



sustainable
kingston

DESIGNING OUR COMMUNITY'S FUTURE... TOGETHER

KNOWLEDGE SHARING REPORT

METHODOLOGY AND LESSONS LEARNED

JULY 14, 2010

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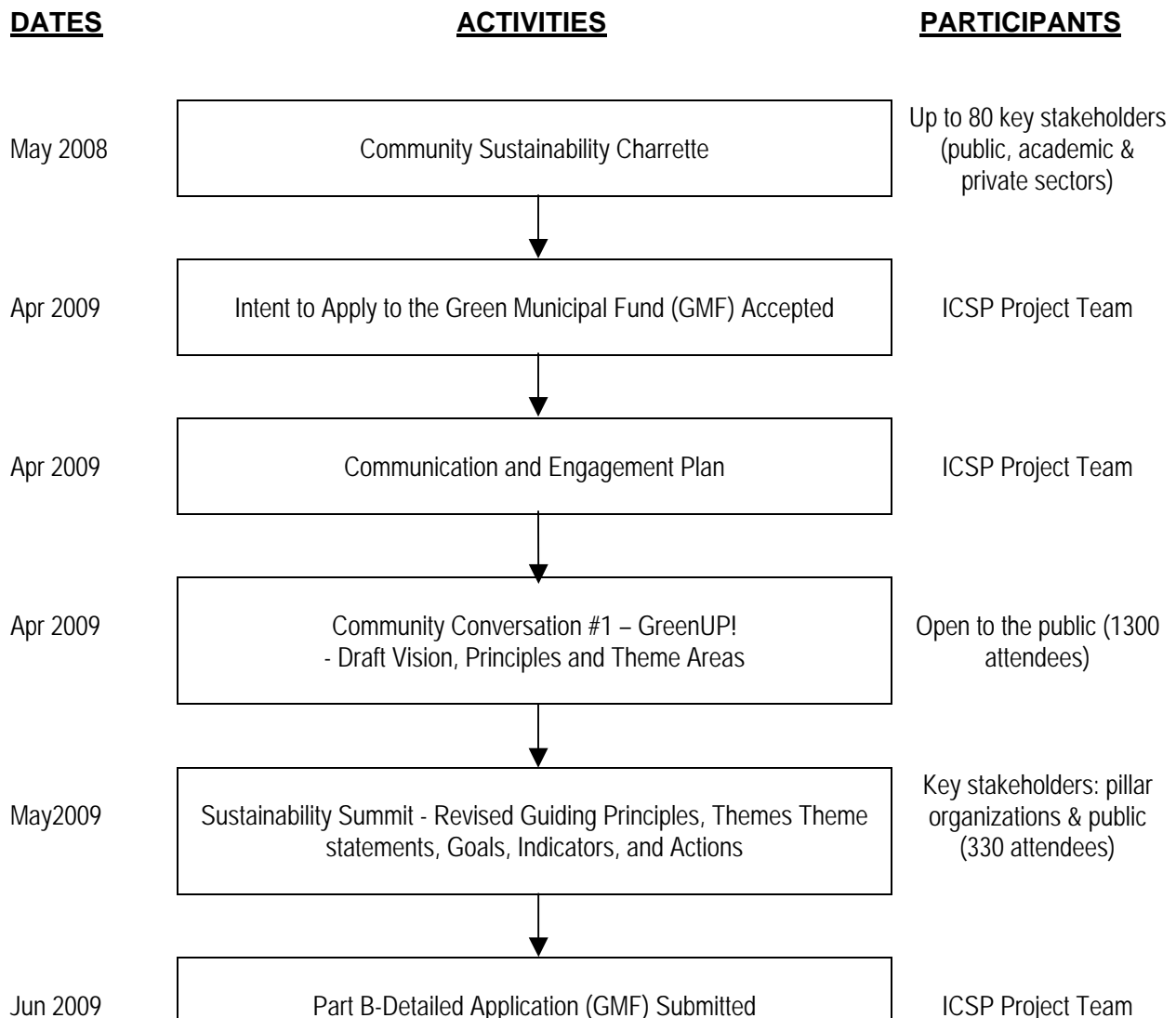
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INTRODUCTION

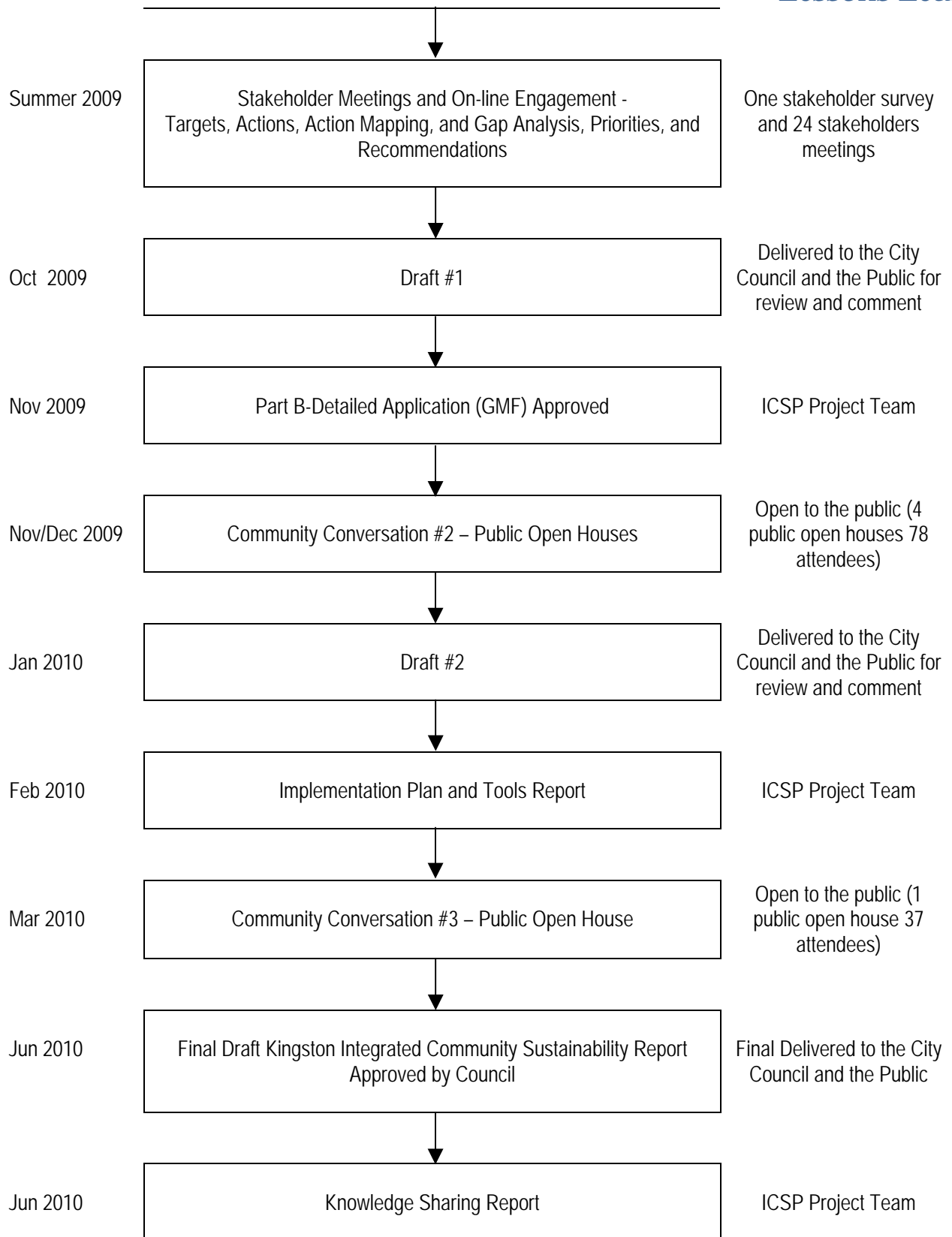
The City of Kingston committed to sharing of their experience with other municipalities through a Knowledge Sharing Report. The purpose of this Knowledge Sharing Report is to provide other municipalities with an outline of the methodology and process, lessons learned, tools, resources, and graphic design templates used during the development of *Sustainable Kingston*, the City of Kingston's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP). The Knowledge Sharing Report will be made available on the *Sustainable Kingston* website and linked to the City of Kingston's public website. Staff from the City of Kingston will be available for discussion with colleagues from other municipalities to answer questions about the process.

METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS

The process to develop *Sustainable Kingston* took place over a two year period. An overview of the *Sustainable Kingston* process is presented below.



Lessons Learned



Community Ownership

One of the strongest – and most challenging – elements of *Sustainable Kingston* is its commitment to community ownership. Typically, Integrated Community Sustainability Plans (ICSPs) and other similar large scale sustainability initiatives are “owned” by the municipality. Early on in the process, it was recognized that a community-built/community-owned plan would better inspire sustainability plans and actions within community organizations, institutions, businesses, associations and individuals as well as the municipality.

Kingston worked to build community ownership through creating a shared vision, collectively defining sustainability, hosting a Community Sustainability Charrette and a Community Sustainability Summit, naming the plan, seeking input on Draft #1 and Draft #2 of the plan through five community conversations, twenty four stakeholder meetings, and on-line surveys, and developing Community Partnerships and Citizen Commitments. Many of the lessons learned are related to the challenges and opportunities of community ownership. Lessons learned are discussed in the next section.

Adaptive Management Framework

Sustainable Kingston was developed using the Adaptive Management Framework (AMF). The City of Kingston considered several different frameworks to organize their ICSP including:

- The Natural Step
- The Melbourne Principles
- Agenda 21
- The Adaptive Management Framework

Kingston selected the Adaptive Management Framework (AMF) to develop the *Sustainable Kingston Plan* because it was most aligned with existing and planned City and Community work. The AMF offered a systematic process of alignment and feedback between the various levels of the framework was used to inform the development of *Sustainable Kingston*. Figure 1 shows the three parts of the *Sustainable Kingston* Framework in relation to the AMF. A detailed description of each layer follows.



Lessons Learned

VISION: This is the overall vision for sustainability. In Kingston, the vision is “*Kingston – Canada’s Most Sustainable City.*”

PILLARS: *Sustainable Kingston is organized using the following four pillars of sustainability:*

- Cultural vitality
- Economic health
- Environmental responsibility
- Social equity

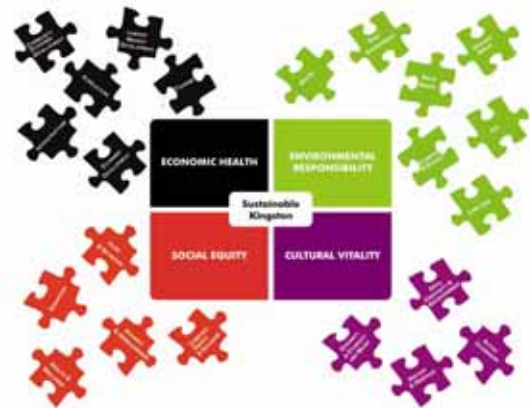
These pillars should be considered to be cross-linked and, wherever possible, interactive and interdependent rather than solitary silos. This illustrates the need for integration that is fundamental to the process of becoming more sustainable.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES: Guiding Principles describe the values that Kingston will hold in attempting to fulfill its vision.

THEMES: A theme is a specific focus area of *Sustainable Kingston* such as energy, economic development, or health and wellness. Themes are organized by the four pillars of sustainability – cultural, economic, environmental, and social sustainability. Twenty themes have been included in *Sustainable Kingston*.

THEME STATEMENTS: A theme statement describes what each theme would look like if the vision “*Kingston – Canada’s Most Sustainable City*” were achieved for each theme. Theme statements were finalized during the Sustainability Summit (May 25 to 29, 2009) and were verified through public and stakeholder review of the results. The theme statements will be revisited at the first annual *Sustainable Kingston* conference.



INDICATORS: Indicators are used to monitor and track performance. An indicator is a measure that reveals a trend or condition. The purpose of indicators in *Sustainable Kingston* is to illustrate high level and quantifiable performance in each theme. An indicator can show if Kingston is moving toward or away from desired goals. As such, indicators can provide overall direction to the community partners. Indicators included in *Sustainable Kingston* should be generated by an existing source, should be available and should be accessible on a regular basis. Some community partners are already using indicators for programs that are linked to the proposed themes. Indicators based on available and known data sources have been identified through consultation with Pillar Champions. Organizations, institutions, businesses, and citizens who are aware of existing data sources or reports that may help illustrate high level and quantifiable performance are encouraged to contribute to our indicator base using the *Sustainable Kingston* on-line tool.

GOALS: The goals presented in *Sustainable Kingston* are high level goals that are intended to provide strategic guidance to the community. They are not intended to be specific or measurable goals. The goals were drafted at the Community Sustainability Charrette (May 2008) and refined during the Sustainability Summit (May, 2009) through consultation with Pillar Champions and Pillar Organizations and will be refined during the review process. Community partners are invited to review the goals and contribute their own existing specific, measurable goals using the *Sustainable Kingston* on-line tool.

ACTIONS: Actions are any projects, programs, or policies that contribute to making Kingston a more sustainable community. Actions may be currently underway or planned.

Lessons Learned

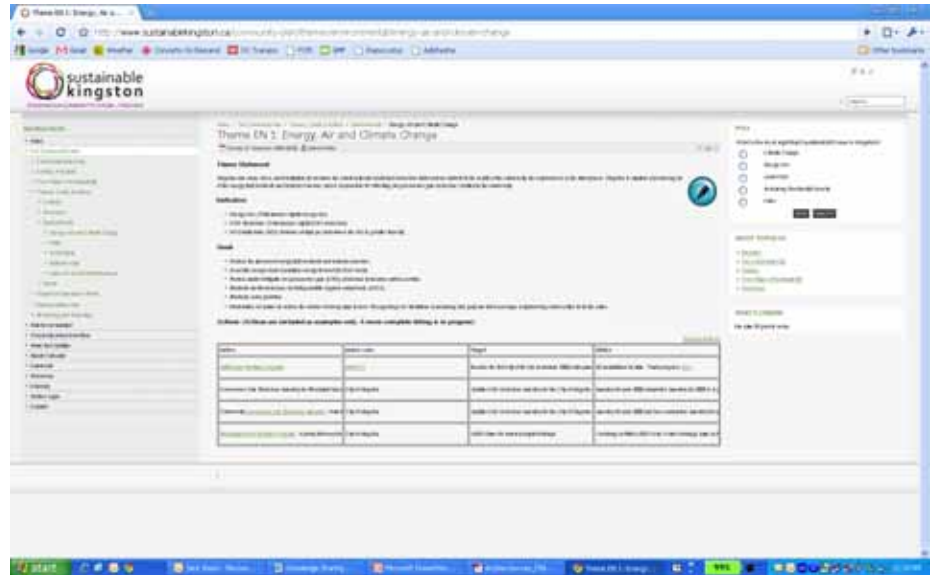
The Community Action Inventory on the *Sustainable Kingston* Website contains actions contributed by a diversity of Community Partners who understand how their work contributes to the sustainability of Kingston. The Website provides detailed information about actions, action leads, targets (if applicable), and status. Community partners are encouraged to review the Community Action Inventory and add their own specific, measurable actions. To share information about the actions you are taking, visit www.sustainablekingston.ca.

ACTION LEAD: An action lead is the Community Partner, individual, organization, or group of organizations responsible for implementing actions. Action leads may confer with other organizations willing to assist in the implementation and will develop and execute an implementation plan. Action leads are also responsible for reporting on progress against targets. Action Leads will be identified on the online tool designed to support *Sustainable Kingston*.

TARGET: Targets are set by Community Partners and ideally they are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound objectives.

STATUS: The status of an action provides an update to other Community Partners and members of the community about the implementation of the action.

IMPLEMENTATION: The intention of *Sustainable Kingston* is to educate, motivate and support partner organizations and citizens in establishing, implementing and achieving their goals in support of community sustainability in Kingston. Partner organizations can assist in implementing the *Plan* by using the pillars, theme statements and goals as guides in the development and establishment of their sustainability priorities. *Sustainable Kingston* does not set specific targets for goals within the various theme areas. Actions and targets are the responsibility and agency of participating Community Partners (including the City of Kingston) and individual citizens (through Citizen Commitments).



LESSONS LEARNED

Sustainable Kingston is based on the input of many people. Throughout the development of *Sustainable Kingston*, there were many lessons learned.

Lessons learned through the collaborative process of developing *Sustainable Kingston*, and in particular as a result of working with pillar champions, pillar organizations, include the following:

- 1. A shared understanding of sustainability and purpose is critical to avoid getting bogged down in process.** Strive to be outcome based rather than process oriented – working towards desired outcomes will help keep the process moving forward. Agree on terminology – everyone has a different way of saying things. People who share a common understanding of sustainability will share resources and contribute expertise because they understand that they need each other’s support to achieve community sustainability.
- 2. The Vision matters.** Your vision becomes a branding and marketing tool, useful for engagement, community pride, and investment attraction. Kingston’s vision is short, ambitious, and easy to remember. Developing a brand to embody the vision was easy to develop, but developing a marketing plan for something that was not in a final form was difficult. While a municipality may be familiar with marketing municipal services, different marketing techniques are necessary to market from a community owned perspective.
- 3. There are two types of principles.** Process principles support you in the development of the plan. Sustainability principles help you make decisions.
- 4. It is difficult to find balance between the number of Themes and Themes Statements.** Having a broad range of themes means that all individuals and organizations have a way of connecting with the plan. It also means that it is difficult to prioritize. We expect that the plan will evolve over time to reflect community priorities.
- 5. Decide what the role of the municipality will be in implementing the ICSP.** This includes governance, resources, and accountability. If the municipality is striving for community ownership, project teams must take the time necessary to build relationships with partners and volunteers, consider questions, concerns, and input from the community, and create opportunities for partners and volunteer to contribute (input, ideas, and resources). If the municipality is going to take responsibility for most action in the plan, the municipality should work with the community to understand, set, and manage expectations through consultation.
- 6. The municipality as a partner amongst other partners is a powerful model.** This works as the municipality can consistently model the behaviour that it wants to see from community partners. It is also difficult because the members of the public who typically engage in the planning processes views themselves as advisors or advocates, not co-creators of action. Community Partners may be hesitant to sign onto a plan until it is complete and they understand who the implementing body will be and what resources will be available to implement it.
- 7. Focus people on the purpose, not the process.** Building a long term plan that aspires towards an inspirational vision is energizing. Sitting in too many meetings, getting caught up in word-smithing and getting bogged down in rhetorical discussion is not. Use participants’ energy to invite others into the process and supply participants with the tools necessary to facilitate the engagement of others. Tools may include project emails, list serves, boiler plate of talking points, FAQs, one page handout, brochure, or power point with speakers notes.
- 8. Passive Action Planning is a good model IF it works.** *Sustainable Kingston* is not creating new actions. It provides a framework for aligning, building on and integrating municipal and community actions (plans, policies, programs, processes, and initiatives) that are currently underway or being planned to see how we are contributing to sustainability. It is important to “let the doers do”. Provide support for the doers to keep doing throughout the process.

Lessons Learned

- 9. The process should not be rushed and timing is critical to maintain momentum:** *Sustainable Kingston* has taken time to develop. This was seen as being necessary to develop trust, establish relationships, understand the different issues and demographics, discuss and work through contentious issues among the different stakeholders (e.g., “development” versus “no development” perspectives; urban versus rural), etc. It is nearly impossible to accomplish long term change without long term buy in. That said, once you start the ball rolling, you can’t step away. A community owned plan generate and sustains its energy because people involved in the process know how their input is being used, what to expect as an outcome, and when they can engage in next steps.
- 10. Diverse stakeholders mean diverse skills, opinions, and collaboration styles.** The Project Management Team must have strong director with leadership abilities as well as the capacity and capability to chair in a direct manner. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of those engaged and utilize them to the core. Work with an editor is to significantly improve the quality of writing after substantive input (in different writing styles) has been provided.
- 11. Communicate. Communicate. Communicate.** There are a wide range of communication tools available to inform, engage, consult, and empower participants in the process. Local media can be an important partner in the process. *Sustainable Kingston* would have benefitted from partnering with local media earlier on in the process and updating media more regularly. Communication tools that may be useful moving forward in implementation are personal or corporate success stories and snip-its (tips, lessons learned, factoids) for Community Partners’ newsletters. The challenge of course is being ‘newsworthy’ without being controversial.
- 12. Stay committed to the process and focus on implementation.** There is a difference between the development phase and the implementation phase of the plan. It is important to understand the difference because you will recognize behaviours that are specific to both. Many academic studies have considered the “implementation gap” in sustainable development and recognized that the gap is real. Everyone wants to avoid creating a plan that will “sit on the shelf and collect dust” for good reason. The real work starts when the plan moves from development to implementation and as a municipality you need to be committed to slowly but surely following the plan through.

TOOLS

Sustainable Kingston is based on the input of many people. Throughout the development of *Sustainable Kingston*, the Project Team used tools to organize project meetings, solicit stakeholder input and consolidate comments from Pillar Champions, community stakeholders and members of the public. Some of the tools used during the *Sustainable Kingston* process included Doodle, Survey Monkey, Basecamp, and Google Docs.

Doodle

Doodle (<http://www.doodle.com/>) is a free web-based tool that can be used to schedule meetings, conference calls, or any other group events. Doodle can also be used to make simple choices among meeting locations, consultation venues, or presence at public events. Doodle was particularly helpful for scheduling meetings within a project team of 10-16 people that did not have shared access to Microsoft Outlook calendars. A typical doodle screen shot is included below.

The screenshot shows a Doodle poll titled "Poll: Project Team Meeting" with a summary of 3 participants. The poll is set for July 2010. The interface includes a calendar view with time slots (9:00 AM - 10:00 AM, 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM, 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM) and a grid for participants: Andrea, Kim, and Paul. A "Your name" input field is also present. A "Save" button is located below the grid. A legend indicates: green = have time, yellow = could make time if absolutely necessary, red = do not have time. A "Functions" section is visible at the bottom. Annotations include: a box labeled "Participants" with an arrow pointing to the participant names; a box labeled "Update to organizer with new respondent availability (optional)" with an arrow pointing to a notification box at the bottom right; and a box labeled "Tally with best option for participants" with an arrow pointing to the "Save" button.

	Tue 6		Thu 8	
Andrea	OK		(OK)	OK
Kim	(OK)	(OK)	OK	OK
Paul	OK	(OK)		OK
Count	2	0	1	3

SurveyMonkey

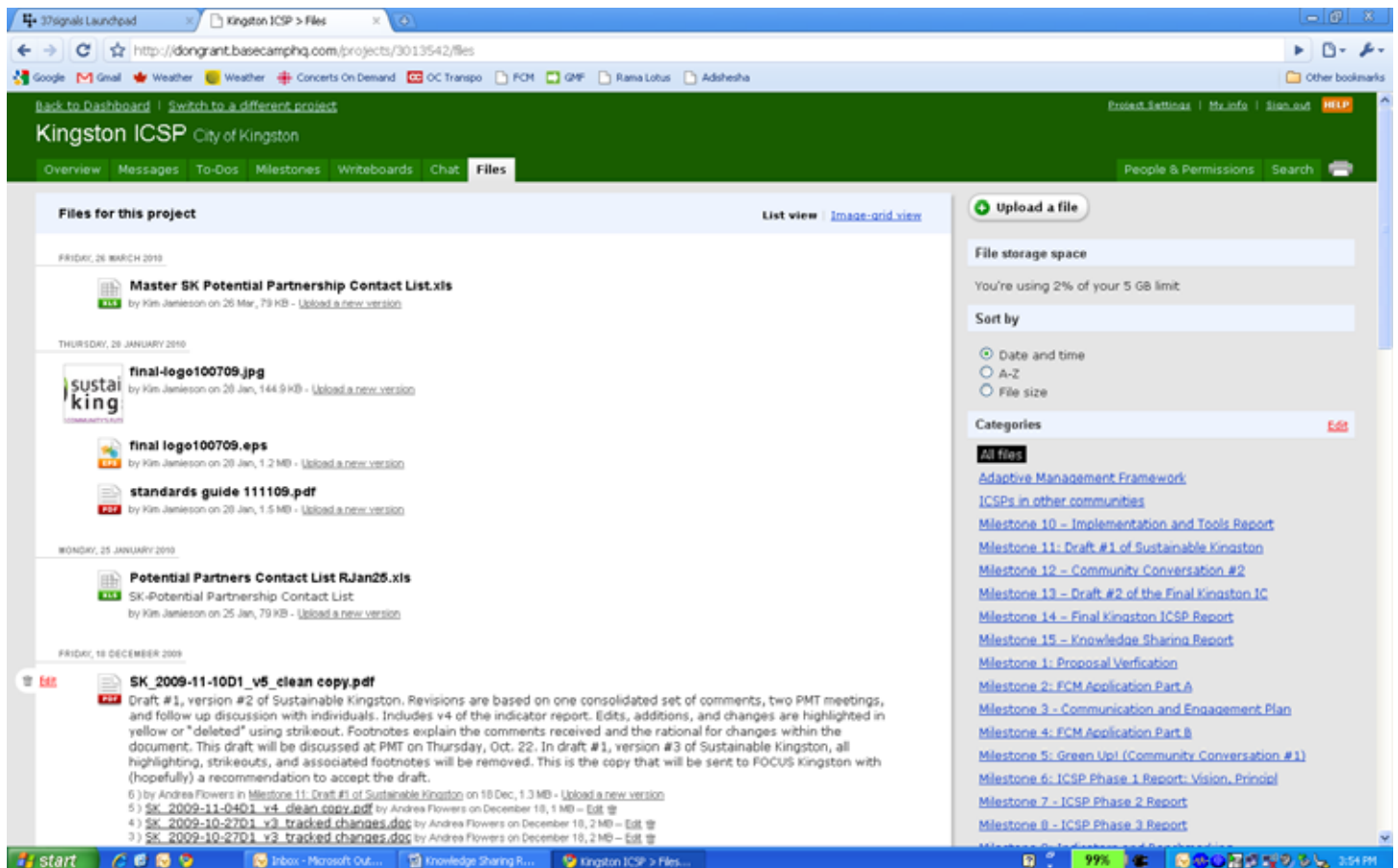
SurveyMonkey (<http://www.surveymonkey.com/>) is a free on-line software and questionnaire tool.

SurveyMonkey was used to gather information, input, and insights from stakeholders and members of the public during the development of *Sustainable Kingston*. SurveyMonkey was particularly useful for collecting input before the Sustainability Summit (more than 200 comments submitted) and after the Sustainability Summit Report was circulated (more than 40 thoughtful responses submitted). All comments received were considered in the development of the first draft of the plan. SurveyMonkey was also useful for identifying a suitable name for the Kingston Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (35 responses submitted).

Basecamp

Basecamp (<http://basecamphq.com/>) is a web-based project management and collaboration tool that offers a wide variety of functions including file storage, message boards, schedules, to-do lists, and milestone tracking. A variety of plans and pricing fees are available.

Basecamp was helpful in the beginning of the project as a repository for project files and background documents. Static project files could be saved, updated, and resaved (keeping track of previous versions). Once the project team was collaborating on working documents, Google Docs was a more effective collaborative tool. A screen shot of Basecamp is below.



Google Docs

Google Docs is a free web-based word processor and data storage application that allows users to create and edit documents online while collaborating in real-time with other users. Google Docs was particularly useful when doing a committee review of text in Drafts #1, 2, and the Final version of Sustainable Kingston. Google Docs was also useful for the project team to maintain a spreadsheet of community partners with contact information and contact status.

Wiki-style Website

Many communities face the challenge of inventorying, tracking, and updating things that are happening in their community. To address this challenge, Kingston proposed the development of a wiki to create a collaborative and community owned website. The goal of the proposed wiki was to provide a forum where community partners including Pillar Champions, Pillar Organizations, and members of the public could quickly and easily contribute edit, and provide feedback on the ICSP by adding commentary and links. Until a *Governing Body* has been established, the wiki functionality will remain accessible only to administrators.

Social Media

Community members were encouraged to set up social media and networking tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube if they supported sustainability in Kingston. Social media and networking tools were not used or maintained by the project team because the municipality was still being challenged by our internal departments on the use of social media.

Opportunities for the Future:

1. Engage more media (print, radio, video, and social networking)
2. Collect and showcase more community/personal stories
3. Leverage existing events for consultation (ex. Community Festivals, food events, Movies in the Square, Parent/Teacher nights, etc.)
4. Engage more volunteers (Volunteer Ambassador program)

GRAPHIC DESIGN TEMPLATES

The project team learned several lessons in the graphic design of final report and support documents of the report.

1. Graphic design templates are easiest for the City to work if design is done in-house or if the City has the software required to make changes as necessary.
2. The design team should be provided with style guidelines for consistency in case documents do not merge well. Examples include items like theme headings, phrases that should appear in italic/bold, punctuation to use with respect to listed items, etc.
3. The design team should be provided with finalized text.
4. The design and review teams should have sufficient time to put the text into the templates. This would reduce the number of proofs required.
5. Where possible, the City and the design team should work together to identify pictures that demonstrate a balance of both Kingston's geography and Kingston'

REFERENCES

Association of Municipalities of Ontario - Integrated Community Sustainability Plan Toolkit

<http://www.amo.on.ca/Content/NavigationMenu/SustainableMunicipalities/FederalGasTax/IntegratedCommunitySustainabilityPlan/default.htm>

City of Kingston - Sustainability

<http://www.cityofkingston.ca/cityhall/sustainability/index.asp>

City of Kingston - Corporate Strategic Plan

<http://www.cityofkingston.ca/pdf/cityhall/CorporateStrategicPlan.pdf>.

Community Sustainability Charrette Report

<http://www.cityofkingston.ca/cityhall/sustainability/charrette.asp>

The Report of the Brundtland Commission (also known as *Our Common Future*)

<http://www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm>

The Melbourne Principles

http://www.iclei.org/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/ANZ/WhatWeDo/TBL/Melbourne_Principles.pdf

Sustainability Summit Report

<http://www.cityofkingston.ca/cityhall/sustainability/>

CONTACT INFORMATION

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