

Recognizing Agenda 21 in Your Community



Across America, state and local officials are passing bills and issuing resolutions to protect their citizen's from the property eroding policies of Agenda 21. Because most people do not recognize Agenda 21 in action, many property owners remain at risk.



This document explains Agenda 21 and describes how it enters communities:

- I. Q&A: Understanding Agenda 21 and Sustainable Development
- II. How to Identify Agenda 21 and Sustainable Development in Planning, Legislation and Regulations
- III. Steps to Avoid Agenda 21/Sustainable Development in Your Community

A brief history of Agenda 21:

Agenda 21 is a United Nation's program based in part on their 1976 "Vancouver Plan of Action."

The Vancouver Plan established that private ownership of property was "socially unjust," and represented a danger to the planet. It proposed returning private land to government control.

In 1987, the UN's Brundtland Commission released a report, which included the Vancouver Plan's recommendations. It also defined the term "sustainable development" (SD) as "*development that meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*" The UN set the definitions for current and future needs.

According to the report, the only way to protect the earth for the future is to expand government control over private property, manage man's interactions with the environment, and redistribute personal and global wealth. *These actions, taken together, are sustainable development.* According to the UN, SD will result in humankind's developing in ways that protect the earth for future generations.

The UN introduced these ideas to the world at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit in the form of a global plan of action called "Agenda 21." The plan was voluntary and non-binding, but only *until* a member State approved it and began implementation.

The U.S. approved the plan, and the implementation of Agenda 21 via Executive Order 12852 issued in 1993. This EO formed the President's Council on Sustainable Development (PCSD) for the sole purpose of bringing Agenda 21 to the U.S.. Authors of Agenda 21 served on the PCSD committees along with federal agency employees. Together, they wrote regulations U.S. citizens *must* obey. These rules gradually return private land to the government and implement all other items in the Agenda 21 plan. One example of these regulations can be found in the Federal Register Vol. 63, No. 163/ Monday, August 24, 1998/ Notices. Look for EPA "Sustainable Challenge Grant Program."

In 1999, the PCSD disbanded after embedding Agenda 21's principles in all federal agencies. Today these principles continue to grow through regulations and are further inserted in communities through a variety of avenues, including stipulations attached to federal grants.

(Note If you are not familiar with Agenda 21, please watch the brief video titled, "Agenda 21 for Public Officials." You can find it at www.sustainablefreedomlab.org/susdev/)*

I. Q&A: Understanding Agenda 21 and Sustainable Development



Why is it hard to recognize Agenda 21/sustainable development in my community?

Regulators, planners and policymakers rarely use the words "Agenda 21" in their work. Instead, they use familiar terms like livability, Smart Growth, sustainable communities and healthy cities. (See section III for a full description of terms.)



How do I know Agenda 21 even exists in the U.S.?

There are plenty of references to implementing Agenda 21 in the Federal Register, UN documents, U.S. progress reports to the United Nations and internal federal agency documents. (See "A brief history of Agenda 21" in box on the previous page.)

What does Agenda 21 have to do with sustainable development?

The terms are synonymous. The term sustainable development has a specific definition established by the UN's 1987 Brundtland Report and later used in Agenda 21 and, under executive order, adopted by our own federal agencies. It defines sustainable development as "*Development that meets the need of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*" (See: "Our Common Future," - Brundtland Report, C. 2 "Towards Sustainable Development")

What is wrong with this definition of sustainable development?

It has two serious flaws.

1. The Brundtland Report proposes massive wealth and property transfers as the solution to reducing poverty and environmental degradation.
2. Since the authors did not know the specific needs of *future* generations, their solution was to exercise broad control *today* of all the economy to create social equity and protect the environment for the future. (See: Brundtland Report, C. 2 "Towards Sustainable Development")

How do I know the UN's sustainable development is the same one in our community?

Nations, such as the U.S., who agreed to Agenda 21, also agreed to follow the UN's definition of sustainable development and work to assure its implementation. Its principles are found in federal regulations, grant stipulations, most planner-led community planning objectives, community visioning and consensus building sessions; the American Planning Association's Legislative Guidebook, 2nd edition; and is endorsed by major associations such as the Leagues of Municipalities, US Conference of Mayors, National Governor's Association, Regional Councils and more.

In addition, the government's "Partnership for Sustainable Communities" adheres to the Brundtland Commission's definition; and the EPA, in January 2012, agreed to change their decision making process to incorporate "sustainable development as defined in the [UN's] 1987 Brundtland Commission's Report."

I thought sustainable development was a good idea for our community.

Most people do not realize that sustainable development *requires* the widespread implementation of the Brundtland Report's transfer-of-wealth conclusions. In the U.S., the conclusions are enforced through federal agency regulations operating under executive orders, and presented to planners, officials and the public in terms of social fairness and environmental sustainability.

The term sustainable development has become so widely used we automatically assume it is a good idea.

How does Agenda 21 or sustainable development get into my community?

Grant money:

- Grants issued in conjunction with government 'sustainability initiatives' contain stipulations or implementation practices that are the primary doorway for Agenda 21/sustainable development to enter your community. These stipulations often require no growth boundaries, income integration through low-income housing demands, reduced vehicle usage, healthy cities, livability principles and other forms of social engineering.
- Other grants issued by non-profit groups such as the Packard, Pew or Carnegie Foundations, frequently promote Agenda 21. Often this happens when HUD or some other federal agency funds the foundation with the money they in turn offer as a sustainability-related grant.

Non-governmental organizations:

- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) including ICLEI, the Nature Conservancy, American Farmland Trust and the American Planning Association have close ties to HUD-EPA-DOT sustainability initiatives and promote Agenda 21 through their regional and community work, conservation easements and funding.

Federal agencies:

- Federal agency Acts including the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act and Endangered Species Act have so expanded, that individual's rights are losing way to unfounded and often exaggerated endangerment findings. The solutions to their findings invariably require fines, taxes, property rights' infringements or the outright transfer of private lands to the government.
- Preservation programs, National Parks, Historic Places and Byways, Heritage Sites and Legacy Forest programs have exceeded prudent land and species' protection and are now confiscating massive quantities of the U.S. land mass in alignment with Agenda 21 principles.

The planning process:

- *Planners' surveys* - may contain unfair questions that do not express all of resident's options
- *Consensus meetings* - may be conducted in ways that elicit responses that support the planner's goals rather than genuine community desires
- *Visioning sessions* - may be over-conducted to the point that the vision belongs to the facilitator and only appears to be that of the community.
- *Stakeholder meetings* - can produce misleading results when the stakeholders do not represent the average community member. Frequently the stakeholders have a financial or ideological interest in implementing the plan.
- *Zoning regulations* - originating with the American Planning Association and others, often contain language that establishes the legal framework for Agenda 21. This is because HUD, various federal agencies and firms such as Siemens funded the cost of the APA's *Growing Smart Legislative Guidebook, 2nd ed.* These supporters *all* have a stake in Agenda 21 implementation.
- *Conservation easements* - often contain ill-defined clauses that severely restrict property owners' rights, reduce property values and favor the land trust for future contract changes.

Regionalism:

- Regional councils replace much of the local officials' authority.
- As the regional council matures, local rule diminishes, leaving citizens with more distant and reduced representation.
- Once a region is formed, the ability to oppose sustainable development is limited.

- Generally, when the regional council accepts grant monies, all tethered communities are bound by the grant stipulations.
- Regional planning often includes tax base sharing which promotes wealth transfer by forcing community members to pay for services in other locations.
- Regional planning often includes "no growth boundaries" that force housing into urban and inner ring suburban areas. This reduces homebuyers' choices and artificially inflates the value of some properties, while reducing it for others.

How can this happen in America?

Governments and agencies consume more and more land by claiming it is for, "people, the economy and the environment." The universally friendly terminology disarms most opposition. In fact, Agenda 21/sustainable development implements a misguided program harmful to all three.

II. How to Identify Agenda 21 and Sustainable Development in Planning, Legislation and Regulations



On the next page is a partial list of terms used in planning proposals, federal regulations or state and local legislation that can lead to the implementation of Agenda 21 and eventual loss of individual property rights. Do not be surprised if you have seen these before. As you will learn from studying Agenda 21/sustainable development, its policies are now embedded in virtually every federal agency and planning organization in the nation.



***Important notes:**

1. To many of us, the terms on the next page sound innocent. Yet, most refer to the government's broad range of policies designed to protect the planet by converting private property into public lands, promoting economic integration through forced low-income housing and redistributing personal wealth through schemes such as "tax base sharing." Other terms are friendly-sounding marketing jargon and not at all representative of the actual outcomes. Words like 'sustainable,' 'smart growth' and 'social justice' could mean virtually anything. Unfortunately, nearly all lead to public policy that infringes on property rights.
2. Often the planners or even public officials promoting plans that implement Agenda 21 are not aware of the connection between their proposal and the UN's action plan.
3. When planning for your community, it is important that your program:
 - ...is completely managed at the local level. It should *not be controlled* by planners, regional councils, non-governmental organizations, non-profit foundations, trusts, federal and state agencies or any other top-down entity.
 - ...assures that community members have a full understanding of how their plan will affect their property rights now and in the long term.
 - ...involves a majority of community members in decision-making, not just a small sampling.
 - ...enables residents to opt out or in to programs as a means of protecting their individual property rights.
 - **...Avoids grant money.**

Agenda 21/Sustainable Development Terms

Look for these in regulations, legislation and planner's proposals.

Sustainable communities' strategies
Smart communities
Livability principles
Equitable housing
Economic integration
Healthy cities
Complete streets
Walkable communities
Environmental justice
Social equity
Health fairness
Conservation easements
Buffer zones
Food miles travelled (FMT)
Urbanism
Regional councils
Advisory capacity
Urban forests
Congestion mitigation
Global sustainable development
Mixed use
Smart growth
Visioning
Runoff
Open spaces
Endangered species
Comprehensive planning
...and many more

Historic preservation
Smart meters
More transportation choices
Economic competitiveness
EJ 2014
Leverage federal investments
Road diets
Environmentally sustainable
Social justice
Economic fairness
Grant monies
Trading of development rights
Vehicle miles travelled (VMT)
No growth zones
Resilience initiatives
Steering groups
Heritage area
Tax base sharing
Urban blight
Urban sustainability
Urban sprawl
Consensus
Historic byways
Ephemeral streams
Habitats
Urban growth boundaries
Regional planning

III. Steps to Avoid Agenda 21/Sustainable Development in Your Community



Citizens and public officials can stop sustainable development by working together. Agenda 21 is non-political. We too must forget party lines. Here are some steps you can take.



"If there is a clock in the deal, walk away."

Planner's survey results, comments and studies often fail to hold up under close inspection. Therefore, plan promoters frequently market a crisis as the need for immediate action, before real scrutiny can take place. Anything from "water pollution," "overcrowding," and "highway congestion," to "fragmented natural habitats," "endangered species" and even "climate change" become convenient alarms requiring instant action. Often, there is little verifiable evidence for the extreme claims.

In New York State, Governor Cuomo, under his Cleaner Greener NY initiative, is attempting to regionalize over 1,000,000 inhabitants of eight counties with a promise of much needed "green jobs." The likelihood of these jobs materializing is doubtful. Close study reveals the job predictions were made by the same group that forecast the non-existent "shovel ready jobs" under the original stimulus program. Under the NY plan, local officials are at risk of losing their authority to a regional consortium and community members their representation. In spite of the high stakes, the Governor is attempting to complete the plan process that would normally take years, in a matter of a few months. His excuse for the rush is, "We need to act now." Actually, there is little reason to "act now" other than that the more the plan is studied, the more the inconsistencies, lost local authority and doubtful outcomes become apparent.

Things you can do:

- Review and recognize plans that may harm individual rights. Join other community members and officials to reject planners and plans that seek to regionalize, urbanize or "protect" society and the community in ways that infringe on property rights and personal choices.
- Do your own community planning and keep planners' input to a necessary minimum.
- Avoid grant money. There is no such thing as "something for nothing." It is better to raise your own money in your own community.
- If accepting a grant, read, study and understand all of the implications of taking monies from governments, trusts or non-profit organizations. If you see the words, 'livable' or 'sustainable,' or any of the previously listed terms in the proposal, refuse the money.
- Think twice before accepting money from non-profit foundations. Groups such as the Packard and Carnegie Foundations often receive their money from HUD and other federal agencies, therefore binding you to the same stipulations as if you had accepted the grant directly from the government.
- Avoid HUD's micro-grants. These are small \$7000 to \$10,000 grants that are often issued through non-governmental organizations. Micro-grants are the "foot in the door" to create

regions and local dependence on even larger grants that contain Agenda 21- based social engineering and lifestyle stipulations.

- Public officials and citizens need to work together to understand conservation easements. The losses they create are often delayed and not readily evident. Thoroughly read all documents relating to conservations easements and hire a personal attorney before entering into any agreement that trades off development rights to your property. Once you lose development rights, you have essentially lost control of your property, no matter what the trust or the government proclaims. (For more information see: The Hazards of Conservation Easements at <http://sustainablefreedomlab.org/files/files/The%20Hazards%20of%20Conservation%20Easements%20Rev.1.4.pdf>)
- Avoid contact with federal programs such as HUD's eCon Planning or the HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities.
- Recognize that Agenda 21/sustainable development is not political. Democrats *and* Republicans have lost property values, and local officials of both parties have already lost much of their authority. (Examples are officials in NJ under the Highlands Act and in Westchester County, NY under HUD's minority relocation program).
- Do not accept any planners into your community who refuse to sign and abide by the Planners' Resolution to Protect Property Rights. (Found on the Sustainable Freedom Lab website.)
- Avoid engaging in so-called regional programs that bind several communities into a larger region for planning purposes. Regions are often formed from old Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's) whose work originally involved transportation. Today, these MPOs have expanded to include all forms of planning and zoning practices such as tax base sharing, sustainable initiatives and no-growth boundaries. While they sound innocent on the surface, in practice they diminish local rule, redirect local tax dollars and force centralized, top down planning. (Examples of regionalism are Cleaner, Greener New York, Together New Jersey and the Tennessee 16 County Plan.)
- Inform your neighbors and have them participate in community planning and all political activities.
- Search "Agenda 21, sustainable development, property rights" and learn more. Go to www.sustainablefreedomlab.org for tools and information.
- Citizens and local officials must get to know each other and work together.

For more information go to: www.sustainablefreedomlab.org