



Sustainable Jersey Special Award Recipients

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Rookie of the Year Award

This award recognizes a municipality that remained committed to achieving certification despite challenges along the way.

Recipients

- 2023: Tinton Falls (Monmouth)
- 2022: Wildwood Crest (Cape May)
- 2021: New Milford (Bergen)
- 2020: Town of Westfield (Union)
- 2019: Audubon Borough (Cape May)
- 2018: Manville Borough (Somerset)
- 2017: National Park Borough (Gloucester)
- 2016: Monroe Township (Gloucester)

Creativity & Innovation Award

This award recognizes a forward-thinking municipality that supports a culture of creativity and innovation as it implements new approaches to solving problems.

2023: Bogota, Fair Lawn, Glen Rock, Hackensack, Oakland, Oradell, Ridgefield Park

These seven towns are active in the Bergen County Sustainability Hub and members of Creative Bergen. They work together using creative placemaking to enhance the quality of life within their own communities and across the county by hosting multi-town/multi-day events to celebrate the arts and local artists and performers. Most recently, they hosted the first Busking Festival in Bergen County in which several towns sent their top street performers to perform in a free, day-long event. Members of this collaborative initiated a mentor program for any green teams interested in implementing



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Sustainable Jersey's suite of Arts & Creative Community actions, with the message that if you're not submitting for arts actions, you're leaving meaningful points on the table.

2022: Trenton

Trenton received this award for the North Trenton/Battle Monument Choice Neighborhood Transformation Plan. The Transformation Plan represents more than 24 months of intensive engagement and collaboration amongst residents and a host of community stakeholders. It is spearheaded by the Trenton Housing Authority (THA) in partnership with the City of Trenton Department of Housing and Economic Development and local community organization Isles Inc., along with a host of residents, city leaders, neighboring townships and more. The CHOICE Plan includes a substantial number of sustainability measures, including green buildings, complete streets, green infrastructure, parks improvements and public safety measures to improve walkability. The Plan is designed to meet the requirements of LEED-ND certification and takes a holistic approach to creating a sustainable community in the heart of Trenton.

2021: Red Bank

Red Bank Borough was recognized for two innovative programs that contribute to making the Borough a safer and more inclusive community. The Volunteer Translator Program makes volunteer interpreters available to help police in their normal duties as well as at community events. The volunteers bridge language divides when police are dealing with the public. The Operation Blue Angel program involves the installation of a blue lockbox on or next to the front door of a residence. Inside is a key to the home supplied by the home's primary occupants, which police alone can use to enter the residence in an emergency. The service is open to borough residents over 55 who live alone or have medical conditions that might impede them in opening the door for police answering an emergency call.

2020: Merchantville

Merchantville was recognized for the program: Incredible Edible Merchantville. Motivated by climate change and a TED Talk on "How We Can Eat Our Landscapes," two residents realized that securing future sustainability in Merchantville would require innovative community efforts. In July 2018, their proposal for Incredible Edible Merchantville was approved by the Borough Council under the municipal green team with the goals of promoting sustainable living, food justice and environmental education to encourage healthy communities. Since then, participants have been working to create food forests in public and private spaces to grow local food and support the local food economy.

2019: Fair Lawn, Glen Rock, Leonia, Oakland, Oradell, Ridgefield Park, Ridgewood and Wyckoff

In order to increase public awareness of the negative impacts of Styrofoam, these eight municipalities developed a curriculum called "The Science of Styrofoam" and hosted twelve trainings for students in the schools across the county. The program involved the local businesses and a certificate and a "Bergen



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Styrofoam Free" decal for those businesses to display. To date, this group has conducted nine collection drives, keeping over 3,000 lbs. of expanded polystyrene, or "EPS" used for packaging, out of the landfills! Recently, the group also successfully urged the Bergen County Freeholders to pass a ban on XPS (or extruded polystyrene) food containers from all county property.

2018: Hightstown

The Hightstown Cultural Arts Commission developed a Public Art Master Plan and Hightstown's Planning Board adopted it as part of the Borough's Municipal Master Plan. Included in the plan is a requirement that a percentage of any redevelopment efforts be dedicated to the inclusion of public art. Over the past two years the commission has worked with the greater community to establish pop-up art galleries throughout the borough and dramatic arts and theater performances with children of all ages at the local parks.

2017: Jersey City

Jersey City has prioritized transparency of data and has allowed public access for its public information and engagement and open data initiatives. There is an executive order in the works that will finalize the long-term commitment of the City to open data.

2016: Longport

Longport Borough enacted New Jersey's first single-use bag fee ordinance. The 10-cent fee imposed on all single-use bags is not punitive in nature. The monies charged are kept by the businesses providing the bags, so it is not a tax. The additional fee's true purpose is to raise awareness and encourage the public to bring a reusable bag.

2015: New Brunswick

New Brunswick's Clean City Block Captain program that engages neighborhoods through community involvement. All residents are encouraged to become Clean City Block Captains. Captains conduct mini clean-ups on their block and educate neighbors about the importance of keeping their block clean. This grass roots effort keeps litter off the streets and builds community bonds block by block. The City provides Block Captains with bags, gloves, educational materials in both English and Spanish along with technical support. Block Captains also promote the City's "Stop. Think. Go Green -- Keep New Brunswick Clean" slogan which encourages people to use trash receptacles and recycle.

2014: Warren Township

The Warren Township Utility Committee (WTUC), in collaboration with the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Rutgers University, developed a mobile Hazard Tracker App, in response to the devastating destruction of the utility infrastructure in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, Hurricane Irene, and the October 2012 snowstorms. The mobile Hazard Tracker App proactively identifies utility hazards as



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an emergency management tool prior to the arrival of a significant weather-related event, potentially saving trees at risk. This app can be used by other municipalities to become a more resilient community.

2013: Rahway

Rahway has worked to connect arts, economic development, creativity and sustainability into their community. Last January in partnership with Creative New Jersey, they convened a diverse group of 75 community members at a two-day event to explore opportunities to create a thriving community. Rahway is also working to integrate green building initiatives into redevelopment projects. For example, the Hamilton Stage for the Performing Arts was a deteriorated industrial building that was redesigned and renovated into a state-of-the-art performance space. Rahway also worked with the County to convert a County Bridge to a footbridge and walking path, which encourages people to walk into the downtown, bolstering the economy of the city.

2012: Harrington Park

Harrington Park involved students in environmental education and sustainability through retreats, active clubs, and initiatives. The school administration promotes recycling, working toward increased energy efficiency, and planning a comprehensive school waste program that will involve the students.

2011: Princeton Township

Princeton Township is the first town in New Jersey to test curbside food waste collection for composting. Operated by the Township Recycling coordinator, the innovative program included 193 homes and will expand to include not only Princeton Borough but also neighboring towns that would like to receive organic collection. Information is shared via websites, articles, and advertisements; in 2011, 10 tons of organic material was diverted from the landfill.

2010: Galloway and Livingston

Galloway: Galloway's taskforce for Sustainable Galloway, Go Green Galloway, took the opportunity to educate the public about the environmental dangers of single-use bags with a spirited program in which they distributed reusable shopping bags that fold into their own pouch. More than 1,100 bags have been distributed and 900 pledges collected. The local high school media class and local businesses were involved in the initiative through a new annual contest, which aims to create an advertising campaign for the project, including local radio spots and print ads, exhibiting creativity as well as collaboration with the entire community.

Livingston: During 2009-2010, Livingston had a continuing wave of events and communications about water conservation, including fix-a-leak week, the distribution of rain gauges, a workshop on building a rain garden and the building of a municipal rain garden, retrofitting of old plumbing fixtures at a building used year-round for recreational programs and alternative school, and ending with a well-publicized and well-attended Build a Rain Barrel workshop. In addition, On December 15, 2008 the Livingston Township



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Council adopted a municipal recycling ordinance that mandates recycling of computers and other electronics. This new program helped to reduce the volume of material that flows into the solid waste stream, reduce tipping fees, and increase the amount of materials being recycled and reused.

2009: Cherry Hill

Cherry Hill pioneered RecycleBank, a recycling program that enlists citizens and local businesses to help increase the township's recycling by weighing and tracking it. For every pound of waste residents recycle, they are rewarded with points that can be used to shop at local and national businesses. The municipality saves money on solid waste pick-up by reducing waste, community awareness about recycling increases and local businesses receive increased business from residents. With this program Cherry Hill increased recycling an amazing 80% in the first six months of the program.

Collaboration Award

This award recognizes municipal green teams that have advanced sustainability by building strong partnerships.

2023: North Bergen

North Bergen Township, its Green Team Advisory Board, and the Board of Education partnered on a hydroponic gardening project to educate students on alternatives to soil-based gardening. To share the success of the project, the hydroponic gardens have been featured in the local newspaper, municipal calendar and on the school website.

2022: Howell

This award recognizes the important collaboration between Howell Township, Howell Township Green Team and Environmental Commission and the Township's schools. The collaboration includes a formal Resolution of Support approved by the mayor and township council for the work between the green team, environmental commission and the local public school system.

2021: Friends Along the Mullica

The Friends Along the Mullica (comprised of City of Absecon, Atlantic City, City of Brigantine Beach, Egg Harbor City, Galloway Township, Town of Hammonton, Mullica Township and the City of Port Republic) project 9 culminated in the production of an educational film that communicates the importance of connectivity between upstream and downstream communities along the 50.6-mile-long Mullica River. The project was developed with a consortium of eight towns along the Atlantic County side of the Mullica River. The project was made possible through a Sustainable Jersey grant funded by the PSEG Foundation. Common interests explored include history, wetlands issues, climate change, litter, illegal



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dumping, off-road vehicle damage, native plant and animal awareness, storm and wastewater management, loss of habitats and more.

2020: Tri-County Sustainability's Towns Helping Towns Committee

Tri-County Sustainability's (a Sustainable Jersey Hub comprised of Burlington, Camden and Gloucester County) proactive efforts to support engagement with the Sustainable Jersey program as well as providing direct assistance to municipalities working on certification in Burlington, Camden and Gloucester counties is a great example of advancing sustainability through strong partnerships.

2019: Glen Ridge, Maplewood, Montclair, South Orange Village and Verona

In 2017, the Sustainable Essex Alliance, decided to investigate Renewable Government Energy Aggregation or Community Choice Aggregation, as a possible project for the Hub. By using the combined purchasing power of the residents, municipalities can often negotiate increased renewable content and better pricing for their residents. The Sustainable Essex Alliance Cooperative was formed. Participating towns in the first energy contract for the project include Maplewood as the lead agent, Glen Ridge, Montclair, South Orange and Verona. The purpose of doing the project as a multi-town group was to maximize the volume pricing discount for renewable energy. The participating townships' electrical supply now includes renewable content 20 percent above what is required by the state. Additionally, the Sustainable Essex Alliance Project has an energy efficiency program included as part of the project that will benefit residents in all of the participating townships.

2018: Chatham Borough, Chatham Township, and Madison

These three municipalities are active participants in the Tri-Town 55+ Coalition, a non-profit, community-based organization that in addition to these municipalities includes local businesses, non-profits, and other public agencies. Its mission is to help address the quality of life and diverse needs and interests of older adults and their families in the three towns. One of the first key initiatives implemented by the coalition is its Rides for Seniors Program that launched in April 2017. The goal is to help those 65 and older in the towns get to where they want to go, when they want to go, without a smartphone. This on-demand car service program not only serves residents but helps local organizations and businesses as well by enabling older adults remain active in the community.

2017: Longport, Margate and Ventnor

Realizing that sustainability issues do not stop at the town line, these three municipal green teams have joined forces to increase the quality of life on Absecon Island. Sustainable Downbeach and the Surfriider Foundation worked to have all Atlantic and Cape May County coastal communities pass an ordinance that prohibits the intentional release of balloons. Margate, Longport, Ventnor and approximately eight other coastal communities have adopted an ordinance. The group is now focusing on statewide legislation. The group's other projects include: reusable bag education and carry-out bag fee ordinances,



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beach sweeps, Absecon Island Back Bay Cleanups, a bike and pedestrian plan and a watershed management plan.

2016: Maplewood, Millburn, South Orange Village

The Maplewood-Millburn-South Orange Green Teams meet monthly to work on collaborative projects. Two successful projects launched include: the Re:Yard program recognizes lawns, gardens and yards for being sustainable and reducing the environmental impacts from standard yard care. The volunteer-led green teams developed a visible local movement to give residents better choices for yards and gardens. To receive re:Yard certification, a yard earns points by satisfying requirements within the re:Yard guidelines. The second program is the Essex Community Energy campaign which helps community members reduce their carbon footprint by learning about energy audits and the incentives available to them to upgrade insulation and replace inefficient heating and cooling equipment. Both programs involved multiple community events, websites and social media outreach that resulted in impressive participation rates in all three towns.

2015: Park Ridge

The Park Ridge Green Team's goal is to make their part of the world more environmentally responsible through education, engagement, partnerships and action. The group has an exemplary history of successful collaborations that move sustainability actions forward. The municipal green team partnered with the school district, principals and PTO's to implement a comprehensive recycling program. The green team also partnered with various borough groups and regional organizations to develop and implement its sustainability initiatives and programs. Partnership examples include: 1) the annual stream monitoring program with the NJDEP Watershed Ambassador/Hackensack Riverkeeper and Park Ridge High School Environmental Science students, 2) a comprehensive Wildlife Interaction Plan with the Park Ridge DPW, the Borough Planner and various non-profits, 3) the annual regional Bi-State Watershed Cleanup with United Water, Keep Rockland Beautiful, other green teams and towns in both NY and NJ, 4) working with the high school art students to create artwork for the rain garden sign and 5) several Eagle Scout projects for park improvements, new water refill stations and a new monarch educational gardens at each school.

2014: Hightstown & West Windsor

Hightstown and West Windsor have an inter-local agreement to share health care services. As part of this agreement, the towns' health department informs residents about the safe disposal of prescription drugs through a variety of educational and outreach materials, and provides a centralized drop off site at the West Windsor Police Station. Introduced as a new action in January 2014, to help keep harmful drugs out of the waste stream, the Prescription Drug Safety and Disposal action is one of 11 Sustainable Jersey priority actions, and Hightstown is one of 39 municipalities certified and approved for this action.



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2013: Maplewood, Millburn & South Orange Village

The Maplewood, Millburn and South Orange Green Team leadership meet monthly to coordinate their Sustainable Jersey applications and overall sustainability programs. The collaboration has resulted in all three towns being recertified and increased community participation and support for environmental initiatives through successful events like the 3-Town Rahway River Clean Up, an Environmental Movie Series, a Green Day Fair and Water Conservation Drip-Irrigation demonstration events. Events and educational campaigns are now coordinated across three towns which has saved resources, increased political green power and assured greater awareness and impact of the issues.

2012: Camden

The City of Camden worked with an amazing collection of community partners as well as the Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority to successfully complete their Sustainable Jersey application. Organizations on their Green Team represent such diverse groups as Tree Foundation, Cooper University Hospital, The Citizens' Campaign, NJ Conservation Foundation, etc. who met monthly to successfully link and leverage the good works going on in the community organizations.

2011: Jersey City

In partnership with several entities, Jersey City is actively addressing food system issues by amending ordinances to allow local food production and sales, establishing and promoting a community gardening program, developing a demonstration rain garden, and supporting the school gardening program. The Adopt a Lot program, which allows residents to use public land for gardening, is a partnership between the City, City Green, and the Jersey City Moms Association. The City Planning Department along with the Washington Park Association, NJCU Youth Corps, and Green Collar Futures developed the Permaculture Learning Garden. Finally, Jersey City has partnered with the non-profit organization CityGreen to continue and expand the successful school gardening program.

2010: Hopewell Township, Hopewell Borough, Pennington Borough

In order to develop collaborative green initiatives and partner on projects in the Hopewell valley, Hopewell Township partnered with Hopewell borough and Pennington Borough to create a Hopewell Valley Green Future Taskforce. The Taskforce is comprised of multiple representatives from each Hopewell Valley municipality and meets quarterly to address an array of environmental and sustainability issues, including alternative energy options, recycling, and educational programs to increase public awareness of green initiatives.

2009: Chatham Township & Chatham Borough

The Township Environmental Commission, the Borough Green Initiatives Committee and volunteers across the two towns came together to put on the Green Fair of the Chathams, the Farmers Market, the Anti-Idling Campaign as well as many other programs. All were successful beyond expectation.