Environmental Indicators – Guiding Principles

The Three E's (streamlining the "triple bottom line" theory)

Sustainable economic development is the ability to make development choices which respect the relationship between the three "E's"-economy, ecology, and equity:

- Economy - Economic activity should serve the common good, be self-renewing, build local assets and self-reliance, and emphasizes quality and profits stay within the community rather than quantity and growth.
- Ecology - Humans are part of nature, nature has limits, and communities are responsible for protecting and building natural assets.
- Equity - The opportunity for full participation in all activities, benefits, and decision-making of a society.

Maximizing a business' achievements and on-going improvements to the 3-E's should be measured by assessments based on indicators. Measurements would signal a move away from or toward habits of consuming faster than resources are renewed, producing excess waste that natural systems cannot process, and relying upon distant sources for basic needs. Regularly scheduled assessments can demonstrate the ongoing accountability and optimization of the business's environmental performance over time and add incentives for additional improvements.

Indicators

Indicators must be flexible and based on best management practices. Each business should establish its own baseline, establish goals and measure and report significant improvements over time.

1. Location - Maintaining a Sustainable Site
2. Green Building Construction and/or renovation
3. Water Efficiency
4. Energy
5. Atmosphere/ Outdoor Air Quality
6. Business Inputs/Outputs - Materials & Resources
7. Solid Waste, Reuse and Recycling
8. Indoor Air Quality
9. Employee Sustainability Education and Support

Location - Maintaining a Sustainable Site

- Within walking distance (1/4 mile) or biking (2 Miles) distance from key transit services
- Located on in-fill or brownfield sites or in existing buildings (historical buildings restored)
- Ration of built space to natural space
- Pedestrian-friendly access

Green Building Construction and/or renovation

- LEED Bronze standard or better
- Total Percentage reduction or elimination of hazardous building materials (PVC, adhesives, finishes, etc)
- Building material waste generated from new, rehab and remodel construction activity does not exceed X% (total weight) for commercial/industrial and residential
- Amount of local/regional materials used for facility construction/operation
- Amount of recycled/reclaimed/remanufactured materials used for facility construction/operation

Water Efficiency

Energy (Intent – reduce energy use, improve energy efficiency and use renewable energy resources)

- Conducts initial energy audit to establish baseline
- Percentage alternative energy (Non-carbon or hydro based)
- Calculate direct energy consumption footprint (e.g. energy used by occupants and processes)
- Calculate indirect energy consumption footprint (e.g. energy used for transportation)
- Percentage of equipment that is energy-star rated.

Atmosphere/ Outdoor Air Quality

Business Inputs/Outputs - Materials & Resources (Intent - Increase the ability of the product to meet the carrying capacity of the existing resources by not consuming resources faster than they can be restored.)

- Purchase of local or regional resources for production whenever feasible
- Provide end-of-life take-back policies for products

- Establish and maintain a toxics material source reduction program to reduce the amount of toxics brought onsite and used in the production process
- Reduce or eliminate toxic materials embedded in products
- If applicable meet or exceed Best Management Practice Standards for this industry
- Do business with suppliers that adhere to the same practices standards

Solid Waste, Reuse and Recycling (Intent – Reduce waste sent to landfill)

- Conducts initial waste audit to establish baseline (tons/volume of waste/recycling per year)
- Determine amount of glass, paper, cardboard, plastic, metal in waste stream and percentage of diversion
- Identify opportunities to increase diversion and create written plan with goals.
- Provide easily accessible recycling area with capacity; clear signage
- "No Can Stands Alone:" Provide recycling container next to every waste receptacle
- Provide written and verbal guidelines and educate employees
- Employee Conservation committee
- Create Waste reduction policy to reduce waste through purchasing strategies, collection and employee education.

Indoor Air Quality (Intent – Reduce indoor air quality impacts of the materials for use in operation, maintenance and employee activities)

- Reduce nitrogen oxide levels (NOx) and VOC's and air toxics
- Purchase Green Seal products of products that comply with California Code of Regulations for maximum allowable VOC levels. Goal = Reduce air quality and health impacts of cleaning products, disposable janitorial products and disinfectants by implementing healthy and sustainable purchasing policies
- Develop and maintain an integrated pest management policy that has no or low environmental impacts
- Prevent smoking in building. Locate designated smoking areas at least 25 feet away from entries, outdoor air intakes and operable windows.
- Use entryway systems (grills, mats, grates, etc) to reduce amount of dirt, dust, pollen and other particles entering the building at all entryways and develop strategies to maintain those entryway systems as well as exterior walkways.

Employee Sustainability Education and Support

- Educate and involve employees in sustainability practices
- Provide incentives to maintain high sustainability practices by ease, opportunity and tracking of employee contributions