

University & Municipal Partnerships in Sustainability – A Model for Success

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For the past four years, Washington College's Center for Environment & Society has engaged in a variety of sustainability initiatives on campus and in partnership with the Town of Chestertown. These efforts include recycling, energy savings, urban greening and climate initiatives. The purpose of the partnership is to enable work that might be difficult for one partner to achieve on its own, leveraging scarce resources and expanding the positive impacts. This partnership has allied scientists, citizens, elected officials, and students of varying ages, and it has provided a model for conceptualizing, planning, financing and effecting change at the community level. Since its inception, the program has grown to include additional towns and the surrounding county. The latest phase of the work is designed to further expand its impact, providing easily accessible tools that can be used by elected officials, government employees and concerned citizens to promote change in their own communities.

This paper explores the successes and failures of this partnership program, outlining the steps taken, its concrete results, and the program's overall effectiveness. The utility of tools such as GIS also are discussed. The paper concludes with a projection for future work and suggestions for how this model might be used elsewhere.

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