



GOVERNMENT CONNEXT FORUM

INNOVATION FOR IMPROVED CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

welcome to
Sustainable Jersey's first
Government Con*next* Forum

a celebration of people, governments
and organizations that innovate
to solve community issues

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Sustainable Jersey



Municipalities
428 Registered
177 Certified

Schools
100 Districts
208 Schools
59 Certified!



GOVERNANCE

Why Does It Matter?

To achieve sustainability it is essential to have a functioning democracy and effective government that acts for the common good and is responsive to citizens. In this context, we define governance as the institutions, social norms, rules, laws, and power relationships that collectively make up our system. This includes how well government provides services, regulates, problem-solves, and performs its other functions. It also includes the means by which we make public decisions including everything from the rules of the electoral system, to the myriad forms of citizen engagement, such as public hearings and local volunteer commissions. Finally, it also includes the social norms that enable citizens to organize to exercise power within the political system and, where necessary, reform that system when it goes astray. When governmental institutions are just and transparent, citizens and their representatives are able to obtain needed information, participate in decision-making, and work towards consensus for setting common goals.

The Goal

We envision a New Jersey in which empowered people take responsibility for informing themselves and where they exercise their rights to participate effectively in public decision making. This will be a New Jersey where elected officials reflect, represent and respond to diverse constituencies, think beyond short term electoral cycles, and seek the common good, and where government institutions are effective, efficient, transparent, and accountable.

“There has been a strong, dominant push for short term thinking throughout the political and business world...we urgently need to group together and make a collective noise, a collective cry... to say that we want a different relationship with the future.” - Camilla Toulmin



more specifically...

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governance indicators

How Is New Jersey Doing?



All **people of NJ are empowered to participate** equally in the formal and informal processes of government at all levels.



Voter Registration

The percentage of the eligible population that is registered to vote has been growing.



Voter Turnout

Voter turnout, particularly in locally focused elections, has been declining for several decades.



Informed Electorate

The percentage of voters who are aware of the party controlling the NJ State Legislature has varied over time, with no clear trend.



Inclusive Decision-Making Bodies

No statewide data are readily available on the composition of elected and appointed governing bodies by gender, race, ethnicity or socioeconomic status.



Political Mobilization

No statewide data provide a comprehensive account of how actively members of the public contact politicians, attend and speak at planning meetings and political hearings, act as part of political or issue advocacy groups, or otherwise mobilize politically to promote their interests and values.



how we got here

- ✓ Formed a **Public Information & Engagement** task force
 - municipal, county & state government experts in information technology, finance, administration, public records, emergency management, planning
 - digital and open government leaders
- ✓ Created 8 new actions
- ✓ Today is start of process: learning together

- * **how does it relate to sustainability?**



our new Public Information & Engagement actions

- citizen engagement
 1. Improve Public Engagement in Municipal Government
 2. Improve Public Engagement in Planning/Zoning
 3. Online Municipal Public Service Systems
- communications
 4. Municipal Communications Strategy
 5. Emergency Communications Planning
 6. Vulnerable Populations Identification for Emergencies
- access to public information
 7. Digitizing Public Information
 8. Open Data Inventory & Management



today's program takeaways

- ✓ learn about our **new actions** as relate to session content
- ✓ provide **feedback** to Sustainable Jersey
- ✓ hear from experts on **what's working in the field** & best practices for bringing it to your town
- ✓ discover **case stories** for inspiration
- ✓ meet companies & organizations that can help you implement our actions with their **innovative solutions**
- ✓ **network** with others in same boat



keynote

dr. alan shark (@publictechguy)



- ✓ Executive Director & CEO of Public Technology Institute (@Public_Tech)
- ✓ Director for The Center for Technology Leadership at Rutgers University
- ✓ Renowned expert in mobile and e-government, digital technology trends in government, thought-leadership & professional development issues for both IT executives & public managers

See Dr. Shark's individual presentation: <http://bit.ly/sharkkeynote>