



Douglas Sullivan
Chair, Sustainable New Providence
Union County, New Jersey

For more than a decade, Douglas Sullivan has been at the forefront of sustainability efforts in [New Providence](#), guiding the Borough’s green initiatives. Since joining the green team, [Sustainable New Providence](#), in 2013—when the town first achieved bronze certification through Sustainable Jersey, Doug has played an instrumental role in shaping local environmental action. As chair of Sustainable New Providence for the past 11 years, he led the Borough to a major milestone in 2025, achieving silver certification.

Leadership in Local Sustainability: Professionally, Doug is an environmental engineer who manages teams focused on hazardous waste investigation and remediation, and environmental compliance. He brings this technical expertise to his community work, helping inform data-driven decisions and strengthen the Borough’s sustainability planning. Doug has helped transform ideas into impactful programs, from launching a community garden and organizing recycling initiatives to supporting events such as the green fair, green challenge, shredding days, and cleanups. He has also guided conversations with Borough Council on electric vehicle charger installations and has encouraged the development of a Community Energy Plan.

A Collaborative Approach to Community Impact: Known for his thoughtfulness and positivity, Doug emphasizes collaboration as the key to success. Reflecting on the Borough’s Sustainable Jersey silver certification, he shared, “I organized the goals and objectives and we worked together as a committee with the municipality to achieve the silver certification. I said we can do this.” The day the Borough received notification that the milestone had been achieved, he noted, brought a smile to his face and a strong sense of accomplishment. Read the [2025 New Providence Borough Sustainable Jersey Certification Report](#).

Doug leads monthly meetings to keep Sustainable New Providence initiatives moving forward. The inclusion of student representatives has expanded engagement, bringing high school students into local sustainability plans. Strong support from the New Providence Borough Council and Mayor has further enabled the green team’s success.

At the heart of Doug’s work is a belief in responsibility and stewardship. “It’s a fact that we need to conserve resources,” he said. “They are finite. I don’t want to kick the can down the road for the next generation.” For Doug, sustainability is not just a set of projects, it is a shared obligation and a long-term commitment to community well-being. He credits the Sustainable Jersey program as a critical partner in New Providence’s success. “We would not have done all of the sustainability actions without a Sustainable Jersey program,” he said, pointing to the guidance, resources, and support that have helped the committee turn plans into progress.

Doug’s journey with the green team began when his professional expertise made him a natural fit to assist with an early greenhouse gases emissions inventory. What started as a volunteer contribution grew into a leadership role that



has shaped the borough's sustainability trajectory for over a decade. As he puts it, "Sustainability resonates with who I am as a person."

Freecycle Fest: For over six years, Sustainable New Providence has held Freecycle Fest, an event that operates like a "free garage sale." Residents bring gently used, working items they no longer need and offer them to others in the community at no cost. "Freecycle Fest is an important event that helps our community members reuse rather than throwing things in the garbage and ending up in the landfill," Doug shared. What began with a learning curve—including the need to define [clear guidelines](#) after some less-than-ideal drop-offs—has evolved into a well-organized and popular program. Today, due to strong participation and demand, the event will be held twice a year. Shoppers are invited to browse and take what they can use, keeping valuable goods in circulation and out of the waste stream. The Borough received 10 Sustainable Jersey certification points for completing the action: [Materials Reuse Program](#).



Green Challenge: New Providence Borough used a \$2,000 [Sustainable Jersey Grant](#) funded by the PSEG Foundation to launch the first-ever New Providence Green Challenge—a five-week summer sustainability campaign that energized residents and strengthened community awareness around everyday environmental practices. Led by Sustainable New Providence and the [New Providence Recreation Department](#), the challenge invited residents to learn about a different sustainability topic each week, complete a hands-on action, and share their experiences for a chance to earn prizes. The response exceeded expectations. More than 200 residents registered to receive the weekly challenges, with many families completing them together. Throughout the summer, participants submitted over 50 emails showcasing best practices, creative approaches, and lessons learned.

New Providence Borough's promotion efforts amplified the impact, with coverage on [TAPinto New Providence](#), [social media](#), the Borough's e-newsletter, email lists, and eye-catching signage displayed in Centennial Park. The weekly challenge posts on social media generated multiple comments and shares. A new Recycle Mascot, created to boost visibility, quickly became a recognizable feature and will return to future sustainability events. The green challenge culminated in a celebratory gathering where participants shared stories, connected with neighbors, and received awards for their efforts, reflecting the community enthusiasm. The New Providence Recreation Department staff presented the green challenge at Sustainable Jersey's Small Grants, Big Impact: Sustainable Jersey Success Stories session during the New Jersey League of Municipalities Conference. Review the [presentation](#), and the [Green Challenge](#). The Borough received 10 Sustainable Jersey certification points for completing the action: [Green Challenges](#).



Green Fair: New Providence Green Fair is a signature community event that brings residents together to explore practical ways to live more sustainably while connecting directly with local organizations, resources, and services. Hosted by the Sustainable New Providence, green fair highlights topics such as energy efficiency, electric vehicles, composting, and the Borough's reusable bag recycling program. The event features a wide range of participants, including Hilltop Bicycles, PSE&G, Union County Recycling, local Boy Scouts, electric vehicle owners from the community, the New Jersey Clean Energy Program, Java's Compost, and Friends of the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. The Borough has played a key role in the event's success, providing space, supporting planning and promotion through municipal channels, and contributing staff on the day of the event. The Borough received 10 Sustainable Jersey certification points for completing the action: [Green Fair](#).

Community Garden: Another cornerstone of New Providence's sustainability efforts is its thriving community garden. In 2016, a coalition of local committees, departments, and volunteer groups—including Sustainable New Providence, the New Providence Garden Club, the Borough's Department of Public Works, Boy Scout Troop 63, and employees from BASF—came together to design and build the borough's first community garden. With more than \$10,000 in combined funding from the Union County Means Green Program, a Sustainable Jersey grant funded by the PSEG Foundation, the BASF Community Fund, and the Borough of New Providence, the garden opened that summer

with 28 raised bed plots enclosed by a deer-resistant fence. Demand was immediate, with all plots leased to residents within just a few weeks.

Due to its popularity, the garden has continued to grow over the years. Additional Union County matching funds supported the expansion of nine more plots, improvements to underground water piping, and the installation of a drip irrigation system. In 2024, an Eagle Scout project added two more plots, bringing the total to 39. “The community garden is a visible part of our work—the Borough just opened the garden for its tenth season this year,” Doug shared. The garden is in a highly visible, well-traveled area and is promoted through the Borough website, where residents can enter a lottery for plots each season. Beyond providing space for residents to grow their own food, the garden emphasizes sustainability and community giving. Plots are maintained using organic practices, with no chemical substances permitted, and are supplied with mushroom soil. One dedicated plot grows produce specifically for local food pantries, and gardeners are encouraged to donate surplus harvests. The Borough received 20 Sustainable Jersey certification points for completing the action: [Community Gardens](#).



Community Energy Plan: The development of a Community Energy Plan marks a key next step in New Providence’s sustainability program, bringing together data, public input, and long-term planning to reduce emissions and improve energy efficiency. Community energy planning is a collaborative process that helps municipalities identify and prioritize initiatives aligned with [New Jersey’s Energy Master Plan: Pathway to 2050](#). These plans focus on increasing clean energy production, reducing overall energy use, and cutting greenhouse gas emissions across the community.

Doug highlighted the significance of this effort, noting, “The Community Energy Plan is an important project that we are nearing completion of. Having this plan will open the Borough up to additional funding opportunities through the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPU) to help implement projects.” Community engagement has played a role in shaping the plan. Sustainable New Providence had a table at a popular street fair, where they gathered input directly from residents through a survey on energy priorities and preferences. Also, residents were notified via email correspondence to complete the survey. This feedback has helped ensure the plan reflects the needs and values of the community while positioning New Providence to take advantage of future funding and implementation opportunities. The Borough received a \$10,000 grant and technical assistance from Sustainable Jersey to develop the plan; learn more about the [NJBPU Community Energy Plan Grant Program](#).

Academic and Professional Background: Doug holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Norwich University and has built a career spanning more than 40 years in the environmental and engineering fields. He began his professional journey with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the New York District, where he developed a strong foundation in infrastructure and environmental work. For the past 12 years, Doug has served as a Senior Environmental Engineer at [Dewberry](#). In addition to his professional work, Doug is engaged in industry and service organizations. He has been a member of the Environmental Business Committee for the [Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey \(CIANJ\)](#) and serves as a Trustee, Fellow, and Board Member of the [New Jersey Post Scholarship Board](#) of the [Society of American Military Engineers](#).

More about Doug: Doug grew up in Buffalo, New York, before moving to New York City after college, and he still proudly roots for his hometown teams, the Buffalo Sabres and the Buffalo Bills. He and his wife, Karen, have called New Jersey home for more than 25 years. They raised their three children—his daughter, Julia (married to Mike) and sons Mark and Justin. Recently, their family celebrated a new milestone as they became grandparents to their 11-month-old grandchild, Michael .

Outside of his professional and volunteer work, Doug enjoys spending time with family and friends, staying active and being outdoors. An avid road cyclist, he recently completed a 45-mile ride as part of New Jersey’s 4th Annual Monmouth Brewery Bikes & Beers ride with his team of friends, Team Toro. He especially enjoys riding through the [Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge](#), where he keeps an eye out for turtles crossing the road and looks for the resident eagle’s nest— small moments that reflect his connection to the local natural environment he works to protect.