



Sustainable Ventures Project

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Sustainable Communities Initiative

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The Sustainable Ventures Project (SVP) outlined in this brief represents the programs targeted for design and development during the first ten-year phase of the CUT sustainable economic development program for urban communities. Larger scale sustainable ventures for year ten and beyond will be outlined in detail, at a later date.

However, briefly some potential projects include the research and development and manufacture of a variety of products for the home and office such as paints stains and varnishes as well as cleaning products; paper products made exclusively from recycled materials. All manufacturing operations and products will be accomplished in accord with the highest regard for ecosystem and human health through the application of the principles of environmental justice; clean production; ecological design and architecture; as well as occupational health and safety systems in their design and operation.

The CUT will look to locate most if not all of the enterprises listed below within close proximity to each other within the core community. The conceptual model employed here is to establish a nucleus of sustainable ventures within the core community (for boundaries see Sustainable Communities Initiative). Based upon preliminary assessment of the assets available in the core community facilities that may be redesigned, renovated and reused already exist and will be utilized to the extent feasible. Where new facilities are required the commitment will also be to incorporate design and construction strategies and techniques for the facilities that employ optimal environmental, renewable energy, and occupational health and safety systems in their design and operation.

The ventures outlined here are designed to promote and foster economic development in an ecologically sustainable and human oriented manner. In the estimation of the CUT this is the optimal path to the design, development and organization of healthy and sustainable communities. Current corporate models while having some elements, which should be replicated, are by and large incapable of providing a sustainable path for life on the planet.

New models will emerge which are compatible with maintaining and ultimately recovering the integrity of the ecosystems, which supply the sources for all materials required for life. This is the only legacy to which we can bequeath to the generations of the future. The current dominant path in its application is completely unsustainable and if continued will bring about a catastrophic collapse from which life as we know it may not be able to recover.

The goal of the CUT programs briefly described below is to begin to add to the body of emerging institutions, communities and knowledge from which the new models will emerge.

Hearth & Soul - The primary project of the SVJ is Hearth & Soul, which will be a natural foods coop, bakery and credit union. The coop will operate as a grocery store featuring organic and natural foods and products. The bakery will offer a variety of baked goods to wholesale and retail customers. The credit union will be organized as a full service financial institution and operate as a community development bank for innovative housing and commercial projects for the local community and the Great Lakes region. The credit union will concentrate on projects that foster and promote the use of ecological design and architecture and renewable energy into their design. The bakery will provide business incubator opportunities for emerging entrepreneurs to utilize the bakery equipment by subscription for commercial baking. Hearth & Soul will eventually develop a line of minimally processed foods such as sauces, salad dressings, and preserves and jams. Hearth & Soul will also house the urban agriculture research and development projects undertaken by the CUT.

Fair Trade Import and Export Company - Import operations will include organic coffee, teas and herbal infusions, nuts, herbs and spices, herbal products, folk art, furniture, clothing, etc. The coffee and tea trade will incorporate a roasting and packaging operation. All products will be offered via the internet and mail order as well as through a fair trade store. This project will overlap with other ventures such as Hearth & Soul and the Candle and Soap Making and Percussion Shop operations.

Export operations will focus on products such as renewable energy products and appropriate technology transfers which foster self-sufficiency. Other products that foster fair trade will be identified and offered for export.

Candle and Soap Making (Aromatherapy, Personal and Household Lines) - This sustainable venture will produce candles and soap for personal and household uses. The candles will be produced from materials that are nonpolluting and nontoxic. The primary materials used in the production of the candles will be vegetable and bees wax. The wicks will come from organic materials and contain no heavy metals or other pollutants that can be released when burned.

The soaps will also come from nontoxic and organic sources. Initially the soap products will be for personal and household uses. If feasible, a line of commercial cleaning products may be developed in the future. Primary focus will be on developing soaps for personal and household use. Types of soap that will be developed and produced are bar soaps for face and bath; liquid castile soaps; dishwashing and laundry detergents; shampoo and conditioner, and soap for babies and children.

The essential oils used for the aromatherapy and scented product lines will be from organic sources and done in consultation with Dr. Jamu Tukes author of *"The Fragrance Mystique: A Primer"* and an expert on fragrances.

Glassware from Recovered Glass - This project will focus on the design and development of local or small scale equipment for the manufacture of a variety of glassware for residential and commercial uses. The design and development of the manufacturing facility will be consistent with the principles of clean production, ecological design/architecture, optimal occupational health and safety and environmental justice.

Currently one of the impediments to local small manufacturing is the dearth of small-scale equipment for local and regional companies. The source for the glass products will be glass recovered from the waste stream. Operations of this type will provide markets for recyclables and hopefully boost the incentives and markets for recovered resource materials. The glassware manufacturing facility would also supply commercial glassware for other social ventures. For example candle holders, jars, etc. for Hearth and Soul and candle making products. Examples of other local and regional businesses, which would be encouraged to buy locally made glassware, would be florists, restaurants and coffee shops.

Woodworker Training and Furniture Making Program - This area will provide training for community residents in woodworking, particularly furniture making. The training program will teach all of the skills required to produce high quality furniture. The graduates of the program will be provided with opportunities to join a cooperative woodworker's incubator, which would assist them in developing their own enterprise. Graduates of the program will be become prime candidates to work as part of a woodworker's cooperative, which will produce furniture in a community based manufacturing facility. The sources for the wood utilized in the cooperative will be from recovered, recycled and sustainably forested sources. Efforts will be made to locate and utilize wood from forest coops around the world. Examples include, wood recovered from lakes and rivers from previous logging operations; wood recovered after lightening strikes or fires and wood recovered from projects. Companies supplying wood from these sources currently exist; however few if any are located in urban communities nor do they have training programs or business incubators.

The furniture that is produced will be finished and unfinished with a product line including but not limited to; bookcases, CD cases, desks, tables, chairs, futon frames, platform beds and bedroom furniture. Custom made products will be added as the cooperative matures. All products will be finished with the finest, environmentally sensitive products available. The finishing products will also be available for sale to wholesale and retail customers.

Reuse and Repair Store - Many consumer items have useful life beyond that which the original purchaser derived from them. For example it is possible to enjoy high quality audio equipment and computer peripherals through the use of used equipment. In the consumer oriented societies of the North the tendency for most people is to purchase new equipment versus repairing older equipment. Many people by choice or circumstances already purchase used and/or repaired goods. Many people lack access to quality used goods **and** repair services, yet there would be a substantial market in urban communities for these services. A high quality system of repair, reuse and resale would produce several layers of potential of potential training and employment opportunities for community people, particularly through partnerships with local community colleges. While reuse and repair are certainly sound environmental practices and while job creation and training have economic and social value the CUT will offer even greater value to this social venture. The CUT will screen all items to determine if they are not subject to recall, modification or otherwise determined to be dangerous. Often products determined to be dangerous find their way into the resale stream placing people at risk, therefore it is ethically important to remove such items from circulation.

Green Building Supply Store - Building Deconstruction/Recycling and Salvage Yard - Essentially this sustainable venture is an extension of the reuse and repair venture, This venture will focus upon salvaging as much as is environmentally feasible from structures (residential and commercial) scheduled to be demolished or renovated. Again special emphasis will be placed on ethics by eliminating materials that are hazardous such as lead and asbestos. The enterprise will concentrate on materials such as brick, flooring, sinks, bathtubs, windows, doors, etc. Some items, which require environmental remediation, will be serviced before resale. Materials, which are not energy efficient, will be salvaged for other uses. Windows for example can be reglazed and otherwise repaired and used to construct cold frames for extending the gardening season and reducing gardening costs by allowing people to begin many of their plants from seed. The Building Supply operation will also sell to wholesale and retail customers a variety of green products such as paints, stains and varnishes, as well as sealers, adhesives and caulks from companies that manufacture non-toxic and least-toxic products. Other building supplies will be offered such as lumber, drywall, cabinets (kitchen and bath), carpet and other material from sources, which meet the ethical and ecological standards of the CUT.

Percussion Shop - The Percussion Shop is a specialized extension of the fair trade venture with the focus being the sale and repair of a broad range of percussion instruments from around the world. While the concentration will be on percussion instruments from indigenous cultures from around the world there are few if any percussion instruments that will not be available from the Percussion Shop. Percussion classes will also be available from local instructors in a variety of formats and styles. Master classes will also be conducted when practical.

Repair services and materials will be available at the shop or via shipment to qualified repair people if not available locally.

Digital Waterhole - The Digital Waterhole is a concept developed by the CUT to provide internet connectivity combined with a social venue via a café. The Digital Waterhole concept is related to the waterhole in African and Third World life where it is a very important social milieu where information about community or village life is shared. While in ancient times and in contemporary indigenous communities it is primarily a place for women in this present-day version it is conceived as a place for men and women as well as children. The Digital Waterhole will provide opportunities for people in communities underserved by computer technology and internet connectivity to have a venue that will provide opportunities for people to have access to computers and the internet for low costs. The Digital Waterhole will also provide periodic classes in basic computer and internet skills for community residents. Also community residents will have the opportunity to complete useful computer tasks such as completing a resume and storing it to a floppy disk and being able to obtain printed copies of the document.

The general concept is one in which a digital café will be set up in the community that serves organic and fair trade coffee and tea and locally produced baked goods from the CUT bakery.

Short-term connectivity (essentially e-mail) and long term connectivity (web based work) will be offered for a minimal fee. Fees will support overhead and CUT programs. Membership fees will also be part of the fiscal considerations with memberships costing between \$10-\$100 annually depending upon various socioeconomic considerations such as senior membership, family membership, etc.

The CUT will seek donations from software, hardware and peripheral corporations in exchange for promotional consideration and/or through their corporate giving programs.