



Sir Robert Borden School Sustainability Plan

In association with Ottawa Biosphere Eco-City Initiative (OBEC)
& Sustainable Youth Canada (SYC)

Completed: 28 June 2016

What is Sustainability?

Sustainability is the ability of things to continue to exist. It applies to natural and human features. We use the earth's resources to meet our needs, but we also want to leave enough natural resources and beauty for future generations to live healthy and happy lives. What we do matters. You impact the environment—the environment impacts you.

What is this Sustainability Plan?

Students developed this plan. Ten students from the school held discussions with several classes to get ideas for the plan. This sustainability plan is your agenda for action. It lists Sir Robert Borden students' ideas on important issues in Ottawa and their local area, and suggests actions or projects that could address them. As you read the plan, you may get new ideas on what you can do to address sustainability. Feel free to put your own ideas into action.

The table of Priority Issues and Actions/Projects for sustainability list three kinds of projects the students have suggested, distinguished by different colours and print styles:

- a) **Student & family projects**
- b) **School projects**
- c) *Community projects*

The last page helps you to decide your personal priorities for sustainability and to make a commitment for action. It then becomes *your personal sustainability plan*.

Biosphere Eco-City

The Biosphere Eco-City (BEC) initiative aims to create a culture of sustainability in a city by 1 involving people, 2 encouraging cooperation, and 3 supporting the sharing of information on sustainability. BEC includes a city's urban core and its surrounding countryside.

Biosphere means, "sphere of life" and is the Earth's outer shell of land, water and atmosphere that supports all life. People have the power to harm or protect the Biosphere. Let's protect it.

The Ottawa Biosphere Eco-City initiative (OBEC) has operated in Ottawa since 2009. It is an all-volunteer charitable organization. Its members believe that government plans are useful, but the actions of you, your friends and neighbours will make the most difference in determining whether Ottawa will be sustainable.

Themes of Sustainability

These are the areas of action for sustainability. Think of sustainability in terms of your area of interest. Whether it is energy, food or waste etc., you can share ideas and activities with people who have the same interests. BEC's Ten Themes of Sustainability are described in the left column of the table beginning on page 3 of this plan. Issues may relate to more than one Theme.

Ottawa Biosphere Eco-City Tools

The Ottawa Biosphere Eco-City (OBEC) Initiative uses simple tools to help people get involved, cooperate and share information on sustainability. They are:

- **Sustainability Plan** – This plan was developed by your students as an agenda on how to address sustainability.
- **Database of Projects** – The OBEC website (obec-evbo.ca) lists many sustainability projects. Anyone with a sustainability project can send a summary to OBEC to put on its database. You can read about them, get ideas and contact project managers to get more information.
- **Demonstration Projects** – These show new ways of addressing sustainability. People can see how the projects were done and even copy parts that interest them.
- **Biosphere Eco-City Council** – Stakeholders and volunteers meet to share ideas and to provide direction to make Ottawa sustainable.

Sir Robert Borden High School

Sir Robert Borden High School is a large, culturally diverse, community-based secondary school located on Greenbank Road. It promotes well-being, creativity, critical thinking and leadership. It has significant outdoor space including large athletic fields. Community involvement and world issues are important at Sir Robert Borden; both of which are addressed in this sustainability plan. Enrolment in 2015-2016 was 840 students.

Sir Robert Borden, OBEC and SYC Partnership

In January 2015, volunteers from OBEC and SYC formed a partnership to develop a training program for high school students. This training would allow student leaders to lead the development of Sustainability Plans and Implementation Strategies for their schools. This happens through short formal discussions with fellow students, who suggest issues and actions for each of Ten Themes of Sustainability. In the spring of 2016, OBEC volunteers trained 10 student leaders at Sir Robert Borden and they organized workshops to brainstorm ideas for the school's sustainability plan.

Sustainability Vision for Sir Robert Borden Students

Sustainability relates to people's use of the environment and the impact of that environment on their quality of life. This plan proposes that students and staff at Sir Robert Borden High School incorporate sustainability principles and practices into their work and lives. In so doing, they will enjoy a healthy, sustainable environment. This supports a high quality of life now and in future generations.

Ottawa & Sir Robert Borden's School Area

Ottawa, developed around the junction of the Ottawa and Rideau rivers, is the capital of Canada. Ottawa is a diverse city with a population of over 900 000 people. The beautiful landscape has multitudes of green spaces within the urban area, and includes a green belt of farms around the urban core. Eighty percent of Ottawa is rural and contains some of the best agricultural land in Canada. Ottawa is one the most educated cities in Canada as well as one of the most bilingual.

Sir Robert Borden High School is located in the west end of Ottawa and draws students from Craig Henry, Briargreen, Qualicum-Graham Park, and Trend-Arlington. This is a diverse area with a mix of high and low-income housing.



| Sustainability Theme | Priority Issues | Sustainability Projects |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Transportation (Movement of goods and people)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Families with unnecessarily large vehicles - Students get rides to school on rainy days - Students getting a ride alone to school - Need to motivate students to walk to school - Some students can't afford bicycles - Qualicum too far to walk, unsafe to bike | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss energy efficient vehicles at supper table - Wear raincoats and promote them as "cool" - Sell school umbrellas - Create carpool for school & sports events - Free lemonade or hot chocolate for walkers - Program to repair, paint & sell old bicycles - Create a rent-a-bike program - <i>Get group to sponsor low-cost helmets</i> - Get school bus for Qualicum students |
| <p>Energy (For buildings, transportation, manufacturing and agriculture)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poorly insulated houses - Electricity use for games & entertainment - Cost of shipping overseas food & equipment - Heavy electricity use to light classrooms - Incandescent lights are inefficient | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage parents to get energy audit - Insulate house as needed - Install weather stripping around doors - Invite friends over for board games - Buy local where possible - No-power hour one day per semester for which students bring non-scented candles - More school use of fluorescent & LED lights |

| Sustainability Theme | Priority Issues | Sustainability Projects |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Design (Of buildings, roads, public spaces and communities)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bike racks unorganized & clustered at front door; not all students enter there - Students don't ride on rainy days for fear bikes will get wet and rust - Students getting a ride alone to school - Plants in school good for mental & physical health - Lack of refuge from heat for people without air conditioning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make efficient bike rack design and spread around school - Make a shelter for bike racks - Free lemonade or hot chocolate for walkers - Increase use of plants in lobby & classrooms - Fundraise for "green wall" in school - <i>Ask community group to work with City to provide access to libraries & community centres during heat waves</i> |
| <p>Habitat (Living places for plants and animals, both urban and rural, on land and in water)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of habitat for pollinating insects - Overuse of paper increases tree cutting & reduces habitat for animals - Lack of insect diversity on school property - Urban students don't experience woodlands | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plant butterfly & bee gardens at home - Join Great Canadian Bumble Bee Count - Plant Milkweed for Monarch Butterflies - After reading newspapers & magazines, give to others to read - Allow only double-sided printing in library - Plant flowers to attract more diverse insects - Create a roof-top garden on school - Ask for school Woodland Program at Wesley Clover Park - <i>Join group to protect woodlands</i> - <i>Help community groups to plant trees</i> |

| Sustainability Theme | Priority Issues | Sustainability Projects |
|--|---|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Food (Local or organic food, urban gardens, heritage crops and animals)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People eat too little local healthy food - Too much take-out food eaten at home - Too much waste from student lunches - Cattle raising creates “greenhouse gas” - Children without experience growing food | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Grow vegetables in back yard or in containers</i> - <i>Patronize local farmers markets</i> - <i>Hold a “healthy food” fair at school</i> - <i>Help create a community garden</i> - <i>Sell simple recipe book as school “healthy food” fair</i> - <i>Make meals & snacks from scratch</i> - <i>Pack your lunch in re-usable containers</i> - <i>Hold “no-waste” Fridays for lunch at school</i> - <i>Promote “Meatless Mondays”</i> - <i>Help create a Children’s Garden</i> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Natural Capital (Soil, water, wood, air and other natural materials that meet human needs)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wooden furniture is thrown in garbage - Runoff from properties overtaxes storm water system - Artificial fertilizer and herbicide pollutes soil & water - Overuse of paper which comes from trees - Garbage along local streams | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Give useable furniture to Salvation Army</i> - <i>Learn how to repair furniture</i> - <i>Collect rainwater at school to water school gardens</i> - <i>Suggest parents use rain barrels at home</i> - <i>Suggest parents use permeable pavers in laneway</i> - <i>Persuade parents to have an organic lawn</i> - <i>Enforce online handouts and hand-ins for classes</i> - <i>Help clean up streams</i> |

| Sustainability Theme | Priority Issues | Sustainability Projects |
|--|---|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Waste (Reducing, reusing, recycling and processing of wastes, and conversion of waste to energy)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduce use of plastic bottles - Waste because of disposable batteries - Too much packaging on retail products - Disposal of items after short period of use - Items for composting going into waste - Used books are not reused - Plastic bags are not recyclable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stop sale of plastic bottles in vending machines - Install more water bottle fillers - Offer SRB merchandise bottles (recycled materials) - Bring your own water bottle to school - Have school use rechargeable batteries - Buy products with reduced packaging - Repair items that are easy to fix - Compost bins in cafeteria, kitchen & staff rooms/offices - <i>Donate books to community book sales</i> - <i>Make milk bag blankets for poor people in tropical countries</i> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Health (Clean air and water, safety, tranquility, and environmental needs of vulnerable groups)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prescription drugs flushed down the sink affect our water and fish - Fumes from floor wax in gym affect health and performance - Some students living alone after high school can't handle everyday problems - Some students are inactive - Seniors & handicapped need more outdoor experiences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offer to be a health guardian at your house and take old drugs back to the pharmacy - Use non-toxic floor wax on gym floor - Provide training for life in Home Economics Class - Former students give talks on coping after high school - Organize indoor/outdoor walking discussion club - Invite and welcome seniors to school games - <i>Help make playgrounds accessible</i> |

| Sustainability Theme | Priority Issues | Sustainability Projects |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Recreation (Non-motorized activities, urban or rural recreation, 'greening' of events)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many students eat lunch only inside and sit all the time - Lack of free sports tournaments and little variety - Too few outdoor activities that are not performance-based | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put more picnic table outside so students will play or walk around after lunch - Hold free/cheap monthly sports tournaments and rotate sports featured - Organize field trips to outdoor locations - Ask a community association to create a local hiking club for young people - Ask a community association to promote casual recreation programs |
| <p>Sense of Place (Feeling of belonging to a community of city, that leads to care for others and environmental stewardship)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some students don't identify with Ottawa - School clubs are too few and most are not well known - People in the community need to meet to create a stronger community - Some people feel uncomfortable in parks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organize "My favourite place in Ottawa" video contest - Hold a school fair where club members advertise their clubs to other students - Ask your parents to organize a street party for Victoria Day or Canada Day - Volunteer to create a community garden where people can come together - Help community groups put plants/trees in parks - Help community groups organize events in parks |

Get Involved - Your Plan for Action

This Sir Robert Borden Sustainability Plan will now become your plan. It was meant to give you ideas on how to take action within your school at home, or in your neighbourhood. In the space below, you are invited to make your commitment to sustainability.

What issues from above most interest you? Try to pick issues in which you know you can make a difference. What action could you take to address these issues? Consider this your project. It could even be a project sponsored by your school.



The Project Database on the OBEC website is a great tool to find out what other individuals and organizations in Ottawa are doing to contribute to sustainability in Ottawa. If you develop or join in a sustainability project, please consider sharing it with others on the Ottawa Biosphere Eco-City Database at: obec-evbo.ca

Your priority sustainability issue(s):

Your proposed project (s) that you can take:



Thank you for contributing to the sustainability of your school and your community.

Report by:
Sustainability Leadership Team of Sir Robert Borden High School,
In association with:
Ottawa Biosphere Eco-City Initiative, and
Sustainable Youth Canada



With Support from the City of Ottawa

