

Sustainability Considerations for Neighborhoods.

RECOGNIZE CONTEMPORARY CONDITIONS.

Twenty-first century American society is starting from a dynamic base of societal norms. Human rights, geopolitics, technology and a changing climate are starting to make impressions on individual lives. Artificial intelligence is creeping into society.

However, many historic norms have remained fundamentally sound. Entrepreneurialism, the desire for safe and decent neighborhoods, personal mobility systems and the employment-based need for life-long learning persist.

Small cities and towns have opportunities and responsibilities to develop jobs with living wages, affordable housing and neighborhood policies and programs to help individuals and families thrive. A growing number of local governments are addressing neighborhood issues in public safety, natural systems, community sociability, education, employment, housing, transportation and infrastructure.

Neighborhood primacy still persists as an issue. Creating and sustaining programs that build and maintain great neighborhoods is the primary job of every local government. Safe and strong neighborhoods build family wealth and the city's tax base. A commitment to "complete neighborhoods" and neighborhoods with character is the place to start.

TRENDS.

Neighborhood Associations are the first line of defense, working with the host city, to retain and enhance the quality of neighborhoods in the face of changing household conditions.

- **People and families have separate "places of residence", "places of work" and "places of interest"**. Creating a sense of community in a residential neighborhood is tougher when the residents leave the neighborhood for work, leisure and pleasure.
- **Households and neighborhoods have fewer children.** Seventy percent of American households have no children under age eighteen living at home.
- **People spend their discretionary time at their "places of interest", or their "third" places.** Neighborhoods can become places to sleep, not live.
- **Child safety issues change everything.** Free play outdoors in the neighborhood has become dangerous in many areas and in many minds.
- **Autonomous vehicles [AVs]** are being tested in many urban areas. Their impact on neighborhoods is thought to be predictable but the roll-out of AVs seems ripe for unintended consequences.
- **Same day home deliveries** are convenient but introduce new and unfamiliar vehicles into the neighborhood. Real-time home deliveries mean more strangers in the neighborhood at all hours of the day and night compromising neighborhood safety.
- **High-Speed Broadband Internet Service and 5G** are being anxiously awaited by gamers, AV providers and many consumers. The health dangers of short-wave frequencies with antennae located near residences creates new challenges for local governments and utility providers; not to mention the potential health risks.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS.

Neighborhood Action. Neighborhoods are not the logical vehicle to address climate change or other global issues; however, neighborhood associations can take local action and support city, state and federal programs.

U.S. CO2 emission, 2018. U.S. energy-related CO2 emissions increased 2.7% (139 million metric tons) in 2018. That’s a big number.
<https://www.eia.gov/environment/emissions/>



Iowa City Climate Action Plan. Local action can work. Iowa City published their *Climate Action Plan* after extensive public discussion. The magic of the approach is that the high cost – low impact actions can be avoided while low cost – high impact actions, the “low hanging fruit”, quickly become apparent.
www.icgov.org/climateaction.

Low cost - high impact

- Increase energy efficiency in new buildings.
- Increase employee commuter options.
- Encourage a “plant rich” diet.

Low cost – moderate impact

- Increase bicycle and pedestrian transportation.

Moderate cost – high impact

- Embrace electric vehicles, alternative fuel vehicles and other emerging technologies.

OUR COMMON FUTURE.

The United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development met in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, aka The Rio Conference. Their purpose was to build a *global agenda for change* for the world community. Many nations participated, including the United States, to propose long-term environmental strategies. The resulting book, *Our Common Future*, presents a positive program for global salvation.

In 2019, a group of scientists convened to evaluate 30 years of activity since The Rio Conference. Their book, *What Next for Sustainable Development, Our Common Future at Thirty*, reflects attitudes ranging from optimistic to pessimistic, but with one firm conclusion. Despite the global treaty approach of Kyoto and Paris, the movement “has more recently come to include a wide array of more decentralized and soft governance initiatives such as local building codes...” [p265]

The report concludes: “Signs of unprecedented and accelerating climate change have led many scientists to give up the promise that economic growth, environmental protection, peace and global justice are indeed mutually reinforcing goals. The ‘compromise of liberal environmentalism’ that has dominated environmental thinking and practice since the Rio Conference in 1992 is now confronted with more critical environmental narratives and ideas.” [p262]
<https://www.worldcat.org/title/what-next-for-sustainable-development-our-common-future-at-thirty/oclc/1089576245>

What Next for Sustainable Development? Our Common Future at Thirty.

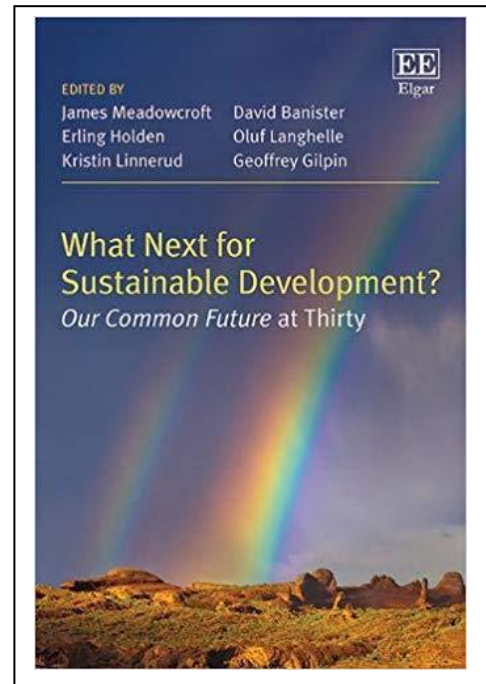
by [James Meadowcroft](#) (Author, Editor), [David Banister](#) (Editor), [Erling Holden](#) (Editor), [Oluf Langhelle](#) (Editor), [Kristin Linnerud](#) (Editor), 2019.

FROM AMAZON...

https://www.amazon.com/What-Next-Sustainable-Development-Common/dp/1788975219/ref=sr_1_4?hvadid=3527197741&hvbm=be&hvdev=c&hvqmt=e&keywords=our+common+future&qid=1570719826&sr=8-4

Sustainable development brings together a series of normative themes related to negotiating environmental limits, to addressing equity, needs and development, and to the process of transformation and transition. To mark the 30th Anniversary of *Our Common Future* (1987), that first placed sustainable development on the global agenda, the editors have brought together a group of international scholars from a range of social science backgrounds.

They have discussed these same themes looking backwards in terms of what has been achieved, assessing the current situation with respect to sustainable development, and looking forward to identify the key elements of the future agenda. This book presents a series of critical reflections on these enduring themes. The overriding concern is with the present and with the future as the editors seek to explore the question: What next for sustainable development?



FROM...

Global Environmental Change

[Volume 26](#), May 2014, Pages 130-139

Sustainable development: *Our Common Future* revisited

Author links open overlay pane | [ErlingHolden](#) ^a[KristinLinnerud](#) ^b[DavidBanister](#)^c

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0959378014000727>

No clear definition of sustainable development exists to guide politicians in solving challenges at the global or regional levels. Rather, the concept's use has increasingly reflected socially desirable attributes of solutions to local- and project-level problems, but these ignore the global challenges that the concept was meant to address.

THE ORIGINAL REPORT...

The Brundtland Report 'Our Common Future'.

(To view the report in full, [click here](#).)

We return to the original definition of sustainable development used in the Brundtland Report and suggest an assessment method to determine whether countries currently meet the threshold values of four equally important primary dimensions: safeguarding long-term ecological sustainability, satisfying basic needs, and promoting intragenerational and intergenerational equity. We also define indicators and threshold values for each of these dimensions; in addition, we show how 167 countries compare in meeting these threshold values. Currently, no country meets all four thresholds. Even so, we propose that, with the use of technology and behavioural changes, it will be possible to reach the threshold values by 2030.

Following the 1983 World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland, a 1987 report named '[Our Common Future](#)' was published, defining Sustainable Development as:

“development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

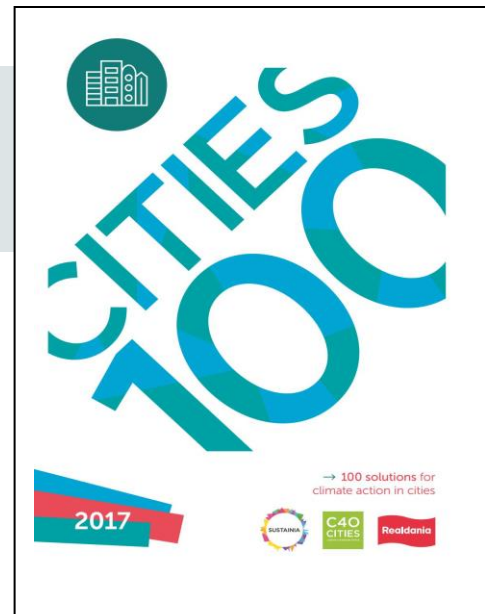
The report highlighted three fundamental components to sustainable development: environmental protection, economic growth and social equity. The concept of sustainable development focused attention on finding strategies to promote economic and social advancement in ways that avoid environmental degradation, over-exploitation or pollution, and sidelined less productive debates about whether to prioritize development or the environment.

CITIES 100 AND C40.



C40 is a data-driven organization of 90+ mega-cities founded in 2005 to address climate change issues. **CharacterTowns.org** appreciates C40 knowing that while its mission applies to very large cities, there are selected programs useful to small cities.

The 2019 edition of Cities100 provides recognition for 100 of the boldest projects from leading cities around the world working to address sustainability and build a greener future. The publication highlights solutions that are replicable and scalable, working to lower emissions and address climate change.



The Upcycle: Beyond Sustainability--Designing for Abundance.

William McDonough, Michael Braungart,

North Point Press, a Division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2013.

SUMMARY.

William McDonough is the best thinker and doer of our age. His work with Michael Braungart on *Cradle to Cradle* followed by this book offers an effective way to view the world and its ecosystem and economy. His creative combination of biology and technology yields practical concepts and products that don't make things better, they make things good.

His attack on "zero" as a goal is refreshing as he replaces "reduce, re-use and re-cycle" with "redesign, renew and regenerate". His intent for buildings, for example, is not to reduce their use of water but to generate water beyond what they use...the idea is not to make things less bad, but to make them re-generative.

The referenced YouTube captures his talk at Stanford University; essential viewing. His closing is the question: **What's Next?**

What's Next is a very specific inquiry about what will happen next to the product just produced? Will it be discarded? Is it too dangerous to recycle? Why not design the next stage of a product's life into its initial making. Planned obsolescence becomes meaningful by anticipating the afterlife of everything we make. Products enter a cycle that is constantly regenerated in a new form that makes the world better.

YouTube: In addition to the Published Review cited below, check out:

["The Upcycle" A Presentation by William ... - YouTube](#)

May 7, 2013 - Uploaded by Sonia Lee

Listen to global thought leader, designer, and sustainable growth pioneer William McDonough ...watch more at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5f9b1N-6jg>

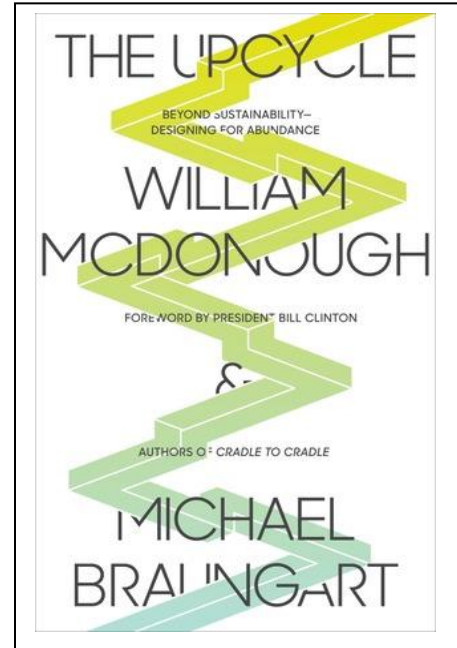
PUBLISHED REVIEW.

[The Upcycle: Beyond Sustainability—Designing for Abundance.](#)

McDonough, William

The Upcycle is every bit as ambitious as such classics as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*—but its mission is very different. McDonough and Braungart want to turn...hear more at:

www.mcdonough.com/speaking.../the-upcycle/



Sustainable Urbanism, Urban Design with Nature.

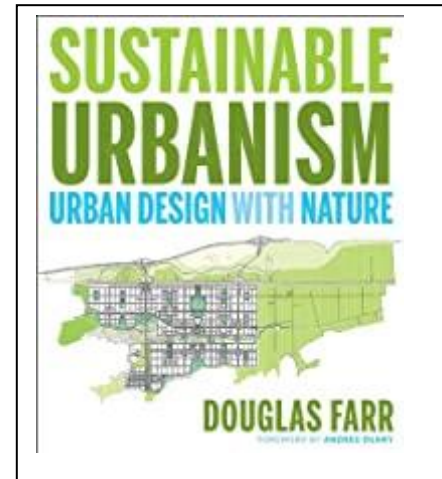
Douglas Farr, John Wiley & Sons, Inc, New Jersey, 2008.

OVERVIEW.

Mr. Farr has done a great service by linking sustainability and the New Urbanism. Of particular interest are the five attributes of neighborhoods: definition, compactness, completeness, connectedness and biophilia.

FROM AMAZON...

“Written by the chair of the LEED-Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) initiative, *Sustainable Urbanism: Urban Design with Nature* is both an urgent call to action and a comprehensive introduction to "sustainable urbanism"--the emerging and growing design reform movement that combines the creation and enhancement of walkable and diverse places with the need to build high-performance infrastructure and buildings.



“Providing a historic perspective on the standards and regulations that got us to where we are today in terms of urban lifestyle and attempts at reform, Douglas Farr makes a powerful case for sustainable urbanism, showing where we went wrong, and where we need to go. He then explains how to implement sustainable urbanism through leadership and communication in cities, communities, and neighborhoods. Essays written by Farr and others delve into such issues as:

- Increasing sustainability through density.
- Integrating transportation and land use.
- Creating sustainable neighborhoods, including housing, car-free areas, locally-owned stores, walkable neighborhoods, and universal accessibility.
- The health and environmental benefits of linking humans to nature, including walk-to open spaces, neighborhood stormwater systems and waste treatment, and food production.
- High performance buildings and district energy systems.

“Enriching the argument are in-depth case studies in sustainable urbanism, from BedZED in London, England and Newington in Sydney, Australia, to New Railroad Square in Santa Rosa, California and Dongtan, Shanghai, China. An epilogue looks to the future of sustainable urbanism over the next 200 years.

“At once solidly researched and passionately argued, *Sustainable Urbanism* is the ideal guidebook for urban designers, planners, and architects who are eager to make a positive impact on our--and our descendants'--buildings, cities, and lives.”

LINK: https://www.amazon.com/Sustainable-Urbanism-Urban-Design-Nature/dp/047177751X/ref=sr_1_1?hvadid=78065378103535&hvbmmt=be&hvdev=c&hvmmt=e&keywords=sustainable+urbanism+urban+design+with+nature&qid=1572979071&sr=8-1