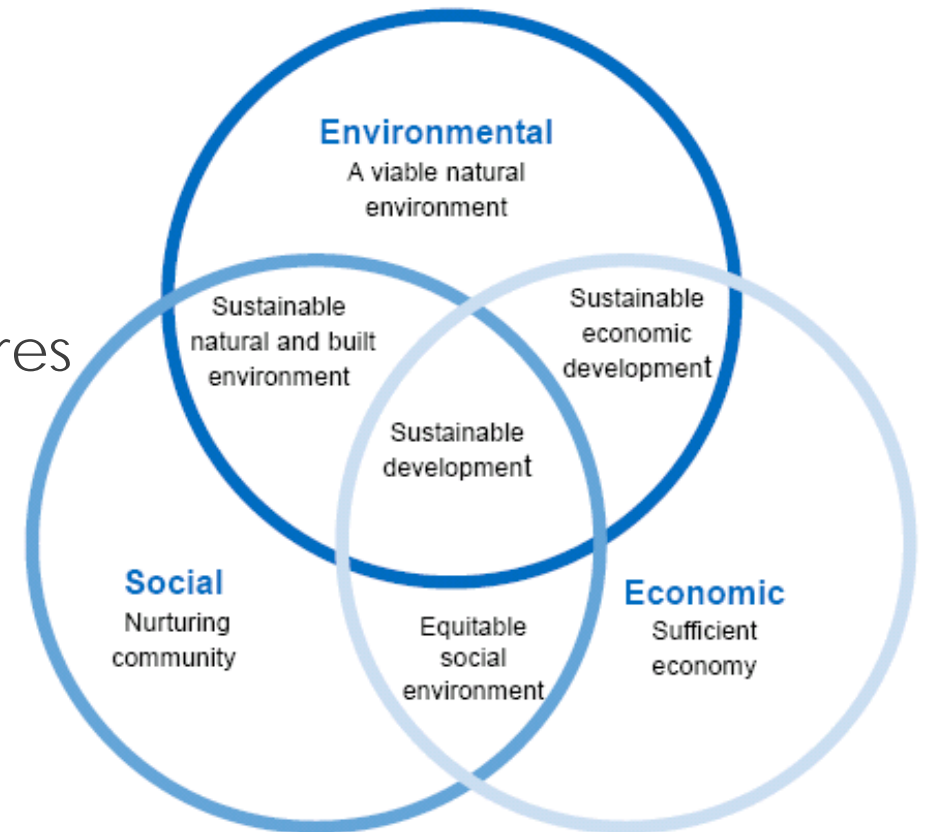


Fig. 1: Triple Bottom Line (TBL)

Conclusion

- The vertical relationships that shape the local pursuit of sustainable development may become more important if the national governments expand regulations, increase intergovernmental aid for sustainability programs, or become more engaged in supranational efforts or agreements on climate change.
- The horizontal relationships may work best for public administrators through coordination with local private and nonprofit actors, which help make significant contributions to the development of more sustainable cities.
- Both vertical and horizontal relations are essential for a city to be sustainable.
- A sustainable city requires that public managers consider the long-term environmental, financial and human impacts of all their decisions. (Fig. 2).

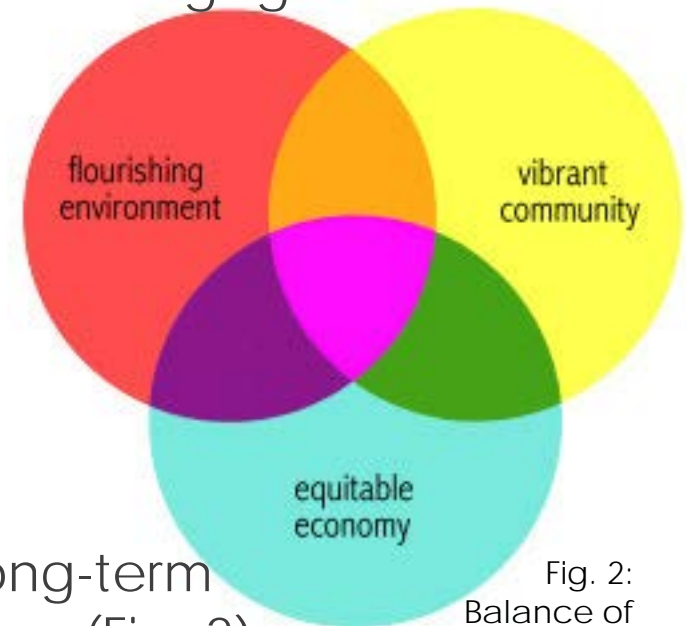


Fig. 2:
Balance of
Sustainability

Resources

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