

Community:	The Landings at Skidaway Island
Date:	January 24, 2014
Steps Completed:	Steering Committee Community Baseline & Assessment
Steps Remaining:	Treasuring Home Survey Demonstration Site

Overview

Your community has an excellent opportunity to become a successful sustainable community by providing valuable wildlife habitat and educating staff and patrons about sustainable natural resource management. We appreciate your commitment to managing for environmental quality, economic vitality, and quality of life. By joining with other Audubon International cooperators, your efforts are helping to enhance, protect, and connect wildlife habitat and resources across the world.

■ Community Baseline & Assessment

This section provides an assessment of current practices and projects under Audubon International's 15 focus areas that you have implemented and provides recommendations for the long-term plan you will create in Stage 2. Information on how to implement some of these projects is provided in the News and Resources section of our website at www.auduboninternational.org or the member only website at www.auduboninternational.org/sustainable-communities-program. Your username is the email you used to sign up and the password was sent to you by email.

Under each focus area, there are several sections to consider. First, read through the priority issues in each area. The priority issues are what we recommend you address based upon the information you provided. We choose these issues based upon what the community is currently doing; these programs and projects in place will be included in Stage 2 and tracked in Stage 3. We also chose these priority issues based upon unique opportunities that exist to expand efforts.

Under several focus areas we recommend local, regional or state-specific organizations to consult. Many times, the community or individual residents may already work these organizations. Such organizations are examples of qualified partners for achieving goals in the long-term plan developed in the next Stage. In Stage 2, listing "partners" is one of the first steps. The Landings is unlike any other community, so the recommendations are tailored to your challenges and opportunities.

General Description

Given that about 2,600 of 4,555 acres of the community is residential, commercial, or recreational space, The Landings is in an ideal position to model how a community can protect and enhance the environment, advance economic development, and be mindful of society. Natural areas have tremendous benefits for communities – they provide space for wildlife, moderate heat island climate effects, clean the air making it healthier to breathe, protect drinking water, and offer opportunities for outdoor recreation. Strive to protect the integrity of natural

areas in and around your community. The number of visitors alone provides a great starting point for The Landings to showcase sustainability. Highlighting achievements for visitors and residents will help the public associate sustainability with The Landings. The center islands restoration project is to be highly commended and a perfect example of how a community can become more environmentally friendly while reducing costs and not hindering aesthetics. Having six certified ACSP golf courses also shows your community's commitment. The media should know about this! Everyone who thinks of The Landings should think "sustainable." We will help you achieve this and instill a strong ethic in your residents, so we will focus on the getting the word out and tracking your success.

▪ [Agriculture](#)

Assessment Results: 8 Yes; 4 No; 3 N/A*

Highlights: On-Site Food Sourcing, Community Garden

Improvements: Landscaping with Native Plants, Regional Farm Support Incentives

[Comments:](#)

For several of the assessment questions, The Landings is actually a "yes," instead of a "no." Community efforts can encourage sustainable agricultural practices, support local food producers, and facilitate the production and distribution of locally produced food through farmer's markets and cooperative food buying programs. This section reviews The Landings' current and reported agriculture assessment.

To become more sustainable, communities can source food locally to support the local and regional economy, reduce transportation needs and costs, and find healthy, low-cost food for residents. The Landings is a private community with a community supported garden but no working farms, but this focus area also addresses food systems. We commend you for sourcing food locally at the Club and in residents' shopping! Purchasing food grown locally for on-site restaurants is beneficial to all facets of the food system. Find ways to encourage residents to participate in the community garden and to buy local foods, through education and incentives.

There are several local organizations working to bring farm fresh food to communities like yours. We recommend looking into how such organizations can bring farmer's markets or direct-to-consumer services (such as Community Supported Agriculture programs) into The Landings. Since local food organizations' missions vary from meeting basic needs to highlighting high-end restaurants using local foods, there may be an opportunity to partner with such organizations to market the property or create a local food festival, cooking class, or tasting parties for residents. Reach out to these organizations to determine whether hosting a farm stand or market on Skidaway Island would detract from their existing sites or possibly enable them to realize planned expansion of services. We recommend visiting the following websites:

Community Supported Agriculture options:

Farmbox Savannah (organized by your own Matthew Roher) -

<http://www.americantowns.com/ga/savannah/organization/farmbox-savannah>

Gratitude Gardens - <http://www.localharvest.org/csa/M33252>

Slow Food Savannah/Revival Foods: <http://revivalfoods.com/>

Sustainable Table: <http://www.sustainabletable.org/home.php>

Eat Well Guide: <http://www.eatwellguide.org/>

Overall, this category is not a priority area for The Landings. Moving into Stage 2, there will be comparably fewer goals associated with this focus area. Rather, we suggest you start to think about tracking current initiatives, and work to integrate local food sourcing education programs into residents' lives. Inviting local farmers, chefs, or other volunteers to conduct educational programs is a great way to educate residents and provide valuable social opportunities, which The Landings Community Association is proficient in conducting.

Stage 2 Recommendations:

Goals for the Landings community in this area will be unique due to the community's motivating factors for becoming more sustainable. Because Landings is a private community, the goals we recommend will be associated with resident education and new resident recruitment.

In the short term, the opportunity to formulate goals aimed towards new residents in materials (i.e. local foods cookbooks, farmers market listings, etc.), programs (i.e., cooking with local food classes, farm to table workshops, history of farming in the Southeast, etc.), or events (i.e. tasting parties, farm tours, etc.) will help to provide a cultural introduction to the region, since many residents move from other parts of the country, and offer unique opportunities to educate and socialize. Opportunities to provide similar programs for existing residents will provide "continuing education" about local culture, environment, and nutrition. Partnering with regional organizations that offer classes aimed towards the population that may have special dietary restrictions, for instance, can help to demonstrate how versatile and healthy local food options can be.

For the long-term, implementing and tracking educational programs for new and existing residents, finding new partners to offer volunteer on-site and tour-based services, and striving to source food locally *as much as possible*, is the recommended long-term strategy. The goals for five, ten, and twenty years out will emphasize the need for residents to be able to learn about the local culture and food systems, eat healthier more sustainably grown food, and reduce agriculturally-based resource use (i.e., transportation, energy, waste, etc.) The Landings Community has a unique opportunity to integrate local culture, environment, and economy, to not only attract new visitors and residents, but change behavior associated with perceptions about food systems.

▪ Economic Development

Assessment Results: 16 Yes; 0 No; 1 N/A

Highlights: Participation Incentives; Historical Preservation; Cultural Events

Improvements: Marketing Sustainability Ethic; Green Business Development; Tracking; Synchronizing

Comments:

This focus area is designed to assess economic vitality efforts. Communities do not exist in a vacuum, although oftentimes private communities are designed to do just that. In order to become more sustainable, private communities must contribute to the regional economy rather than deplete it, and ensure the micro-economy within the community is healthy and diverse, adapting to change, providing long-term material security to residents, and respecting ecological limits by maximizing income generation while also maintaining or increasing the assortment of natural assets that yield benefits. Sustainable communities strive to price goods and services to reflect the full social and environmental costs of their provision and link area businesses, products and services, and resources and customers to increase the recycling of money and other resources that will remain in the community.

Skidaway Island was identified in by the Chatham County Metropolitan Planning Commission as an “amenity community,” a planned community where there is “greater emphasis on environmental and community amenities. While primarily auto-oriented, some offer increasing options for mobility both within the development and to external locations.”

Therefore, the county seems to recognize that The Landings prefers to be somewhat self-sustaining, rather than opening transportation corridors to major business development. This means the Village Center area of The Landings will be a primary source of business services for the community. Locating commercial uses near residential areas has the benefit of reducing automobile trips and therefore reducing traffic congestion, pollution, and fuel consumption. Town centers provide a means of making goods and services available with a minimum of disruption. Create a Village Center with elements of a sustainability identity to reinforce the established community character.

While The Landings is just considering future uses for this area, keep in mind that there are several low- and no- cost resources for finding sustainable solutions. The MPC report recommends smart growth principles for Greater Savannah area in their Community Vision (See Appendix A). We also recommend contacting the Georgia chapter of Smart Growth America. They can provide technical assistance, recommendations on Smart Growth techniques and resources, and provide information about low-cost, sustainable redevelopment consultants. The website is:

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/category/georgia/>

Stage 2 Recommendations:

Economic Development for the community also applies to attracting and retaining residents through the main economic drivers of the community: the natural environment and the golf clubs. We have heard member recruitment being top priority from many of our golf club members, especially with the economy in dire straits. The community survey is a great first step to gauge the community perception about what they value, so decisions about community income and expenses can be made. The priority is to gauge what services and amenities add value to the community.

One of the follow-up steps to consider is selecting a few volunteers who can lead walks around the course explaining the ecosystem services the course provides. From water systems to landscaping to turf system management, these trainees can offer education and new perspectives. Again, coupling this with your existing wildlife and bird-watching inventories is a good way to get people out on the course, and thinking about golf as more than just a game, but a community asset.

Your planned initiatives to communicate the sustainability ethic through The Landings Company and national marketing is also key to drawing the right residents to your community. Aligning your community's marketing efforts with local and regional marketing that emphasizes the natural assets and sustainability practices will help your community stand out and draw the "green" crowd. Connect with organizations leading regional green initiatives to get the word out about The Landings as a sustainable community. Listings like those on Savannah GreenSource.com's website are an easy place to start: <http://www.savannahgreensource.com/>.

For the long-term, attracting to the Village Center eco-friendly businesses that promote nature enjoyment through green business incentives or recognition is recommended. More information about promoting eco-tourism activities for residents and their guests is under the focus area "Recreation." The final consideration for linking economic development to the community will be awards and recognition. In every community, people want to be recognized for their contribution. This encourages continuing commitment and provides a 'pat on the back' to those who are helping to make the community more sustainable. Think of the natural areas and trails as assets much like a library or art museum. Nature trails or benches can be dedicated as an alternate funding opportunity. This can extend to other wildlife areas in the community. Overall, this category is not a priority area for The Landings. Moving into Stage 2, there will be comparably fewer goals associated with this focus area.

▪ Education

Assessment Results: 16 Yes; 7 No; 2 N/A

Highlights: Community Outreach and Communication; Active Committees; Employee Trainings

Improvements: Displays; Green Building; Participation Incentives

Comments:

Overall, this focus area is mostly addressed through the numerous efforts by active community members. An asset that The Landings has is the energy and connectivity of its residents. Existing residents participate in and develop stewardship projects, provide extensive outreach to the Savannah community, and frequent the shared facilities, giving ample opportunities to introduce education about sustainability. The community's tasks are to connect more residents with sustainability education opportunities and bring sustainability to the school system outreach efforts that residents are involved with in the region. The Landings should capitalize on the active and engaged residents working towards sustainability.

Community-hosted presentations and tours of natural and archaeological sites by expert speakers about nature conservation and the local heritage will help in establishing a sense of place among new and existing residents. A valuable reference containing information about natural landscaping and community education is *A Sourcebook on Natural Landscaping for Public Officials* found at: www.epa.gov/glnpo/greenacres/toolkit/. Community groups can offer not only natural history-type seminars but also speakers from the green building industry, water utility, and waste management to discuss issues appropriate for your well-educated audience. Create a Green Builder Award program to recognize developers incorporating low impact development LID site design standards or LEED Green Building standards. In addition to the many organizations listed in your assessment, the Green Thumb Club of the Landings Landlovers should be considered a key partner in offering sustainability education, if they are still active.

The variety of ecosystems on your property gives you the potential to create a great driving nature trail and to expand your walking trails. Pointing out wildlife gardens (hummingbird, butterfly, and songbird), birdhouses, and naturalized areas along a trail can create an excellent education project which would also allow for quiet contemplation. Your trail should include as many ecosystems as possible and can focus on different types of wildlife habitat and projects, the history of the property, and particularly interesting trees and land formations. Add interpretive signage along the trail to highlight environmental features, including energy and water saving technologies and native plants. We encourage you to be creative.

Presentation Series – Public Sessions

Schedule a regular speaker series, which can include staff and/or other local experts from MAREX and the State Park to give educational public talks, presentations, and slide shows on selected issues of importance for the community (environmental issues and education, sustainability, case studies from other communities, etc.) You can also promote Sustainability webinars offered by Audubon International Staff, consult www.auduboninternational.org/webinars for dates and times

Stage 2 Recommendations:

Since The Landings has so many activities available in the community, the goals should be to ensure these opportunities are communicated to residents and to increase participation. The Demonstration Site will be a living, tangible, hands-on example of the strategy for sustainability. Visitors and prospective new residents should be able to see living examples of what the community is doing to become more sustainable, from birding guides and wildlife fact sheets in the community center to native landscaping gardens and perhaps signage along the trails. Creating additional display sites will also provide you a place to advertise local educational opportunities and reach a broader audience. Also consider offering discounted fees for membership and trips in your sustainability-related groups to incentivize participation, perhaps as a reward for the Tallow Terrors or Bottle Brigade.

You can download and distribute any of our fact sheets for residents and visitors. You can also download low- and no-cost educational project ideas. The objective for this focus area will be to make every person who comes to The Landings aware of its sustainability initiatives. Another key objective will be to identify projects that school volunteers can do with grade schools in Savannah to increase environmental awareness, such as butterfly gardens or water conservation lessons.

The goals for the long-term vision plan should also be to raise awareness among peer communities and associated organizations, such as the Communities Association Institute. Audubon International has a working relationship with CAI and other such organizations, which provide resources and education to private community associations. Their website can be viewed here:

<http://www.caionline.org/Pages/Default.aspx>.

And the Georgia Chapter at: <http://www.cai-georgia.org/>

This chapter offers tips for homeowners and community associations that are directly relevant to The Landings. Working with us, we will help you develop case studies, press releases, and articles to distribute to such organizations. Building on the recognition you received from CAI in 2012, this will help The Landings develop the reputation as **the** sustainable private community in Georgia.

▪ Environment

Assessment Results: 23 Yes; 4 No; 0 N/A

Highlights: Turf Management; Native Plants; Litter Removal; Mapping; Planning; Stormwater; Integrated Pest Management; Naturalized Areas and Wildlife Habitat; Wildlife Inventory; Environmental Policies

Improvements: Publicizing Environmental Measuring

Comments:

Skidaway Island is located in the Ogeechee Coastal watershed, in one of the state's High Priority Watersheds and bordered by High Priority Waters. The Landings Association has demonstrated strong leadership working with EPD and the Committee to identify the community's water supply needs and by implementing xeriscaping in common areas. A long term water management plan is needed that includes water conservation and stormwater management solutions. Any local water plan should draw from resources in the state water plan: http://www.coastalgeorgiacouncil.org/pages/our_plan/

In the meantime, stormwater education can increase public awareness of the consequences of litter and other non-point source pollution including fertilizer, pesticide, petroleum products, sediment, and pet waste on local waterways.

Education about water supply concerns will help to motivate water conservation. Salt water intrusion has been an issue in coastal Georgia aquifers since the early 1960s. Residents need to be informed that the rate of groundwater pumping is directly tied to the rate of salt water intrusion into the water supply; in other words: your water conservation can make a huge difference! The community has a long way to go to reach the regional goal of 100 gallons per capita per day. Reducing the amount of potable water used for irrigation by shifting to reclaimed water or harvesting rainwater will extend Skidaway's water supplies.

Overall The Landings does an excellent job of using the natural landscape. Native vegetation is adapted to your areas' climate and soils, reducing the need for chemical inputs and extensive watering, and providing a valuable food and shelter source that local wildlife need. Exotic species are not adapted to the area and sometimes need significantly more labor and inputs than native plants. The importation of exotics is responsible for the introduction of some devastating plant diseases and insects. In addition, exotic plants can become invasive, replacing diverse native systems with a single variety of plant, such as has occurred with purple loosestrife in wetland systems. Encourage residents to emphasize native plants as a means for providing wildlife habitat when incorporating new vegetation into the landscape. Specifically, longleaf pine once covered most of your region, so conserving and restoring longleaf pines where possible is important.

Look for resources from natural resources agencies and organizations for education materials and best practices, such as from the State's Wildlife Action Plan:

<http://www.georgiawildlife.com/conservation/landowner-programs>

Stage 2 Recommendations:

There is great potential for creating a variety of wildlife habitats on the grounds. The property is fairly large and with some naturalization projects you should be able to attract a great diversity of wildlife. Our every action, no matter how small, causes a reaction in our environment. Our goal is to choose our actions wisely.

Stormwater and water supply are a concern in communities everywhere. Georgia communities have special considerations because while water is abundant, it is not an unlimited resource, and pervious surfaces, intense rainfall, and the ocean influence water quality and availability. Flood hazards associated with the smaller waterways in the area are as important as the more obvious hazards associated with the ocean. As urban areas spread out into the adjacent marshlands, development increasingly encroaches onto the floodplains, which help provide a natural flood buffer and water filtration system. We recommend a Stormwater Education Campaign for residents, especially new homeowners. More information and examples of other community's education campaigns are available at:

<http://www.northgeorgiawater.org/stormwater/public-awareness-and-education>

http://www.clemson.edu/public/carolinaclear/water_quality/

We also have a contact at Georgia Department of Natural Resources who works with coastal communities:

Kelly (O'Rourke) Hill

GA DNR Coastal Resources Division

Coastal Resources Specialist

Kelly.Hill@gadnr.org

912-264-7218

In Stage 2, The Landings will be creating a long-term environmental stewardship plan. Creating a map of property with priority stormwater, naturalized, and wildlife areas will help to identify what to feature and what to improvement upon. Using a wildlife inventory, stormwater education campaign, and native plants information will make this task easier and enhance educational materials for residents.

▪ Governance

Assessment Results: 9 Yes; 14 No; 5 N/A

Highlights: Monitoring; Energy Conservation Planning; Communications; Landscape Management

Improvements: Energy Conservation Policies; Purchasing Policies; Incentives; Retrofits; Integrated Pest Management

Comments:

The Landings has made a good start at addressing energy conservation, landscape management, and water conservation through its committees, planning, and policies. In order to ensure the community is truly sustainable for years to come, The Community Association should update standards and policies based upon sustainability principles. This includes environmental purchasing, landscaping standards, and acceptable practices for shared buildings. It would be further advantageous to investigate offering incentives to upgrade community-run buildings, and programs that allow the community to offer incentives or run programs for homeowners in areas like alternative energy and water conservation. The Landings is a very connected community that is open to green options and has many already in place.

In Stage 2, we will review the Association's standards for homes and common areas and whether they include cultural and environmental sensitivities. For instance, the rules regarding solar panels and rainwater catchment devices need to balance aesthetic uniformity with strategies for keeping energy and water costs low for the homeowner.

Additional planning and monitoring may help organize efforts around energy conservation, waste reduction, and water use. The Landings may also want to address the Landscape Guidelines, specifically where treatment of weeds is addressed. We highly recommend looking into Integrated Pest Management rather than the application of chemicals whenever possible. We understand many homeowners may have outside landscaping companies. We suggest The Landings look into adopting guidelines for such companies, or enact a preferable company list for residents.

Stage 2 Recommendations:

Goals for this focus area should be to focus on the adoption of standards for homeowners that encourage green practices, reducing paper use in the Association's documentation and communications, reducing energy use in offices and street lights, and the implementation of incentive based programs to encourage homeowners to participate. Tracking savings and program effectiveness will help determine Certification. I encourage the Landings Association to review the article "Bright Returns," which can be found on the CAI website: <http://www.caionline.org/info/help/green/Pages/default.aspx>

▪ Public Health

Assessment Results: 23 Yes; 7 No; 0 N/A

Highlights: Wellness Committee; Health Events; Recreation Advice/ Opportunities;

Improvements: Nutrition Advice; Health Classes; Carpooling

Comments:

Active Adult communities are expanding services, as they seek to combat the lingering effects of a serious recession, offer new health strategies for aging residents, and devise ways to broaden their appeal to potential new residents. Broader fitness and health programs can be seen at many communities. Major changes have been made in dining facilities and meal plans, providing residents with more choices over what, when, and where they have their meals. And while a protective environment that emphasized insulation from its surroundings has long been a selling point of many private communities, the model of many today is to seek more extensive integration with outside consumers and organizations.

According to marketing research, in addition to facing financial pressures, the industry is also contending with lifestyle shifts and a marked improvement in the health and fitness of its core market. A generation ago, many people in this age group were eager to find more sedentary and protective living environments. Today, they are just as apt to be taking strenuous wilderness vacations and running in marathons. The Landings is in a great geographical location to appeal to active adults. Linking the recreation potentials with a sound health plan for the community will be important.

Stage 2 Recommendations:

Due to age considerations for a majority of the residents at The Landings, working with Public Health partners to bring programs and seminars to the residents, or offering information about regional opportunities should be the majority of the goals in this focus area. Maintaining the partnership with Memorial Hospital bringing physicians to educate residents will be important. The Club fitness and clinics offerings are impressive, and the Club could enhance their commitment by identifying healthy food options in the restaurants. Other considerations would be inviting holistic practitioners, such as organic chefs, massage therapists, yoga instructors, etc.

Providing health and fitness opportunities to all of the community's residents, regardless of Club participation, should also be a priority. Publicizing church support groups and those fitness activities organized by New Neighbors can help reach the full array of residents.

- Housing

Assessment Results: 2 Yes; 3 No; 7 N/A

Highlights: Rehabilitation and Upkeep of Housing Stock

Improvements: Staff Housing Assistance

This focus area is designed to address equal opportunity housing and green upgrades for older homes. For The Landings, the only qualifying goals in the focus area are regarding helping staff access affordable housing and addressing old or abandoned housing stock. Existing programs address the latter area. An employer assisted housing program (EAH) can involve homebuyer assistance, rental assistance, education, and counseling. EAH is a cost-effective way to attract and retain quality employees.

▪ Open Space and Land Use

Assessment Results: 17 Yes; 0 No; 7 N/A

Highlights: Trails Network; Planning; Landscaping; Policies; Mapping

Improvements: None

Comments:

This focus area is designed to address protection of natural areas. For The Landings, all the qualifying goals in the focus area are being addressed. The Village Center is a good opportunity to showcase sustainability and good environmental stewardship in land use. The landscaping practices can further demonstrate The Landing's commitment to preservation and stewardship. Using existing places, like the Village Green, to offer services to residents that they may otherwise drive a distance to use and will detract from businesses encroaching on the community's bordering open space is a great way to highlight open space preservation.

There are also several land trusts in the region who may offer advice, educational materials, or case studies on land use for private communities. Building displays that provide visual educational opportunities for residents and guest to learn about the community's land use in the context of the region or state will help facilitate understanding. Land use organizations in addition to your affiliation and interaction with the Skidaway Island State Park:

Nature Conservancy (at SkIO): <http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/georgia/>

Audubon Society: <http://www.savogeecheeaudubon.org/>

Georgia Land Trust: www.galandtrust.org

Stage 2 Recommendations:

The goals in this focus area should be to demonstrate The Landings achievements in open space preservation and environmentally sound land use practices. By creating a committee to investigate the Village Center land use, the community can demonstrate open space preservation through repurposing and possibly upgrading existing facilities. Showing visitors and guests this important step towards sustainability is essential to educating people about open space and land use, and marketing these efforts. Visual cues about the surrounding land use of the community through signs or displays will help further education and marketing options.

▪ Planning, Zoning, Building & Development

Assessment Results: 14 Yes; 14 No; 7 N/A

Highlights: Design Standards and Review; Disabilities Services

Improvements: Green Building Retrofits; Smart Growth Standards and Policies; Incentives

Comments:

For the assessment questions related to reuse and neighborhood stores, The Landings is actually a “no,” instead of a “N/A.” This section reviews The Landings’ current and reported planning and building assessment.

The Landings is a planned community with few issues about new development and therefore the need to construct rigorous zoning codes or rules for future expansion. We would advise The Landings to address the desire to “fix it first,” rather than tear down and annex out, for new building construction *through an adopted statement*. Even though the Landings have no plans for expansion, and the boundaries are concise and set, formally adopting such a statement helps a community to be clear and consistent about future growth or aging infrastructure. Further, a central tenet of Smart Growth is to direct resources towards existing communities. The Landings is already seeing the growing market for these types of communities as Baby Boomers retire. Consider maximizing the marketing strategy to include the focus on existing infrastructure. With the growing financial strain on many planned communities, particularly golf communities, emphasizing the prioritization of upgrading rather than new building will help to demonstrate The Landings’ commitment to sustainability.

The Landings does not have very many different land uses within the community, so using mixed use or smart growth principles in design is not applicable. However, design standards and a sense of place are just as important to this focus area. The community already has design standards that encourage a sense of place. Capitalizing on the unique character of the community, a peaceful retreat of sorts, as an essential component of the planning and layout, should be a priority. Allowing residents to use alternative energy sources, low-or no-cost water conservation and quality technologies, and other green on-site structures is worth marketing and promoting. As many planned communities resort to labels and “greenwashing,” The Landings can be proud to be walking the walk.

Stage 2 Recommendations:

The goals for this focus area should be to track and promote the Village Center becoming a neighborhood shopping are, create visual cues and educational signage, encourage green building and reuse, and look into partnering with businesses that are currently promoting golf communities to your current target demographic.

▪ Population

Assessment Results: 8 Yes; 1 No; 0 N/A

Highlights: Social Equity; Diversity

Improvements: Staff Housing Incentives

Comments:

For private sector communities, this focus area is intentioned to address resident retention and community equity. For instance, is employee retention tracked and are they considered in pricing at on-site amenities? Is there a satisfactory system in place to gauge resident's opinions on community matters? And, do the residents feels represented in government? The constraints which led The Landings to answer "N/A" to the employee equity questions on the assessment are location and surrounding land use. We understand the private community does not allow for affordable housing for employees. Perhaps an employee recognition program, or other such incentives, will help to retain employees. Offering training sessions about sustainability programs, or allowing employees to sit in on more important resident training session helps create buy-in with the staff.

For resident retention, The Landings is on the right track. Feeling that opinions and preferences are taken seriously and considered in a timely manner is the most important factor in attracting new residents and retaining current ones. Having a dedicated area, mailbox, or other such method for residents and employees to drop a note about issues and retrieve information about trainings, incentives, and the method in which they will hear a reply goes a long way to giving people the impression that they are important. We commend you for offering this and encourage you to follow up and ensure the comments are heard and results are delivered, so people feel their input is valued.

Stage 2 Recommendations:

For stage 2, The Landings should continue to track the result obtained in the citizen survey on a regular basis. All data that can be obtained will help flesh out a solid strategy for recruiting new residents and keeping residents satisfied with processes within the community. Having employees (depending on the number, duties, and hours) help with sustainability projects and trainings by offering incentives (employee pool day, etc.), can not only boost employee involvement, but help to offset volunteer duties. This can be especially helpful in tracking data and helping to keep residents updated about sustainability initiatives. At the end of the day, we want everyone in the community to take home the lessons that will help alleviate the stress on the environment.

▪ Public Safety & Emergency Management

Assessment Results: 5 Yes; 3 No; 3 N/A

Highlights: Green Fleets/ Fuels; Alternative Energy Backup

Improvements: Disaster Mitigation Training and Incentives

Comments:

The Landings has made major strides in taking environmental stewardship into consideration with public safety services and personnel. We encourage communities to provide trainings and education to emergency management services about resource use in the community. You may also consider providing a map with trail systems and sensitive habitat areas to take into consideration when they are in the community. If the services are provided from a non-site managed service, investigate whether the provider is using green fleets or harmful chemicals, and let them know about The Landings' commitment to sustainability.

The Landings does not have many public safety challenges. This focus area is also designed to help members assess and plan for disaster preparedness and prevention. Particularly if residents are moving to an unfamiliar region, information about the many species they may encounter and coastal hazards is helpful. We emphasize that communities can peacefully live with nature without eradicating or destroying species or their living systems. Providing information and trainings to residents about potential safety hazards and ways to manage their property in order to mitigate forest fires, floods, or other types of disasters, can encourage environmental stewardship and prevent anthropological contributions to disasters.

It is important people know how to correctly manage their property to reduce flood hazards. Flood proofing homes can greatly decrease the risk of structure and property damage from floods. In the materials the community provided, information about the resident committees for emergency preparedness was included. At the very least this committee can give information to new residents; perhaps with a signature page to be returned to the Association which acknowledges receipt of the information. The State offers numerous resources for distribution to homeowners, including:
Ready Georgia toolkit: <http://www.ready.ga.gov/Get-Involved/Online-Toolkit>
Georgia Department of Natural Resources Flood MAP: <http://www.georgiadfirm.com/>
FEMA Flood Preparation and Safety handout: http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1450-20490-6816/f684_prep08.pdf

Oftentimes, local agencies are funded explicitly to provide training and information about these subjects. The Landings should consider contacting these agencies to deliver this information to residents, many of whom may have worked with such agencies in their former locations. With the active volunteer base at The Landings, one or many residents who are knowledgeable about the subject could be the "on-site" liaison, available to answer questions and offer advice, and set up trainings using resources such as:
<http://savannahga.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1763>

The Georgia Extension Office offers a bevy of pertinent information of living with nature, including publications on wildlife: <http://extension.uga.edu/environment/wildlife/>

Stage 2 Recommendations:

The goals in this focus area should be emergency preparedness. Getting the residents information through welcome materials, seminars, trainings, educational walks, or webinars is extremely important. This way, The Landings can demonstrate how to live harmoniously with nature while being safe. To achieve such goals, tracking the number of residents who received the information, the number of times the information was distributed, and the number of ways in which the message was communicated, will help to measure the commitment to public safety and emergency management given the location of the community.

▪ Recreation

Assessment Results: 6 Yes; 4 No; 0 N/A

Highlights: Recreational Opportunities; Mapping; Communications

Improvements: Resource Efficient Facilities; Signage; Incentives

Comments:

The Landings is a very active community. This focus area is well covered by the various classes and services offered by the community. We commend your organized outings and events! The residents are clearly engaged and enthusiastic about staying active. The Landings' community recreation opportunities are well communicated and documented. The quality of recreation and park facilities in communities may be a significant factor which pulls retirees to new communities. Residents who engage in social and cultural activities and develop ties to their new communities are more likely to be satisfied with their community, their quality of life, and tend to stay in that community. Available recreation opportunities, including parks, are likely to be important to permanent and temporary (seasonal) retiree relocators because of their significant contribution to quality-of-life. Leisure and recreation are viewed as a vehicle for developing stronger personal and interpersonal relationships, building community capital through volunteering, creating a sense of community identify, and enhancing the physical health and wellness of the community.

The Leave No Trace ethic applies not only to wilderness areas but to recreational nature trails as well. Identify locations with high use and litter problems to install educational signage, and be sure to communicate through community bulletins the amount of litter picked up by volunteers.

Stage 2 Recommendations:

After reviewing the submitted materials and looking through the website, we determined that some projects and plans for this focus area will be synchronizing, organizing, and marketing for the community and residents. For instance, having a comprehensive list or calendar of recreation opportunities for guests, residents, and potential new residents will help to outline the recreational opportunities available on- and off-site. To ensure some fitness facilities are available to all on the island, consider advocating for the State Park's swimming pool to be reinstated, closed due to budget cuts.

Encouraging recreation activities that offer a nature experience will not only increase residents' sense of place, but it will also reduce the amount of recreational infrastructure needed. Focus on reducing participation fees for low-impact recreational activities – such as passive recreation like kayaking, hiking, sailing, biking, and bird watching – to incentivize participation. To further offset costs, ensure that recreational facilities are using resource efficient lighting and water saving technologies where possible.

Another possible goal could be to have resident's stories available on the website and in printed materials. The testimonies can be created by presenting each recreation group (golfers, tennis players, hikers, birders, etc.) with real resident photos. These stories can draw the reader in, placing themselves in the community and providing insight on the activities they may choose to enjoy.

▪ Resource Use

Assessment Results: 72 Yes; 11 No; 8 N/A

Highlights: Water Conservation Planning; Native Plant Use; Monitoring Water Use; Irrigation System Efficiency; Water Quality Management; Energy Efficiency; Integrated Pest Management; Recycling; Waste Reduction Planning; Reuse Programming; Composting Programming; Litter Removal

Improvements: Home Water/Energy Audits; Resource Reduction Policies; Waste Survey; Construction Recycling

Comments:

The Landings is doing a great job of reducing the community's resource use. We commend your dedication to keeping the community aesthetically pleasing without sacrificing the environment. There are too many planned communities that not only encourage, but mandate residents to keep properties looking as if they are located in another ecosystem. The use of native plants, solar power, recycling services, and litter removal is something to be proud of!

Often times, the issues faced by communities cannot be defined by political boundaries. Environmental issues, for example, are more often defined by watershed boundaries, ecological regions, and landscape features such as rivers, lakes, mountains, and forests. Because of this, looking to potential regional partners that can help address the needs and concerns of the community in regards to water resources is a good way to keep costs down. Especially in Georgia, *as mentioned under "Environment," reducing the amount of irrigation water used can be accomplished several ways. Converting to a drought-tolerant turf, xeriscaping, and naturalization can reduce the amount of irrigated acreage and maintaining lawns at higher mowing cuts decreases irrigation needs. The Landings is way ahead of the game with most of this, but putting a game plan in place and marketing efforts is a good way to educate and make water resource projects and policies sustainable.

The Landings has some great potential and existing projects in place regarding energy efficiency. For instance, something as simple as the signs in the community buildings under each room's light switch reminding users to turn off the light cuts back on energy use and saves money. Looking into programmatic partners that can assist with education, outreach and funding will help alleviate the burden of providing services directly to homeowners. The Georgia Solar Energy Association has been conducting an outreach program to homeowners associations promoting standards for the aesthetic installation of solar energy devices and incentives available through federal and state sources. More information is on their website: <http://gasolar.org/>

Georgia Power offers free home energy audits to all customers.
<http://residential.georgiapower.com/products-programs/energy-audit/>

Helpful resources, including WaterSense, of which AI is a partner and sponsor, and Conserve Water Georgia:

<http://www.epa.gov/watersense/>

<http://www.conservewatergeorgia.net/documents/community-government.html>

For presentations, contact EPD associates: Alice Miller Keyes (Alice_Keyes@dnr.state.ga.us 912-262-3185) or Lebone Moeti (Lebone_Moeti@dnr.state.ga.us 404-463-1762)

Stage 2 Recommendations:

There are many facets to waste management and recycling. All facets are driven by the goal of reducing a community's waste stream, the amount of garbage that is deposited in landfills, and by incorporating reuse and recycling efforts to minimize our impact on natural resources, find valuable uses for materials, and "close the loop" by purchasing goods made from recycled content (i.e. office paper, carpets). Reducing energy consumption, improving efficiency, and seeking out alternative renewable sources of energy are paramount for the future of our communities.

In a free market society, we vote with our dollars. We can create a demand for energy efficient, low waste materials, and the purchasing power of all The Landings residents is important. In community offices and facilities, purchase items which can be reused or recycled. Approach local suppliers to determine if you can get a reduced price on compact fluorescent light bulbs, low-flow showerheads and faucets, and items made from recycled materials. By increasing demand for a product, producers will be able to increase production, which will lead to future price reductions, allowing others to purchase more environmentally sensitive products at a lower cost in the future. A good example of this premise is recycled office paper. Environmental organizations, governments, and environmentally-minded businesses made it a policy to purchase office paper with recycled content, despite its higher cost. Today, we can buy recycled paper for the same, and sometimes lower, cost of paper made from virgin material.

Outdoor water conservation and solid waste management are also important in The Landings. In Stage 2, tracking residents' use of incentive programs, energy efficiency programs, and overall resource use will help residents continually monitor and reduce use. Additionally the number of incentive programs and resources available should be tracked. Reaching out to the maintenance facilities and maintenance staff, as well as the club and golf course, to provide training about integrated pest management, water quality control, water conservation, and waste reduction is something AI can help facilitate. In addition, planned communities often allow residents to hire private landscaping companies. It is important those contractors understand the principles of resource efficiency and The Landings' dedication to such.

Communicating the community's goals for reducing water and waste to all residents can help engage them in the effort. For example, the average recycling rate for a U.S. resident is 1.5 pounds per person per day. According to your recycling center participation, Landings' residents are diverting 0.34 pounds per person per day from the waste stream. There is room for improvement! Ask your other waste management providers and utilities to report data on your community that you can convert and compare in these terms. Be sure to convert the data from millions of gallons (as currently reported in the Journal) to numbers that people can relate to, such as average per person. Finally, celebrate your achievements, when the community hits major milestones!

▪ Volunteerism & Civic Engagement

Assessment Results: 8 Yes; 2 No; 2 N/A

Highlights: Diverse Volunteer Opportunities; Active and Diverse Committees; Diverse Events and Activities

Improvements: Tracking; Synchronizing

Comments:

Volunteerism and community engagement is the key to becoming a more sustainable community. The Landings has an excellent network of volunteer committees and associated activities. From the submitted materials, there are a wide variety of opportunities for residents to become involved in the community, and a variety of low- or no-cost educational programs offered. The Landings Journal and website calendar are good vehicles for relaying these opportunities to residents, and the information is comprehensive and versatile. Archiving this information on the website is invaluable, providing a paperless and convenient option for residents and the public to access the information and provide a snapshot of life in the community.

The Landings is doing a great job on providing volunteer opportunities for community enrichment activities. More importantly, community members have the opportunity to help with regional efforts too. A community is successful in becoming more sustainable by having a network of volunteers working to improve the quality of life within the community and all around the world. The phrase “think locally, act globally” applies to the residents of The Landings. By offering support to off-site organizations and people, the community is helping the world around them become more sustainable.

Stage 2 Recommendations:

The goals for this focus area should be tracking, synchronizing, and organizing the volunteer network that exists in the community. Keeping the list of groups and services on the website updated is important, and you may want to consider a “live” version of a database that committee/group leaders can update themselves. Updating a central database of committees and volunteers will help to organize volunteer opportunities and participants. This can give a synopsis of community values, provide numbers for funding, and create a volunteer organization as a whole. By creating a community volunteer database, committees needing more volunteers can appeal to a specific audience. Further, this will help to institutionalize incentives for volunteers (i.e. volunteer of the year awards, event attendance awards, vote for your favorite volunteer activity, etc.). Communities that reward residents who participate in volunteer events will have residents that are more inclined to help.

Organizing volunteer opportunities by type, similar to the groups list on the website, will help residents, and particularly new residents, identify community values and ways in which they might help. Types can be locations such as on-site and off-site, categories like arts/culture or environment, or frequency, whether volunteers are needed once, annually, monthly, etc. Similarly, keeping a central list of volunteers who have offered services to the residents (lecturers, gardening experts, health care practitioners) will help provide a roster of information sources.

▪ Transportation

Assessment Results: 21 Yes; 2 No; 13 N/A

Highlights: Golf Cart/Alternative Transportation Usage On-Site, Safety; Organized Outings

Improvements: Mapping; Signage; Connectivity; Trails Linkage; Traffic Control

Comments:

The location and design of the community constrains transportation options for The Landings. Organizing a community transportation service could potentially either hinder time schedules for residents or become costly. The remote location of the community prohibits use of public transportation systems, but the community can share information with residents about the Chatham Area Transit bus route that runs through the Village. The age of the residents may affect their view on shared transportation, and will directly affect their ability to walk or ride when taking health or physical limitations into consideration. Keeping these constraints in mind, there are some things The Landings is doing under this focus area.

Several small steps residents may take to become more sustainable under this focus area can be done in the community center. For instance, you can maintain a car sharing information board (like many college dormitories have) for longer or regular trips (grocery store every Wednesday morning; Tucson last weekend of the month). Also, you can create a map with distances between amenities documented. This will help residents track their recreation miles, and plan on-site trips according to best type of transportation. Sustainable transportation systems are also about design. Having a bike “library” or a special section in the library for local flora and fauna guides will help encourage residents to try alternative forms of transportation.

The Landings might consider marking walking, biking, and driving lanes. Clearly marking the roads in the community for multiple uses will remind residents and guests of the other types of transportation (feet, bikes, etc.). Simple signs and other visual cues that help residents and guests identify scenic routes or points of interest can encourage walking or biking over driving. Using the natural beauty of the community as an impetus to walk to check the mail or attend an event at the community center will help to discourage the use of cars on-site. Ensure connectivity of walking and biking trails around the community and to off-site amenities like the Village.

Additional resources on making safe streets for pedestrians can be found here:
http://www.lgc.org/freepub/community_design/factsheets/traffic_safety.html

Finally, transportation systems include the roadway materials and roadway landscapes. Considering what types of materials might help alleviate water movement is important for stormwater management and groundwater protection. Pervious pavement and recycled materials for roadways can help cut costs in the long-term.

Stage 2 Recommendations:

For Stage 2, tracking alternative transportation route use is important to measure how useful trails, bike sharing, and other programs are to residents. Tracking ride sharing can help to reduce the carbon output of the community. Funding is available for alternative transportation systems even in private communities, because the reduction of carbon footprints by using such transportation is proven and effective. Additionally, marking the roadways with signs or road paint can help The Landings market itself as a community where you can park your car and still go anywhere you want. Capitalizing on the trail systems and active lifestyle of many residents will help set the community apart.

■ Comments and Further Recommendations

Each focus area was presented with comprehensive information to jump start your thinking process about Stage 2. In Stage 2, The Landings will decide goals for each focus area, with associated targets chosen to track and measure progress on those goals. This becomes the community's **Long-Term Vision Plan**.

Keep in mind that in order for this process to be effective, one person or one committee cannot reasonably be expected to implement and track the goals. Therefore, each focus area should be assigned to a separate committee or person, with the Coordinator acting as the "information collector." For instance, The Landings will choose goals to achieve under the Governance focus area. It appears that these goals should be carried out and tracked by the Landings Association. The AI Sustainability Coordinator will collect information about progress from the Association, and send it to AI. In the end, we will help you track the success of your existing programs, give you new resources and project ideas, and help you publicize your progress.

We work with many Cooperative Extension Agencies across the United States, and feel they offer the most relevant, trusted, and scientific information to land managers, neighborhoods, and communities. We encourage you to contact your local extension agent to review the education opportunities. Many of our members have also found that funding for specific initiatives is available through such agencies:

University of Georgia Cooperative Extension in Chatham County
124 Bull Street
Suite 120
Savannah, GA 31401
PHONE: (912) 652-7981
FAX: (912) 652-7989

We are always looking for promotional-quality pictures and slides to use in slide presentations, documents, and our website. Pictures should be clear, in-focus, and have good contrasts. They can be in color or black-and-white. We cannot use Polaroid pictures or color copies of photos for our promotional materials, although we can use them to review certification requests. The subject matter we need includes: naturalized areas, vegetative buffers, close-ups of wildlife and native plants, before and after pictures of projects, people recreating, planning meetings, and people involved in projects such as planting or monitoring nest boxes.

■ Next Steps

Creating a Demonstration Site

Models play an important role in creating community awareness. The primary contact person and Neighborhood Audubon Committee should initially focus on one site.

The purpose of the Demonstration Site is to demonstrate ways to promote ecologically sound land management, conserve natural resources, and promote environmental education and awareness. As citizens visit the site, they will see the commitment to environmental stewardship and a challenge to the community members to follow their lead. Further, letting people know about your environmental commitment and ongoing stewardship efforts, why the efforts are being made, and how they directly benefit the residents is vital to developing ownership of the program by individuals and encouraging action in their homes.

The Landings should start with highlighting current areas that residents and guests may associate with stewardship and sustainability:
Sparrow Field

Nature Trail
Local Foods at the Dining Facilities
Reclaimed Water Use

The Landings might also highlight projects that residents and guests may not connect to sustainability efforts, such as:

Archaeological Sites (History and Culture Preservation)
Community Library (Reuse and Transportation Savings)
Community Golf Cart Use (Lower Emissions)
Home Design Standards (Lower Energy Cost Colors/ Building Materials)
Resident's Art Projects (Community Culture)

You might take pictures of each site, create a description that links the picture to stewardship, and mount those pieces on a map or display in the main hall of the community center, or erect signage at one or more sites. Using the existing assets will show the communities' commitment to sustainability. Remember that many times the steps we take to save money, improve our quality of life, or enhance knowledge, also benefit the environment, economy, and social systems in the community. We encourage you to be creative and look in places you might have not otherwise thought of!

The Treasuring Home Initiative

Valuing and caring for your community's natural resources and unique landscapes is critical to creating a healthier and more sustainable environment for the future...and it all starts in our own backyards. Practicing good environmental stewardship in and around residents' homes is a vital way to make a positive contribution to the quality of the environment where you live. Treasuring Home includes information on what your residents can do indoors, beyond their backyards, additional resources, and the Treasuring Home Survey. Find out why people choose to live in The Landings and make these priority areas. For more information, visit the Education Resources section of the member's only website: <https://www.auduboninternational.org/members-sustainable-communities>

Creating Incentives

Strive to create incentives for members of your community to make sustainability "the way they do things." Offer preferred coupons for recreational activities, free dessert night at the Clubhouse, showcase of homes tours for innovative resource use, or certificates of achievement. Competitions are a fun and effective way to engage residents and institutionalize actions like water conservation. Remember, people love to feel appreciated for contributing, so rewarding even small actions will yield phenomenal results! If you would like ideas about successful incentives or reward programs, feel free to contact us.

■ Audubon Information, Support and Guidance

We are available to provide additional information, support, and guidance to help you implement SCP projects. If you have questions or need more information, feel free to call us. Also remember that your experiences, both positive and negative, may be very helpful to other properties involved in the Sustainable Communities Program. If you are encountering problems with your management efforts, we'd like to know that too. Staff is in the office on weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. We can also be reached by e-mail at scp@auduboninternational.org.

Local support for your Audubon efforts is also available. Our *Stewardship Network* is made up of individuals who have brought a property through certification in the Audubon program. These stewards are eager to share their knowledge and help others implement the program.

Thanks for your commitment to environmental quality. We are excited about all of your plans. Feel free to give us a call if you have any questions about the program or projects. Please keep in contact regarding your projects. Keep in touch!