

CITY OF KENT ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE/MISSION

The City of Kent Environmental Commission is concerned with environmental aspects of the community which affect the character of the community and the quality of life of its citizens. Inherent in its charge is attention to the balance of elements - energy, physical resources, and human activities - that influence the degree to which a community can sustain its social, economic, and physical environment and enhance its general well-being.

The sustainability of a community represents its capacity to control the influence of various components so that a balance is achieved which minimizes the resources necessary to sustain the community and reduces the detrimental impact of its wastes and other negative effects while maintaining the attributes of the community that constitute its quality of life. The objectives to be pursued in achieving sustainability must include equity among its citizens, an understanding of the environmental consequences of policies, and a recognition that the activities of the community are influenced by and influence in turn activities that occur in surrounding environs.

A community's character is influenced by its air and water quality, nutrition, waste, space and land utilization, population density, culture, and aesthetics. The interconnection of these elements and how relationships are affected by public and private actions is the subject to which the Commission must address itself. The most reliable information available, careful interpretations, and reasonable conclusions will lead to the Commission's recommendations to be made to the Kent City Council and other boards and commissions.

The effective use of resources - natural, human, and technological - to meet today's community needs while ensuring that these resources will be available to meet future needs is essential. A sustainable community seeks improved public health for all its residents by limiting waste, preventing pollution, and maximizing conservation. Furthermore, a sustainable community promotes an improved quality of life through greater efficiency and development of local resources to support and enhance the local economy while encouraging social justice. Such a community is one that is far-seeing and flexible. In the final analysis the success of sustainable development will depend upon economic and social change that will reduce threats to the environment and the consequent need for costly environmental protection measures.

Achieving sustainability in a community must involve:

- o satisfaction of human needs such as economic, environmental, aesthetic, cultural, social, and spiritual;
- o maintenance of ecological integrity by humans as stewards over the earth, each with a degree of responsibility for the environment;
- o equity and justice for all citizens;
- o social and self-determination with respect for cultural variants.