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## Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): How to Individually and Collectively Move the Needle

Some years ago, the United Nations delineated 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that describe the important issues our world is now facing. Climate Change is one of the SDGs and it is certainly at the forefront of all of our minds. However, it now appears that all SDGs are interwoven and wrapped around the Climate Emergency. Thus, to heal our planet we must focus on all of the SDGs at once. Below is a description of each SDG and how it relates to our lives in the Town of Somerset and the DMV.

- 1. No Poverty:** There is a huge population that lives in poverty in our region. We must find ways to offer assistance, either through charity or working directly with organizations that provide services for those in need. I always love helping at Martha's Table.
- 2. Zero Hunger:** Homelessness is major problem. We need to donate to food distribution centers and help to distribute meals. My son has become friends with a number of homeless people, supporting them with meals and friendship.
- 3. Good Health and Well-Being:** Being such a wealthy country, EVERYONE deserves the right to live in good health and receive quality medical services. We need universal health care for all. Please write to your Members of Congress to consider this important step.
- 4. Quality Education:** Everyone deserves a free education. A high school degree used to be the baseline for a successful life, but now an undergraduate degree is critical to any level of success in our society. We need to urge Congress to ensure that all citizens have access to a free undergraduate or trade school education.
- 5. Gender Equality:** Misogyny is still a major issue and women generally receive lower salaries than men in many professions. More women need to assume higher visibility roles in society, e.g., become Supreme Court justices, CEOs, board members, and high-ranking officials in order to balance power and tap

into the many talents that women offer. Recommend a woman for a higher position at your workplace.

- 6. Clean Water and Sanitation:** In less than five years, 50% of the world's population will have water scarcity and water stress issues. Our drinking water is now contaminated with forever chemicals (PFAS), lead, and many other dangerous chemicals from industry. We must find ways to clean our Chesapeake Bay and its rivers so that we can have clean water to drink. Grow oysters on your dock, make sure not to flush drugs down the drain (bury them), and support the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.
- 7. Affordable and Clean Energy:** There is finally a push to end our dependence on coal and other fossil fuels, but we must take more actions and accelerate this process if there is any chance of reducing Greenhouse Gases (GHG) and stabilizing our planet under the 1.5°C benchmark. We must buy EV cars, install solar panels, compost and use renewable electric energy (<https://motherearthproject.org/renewables/>), and find ways to reduce our individual and collective carbon footprints. Presently, only half of our town composts; please click the above link to sign up!
- 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth:** The economy is so critical to our lives. Jobs bring stability and a minimum wage of \$15/hr is critical to providing everyone a decent living wage. If you are an employer, please make sure your employees receive a sufficient wage to support their families. It may be time for a raise.
- 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure:** President Biden's Economy Stimulus Package must consider all of this in order to create a more stable future. We need to upgrade our highways and bridges in order to maintain a strong and viable economy. Locally, we hope to have LED lights in our town soon and perhaps even an EV charging station at the Town Hall.

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## Sustainability Corner

**10. Reduced Inequalities:** There have been a lot of successes to report for the LGBTQ community, but racism is still a central issue for our nation, illuminated by the BLM movement. We must all participate in recognizing our own racist tendencies and find ways to support a more equitable and inclusive society. My son (again) is a part of Youth for Equity Club at B-CC High School to reduce racism among teachers and students, and push for new curriculum that discusses parts of our racist history that have previously been erased or barely mentioned.

**11. Sustainable Cities and Communities:** DC is now the nation's leader in climate legislation and Montgomery County is not far behind. We must continue to push our legislators for more aggressive and comprehensive climate laws, to expand the protection of our natural resources as well as create new job opportunities in the renewable energy sector, now the fastest growing source of jobs in the country.

**12. Responsible Consumption and Production:** This issue relates to all of us. We must learn to use less, reuse, recycle, and find ways to reduce our carbon footprint at home and in our beloved town. An easy way to determine the proportions of your carbon footprint, go here: [coolclimate.berkeley.edu/calculator](https://coolclimate.berkeley.edu/calculator).

**13. Climate Action:** Climate Awareness has been a central issue for a few years and as we continue to convince the world's population how the frequent events of devastation (e.g., fires, flooding and hurricanes) are related to the climate emergency, we must demand that our local and federal politicians create decisive and immediate climate legislation, that is NOW — not for the 2030s and 2040s. Stormwater management is a major issue in our Town, particularly as it relates to flooding.

**14. Life Below Water:** Many scientists have shown that by protecting 30% of our oceans' shorelines, marine life will rebound very quickly and provide ample food and income sources for the world. In these protected areas, fish are able to grow larger and older, thus being able to produce a significantly larger offspring. It's a win-win because biodiversity is rejuvenated and fishermen will be able to catch twice as many fish in half the time. Fourteen countries (not the U.S.) have already passed such legislation.

**15. Life On Land:** President Joe Biden has declared that he will push to protect 30% of federal lands from development and commercial operations, thus allowing biodiversity to have a chance for the future. Creating and protecting ecosystems is essential for numerous species as well as critical for humanity and its hope for survival.

**16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions:** Despite the recent attempts of insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, our democracy has now shown that it is resilient and strong, which is critical if we are to find a sustainable path forward. We must continue to support and defend our Constitution and find ways to unite our country. Please reach out to others and explore ways of sharing ideas and finding common ground despite the fear and divisiveness generated by the last Administration.

**17. Partnerships for the Goals:** We must reconnect with countries around the world, strengthen our international bonds, and attempt to reestablish our leadership role in the Paris Climate Agreement. This is a world project and only through collective action will we be able to create a sustainable future for all.

### Let's Get To Work!

Please choose a few of the SDGs to focus on and let us know what you are doing by sending us your story at: [TOS.EnvironmentCommittee@gmail.com](mailto:TOS.EnvironmentCommittee@gmail.com). Stories inspire us to take action and we hope to share these in future Town Journals.



*A Parachute displays the Mother Earth Project sculpture, Symbol of Sustainability, surrounded by paintings of the 17 SDGs. Come on by and take a look!*