Sustainability ROUND TABLE

Strategic Plan 2024-2027

This plan represents the goals of the SustainRT and its membership and may be amended by a majority vote of the SustainRT Steering Committee at any time. The Steering Committee welcomes and encourages ongoing input, involvement, and iteration on this plan from SustainRT members.

Mission

To provide connections and leadership around the triple bottom line of sustainability, for the development, promotion, and improvement of sustainable thinking and practices in all libraries and the communities they serve.

Vision statement

SustainRT members and program participants live out the ALA Core Value of Sustainability in all aspects of their professional and personal lives. In doing so, they grow the capacity of the various communities in which they engage to move toward more equitable, healthy and economically viable ways of operating.

Core Values

SustainRT will strive for balance in the following core values and use them to guide the work of the roundtable and its committees.

Social Equity
Recognizing differences in the experiences of groups and individuals to facilitate greater access and empowerment for those experiencing systemic injustice.

Economic Feasibility
Practicing good stewardship of funds entrusted to the roundtable to maintain fiscal stability while directing purchases to businesses and organizations that share our values.

Environmental Responsibility
Employing natural resources in a way that recognizes their true value, reduces unnecessary waste and consumption, and utilizes techniques that allow for renewal of resources.

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Commitment to How We Approach the Work

We strive to prioritize connection and self-care when engaging in this work, so that it is personally sustainable. We will respect boundaries, intentionally approach the work in a values-driven way, emphasize gratitude, and center flourishing as the ultimate purpose of our work.

About the Process

Appreciative Inquiry

The SustainRT leadership chose to use the appreciative inquiry framework to guide our strategic planning for 2024-2027. The four fundamental ideas that underlie the appreciative inquiry process are 1) asking impactful questions that are both positive and powerful, 2) imagining inspiring images of a desired future, 3) the involvement of many voices, especially those who will be called to take action, and 4) building on successes, rather than focusing on problems or failure (Cooperrider Center).

Because appreciative inquiry is both positive and collaborative, it was an ideal framework for framing our strategic planning. Sustainability work can be draining and demoralizing, especially when it feels like little progress is being made in the face of enormous problems. Appreciative inquiry, on the other hand, focuses on what has worked, and gives participants license to dream of a better future, and this can unlock creativity and connection in a way that focusing on what isn't working can't. SustainRT, since it was established, has consistently prioritized collaborative work, rather than a top-down approach, which is why our roundtable has a "steering committee" (rather than a "board") and a "coordinator" (rather than a "president"). This valuing of collaboration is another reason that appreciative inquiry was a strong choice for our strategic planning process.

The appreciative inquiry process consists of four stages. These stages, and how SustainRT leadership applied them in the strategic planning process, are outlined below.

Stage One: Discovery

The Discovery stage is about learning the community's strengths and asking questions that will help community members envision a desired future.

For this stage, the SustainRT steering committee and committee chairs split into four groups (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results; based on the SOAR framework) and worked together to develop a list of questions that would help us explore SustainRT's strengths and dreams. After all the questions were developed, we put them into a Padlet so that the steering committee and chairs could vote on their favorite question in each of the four categories.

The questions with the most votes were used to create a focus group questionnaire.

Stage Two: Dream

The Dream stage involves imagining a future that reflects the community's goals and vision. Asking positive, powerful questions encourages openness and creativity as community members envision their dream future.

For this stage, SustainRT's steering committee and committee chairs participated in a focus group using the questionnaire developed in stage one. Participant responses were then summarized and used for the next stage of the process.

Stage Three: Design

In the Design stage, the goal is to reflect on the feedback gathered in the Dream stage and look for themes and patterns. These themes are then used to develop several provocative propositions. Provocative propositions are statements that capture what the community has identified as their strengths, paired with their dreams for the future. The statements should be both challenging and realistic.

The SustainRT coordinator, past-coordinator, and coordinator-elect developed three provocative propositions based on the focus group feedback.

Then, the steering committee and chairs reconvened for a Dream Summit to explore the provocative propositions, brainstorm actions that could help SustainRT meet the statements, and commit to one or more actions in the coming four years. After the Dream Summit, chairs and steering committee members reflected and discussed with committee members before submitting 1-2 action ideas into a Google Form. The action/project ideas below are the result of that deliberation process.

Stage Four: Deliver

Finally, in the Deliver stage (sometimes called the Destiny stage), the community implements the actions that they have committed to take in service of the collectively-articulated dream for SustainRT's future.

Over the next four years, SustainRT will hopefully deliver on the strategic plan projects that this process has produced.

Guiding Provocative Propositions

The following provocative propositions reflect the inclusive planning process that we undertook as identified SustainRT's strengths and envisioned our future. All of the projects that we are pursuing as a part of this strategic plan should contribute to the attainment of these propositions.

1

SustainRT collaborates with an expansive array of relevant stakeholders, sustaining and growing a community of practice that spans ALA and beyond. Together with partners, SustainRT pushes sustainable community practices further into the public consciousness. The sense of community present in SustainRT's work makes its members excited to advance the mission of sustainability in libraries. SustainRT offers a hopeful environment and meaningful connection where library leaders (formal or informal) can renew in the face of the widespread challenges of climate change and environmental degradation.

2

The activities of SustainRT members result in meaningful change in people's lives, in their libraries, and in their communities. This work to promote human flourishing brings joy and fulfillment to SustainRT members, maximizing a desire for sustained engagement. SustainRT contributes to libraries' work to mitigate climate change, adapt to climate emergencies, and promote climate justice. SustainRT works effectively to promote social justice as a component of sustainability.

3

SustainRT's members are engaging in work that is practical, effective, easily implemented, and relevant to the function of library workers. The roundtable explicitly highlights the connections between library work and sustainability, and it makes the invisible successes of members visible to and adoptable by the community. SustainRT highlights, promotes, and makes accessible sustainability best practices that its members are exhibiting. The work of SustainRT brings light to the forward motion of sustainability in libraries and society.

Projects

- Project #1: SustainRT Small Grants
- Project #2: Highlight the Citation of Wellness in the Workplace Award
- Project #3: List of Sustainable Awards for Libraries
- Project #4: American Libraries Sustainability Summit
- Project #5: Increasing Participation in SustainRT Mentoring Program / Creating Monthly Drop-In Meet-Ups
- Project #6: Highlight SustainRT Member Best Practices
- Project #7: 100% ALA Organization Sustainability Pledge Adoption
- Project #8: Increasing Carbon Offsets Related to ALA Annual Conference
- Project #9: Greater Focus on Social Justice / Climate Justice
- Project #10: Social Media Engagement Analysis
- Project #11: Network of Sustainability Ambassadors
- Project #12: Increase Use / Reach of SustainRT Booklist

Project # 1: SustainRT Small Grants Project

Intended Outcome:
The intended outcome is to start a small grant program ($500-$1000) through SustainRT that will help fund innovative sustainability-related projects proposed by SustainRT members. This project could help funnel some of our healthy funds back into our community and help our members achieve their own sustainability initiatives at the local level. Interested applicants can submit small, feasible, and measurable project ideas to start a service, program, resource, etc. We could maybe even pair them with a mentor that could help provide guidance on their project and help the grant awardees find ways to make the new service/project/program sustainable after grant funding is spent.

This could be a really amazing opportunity for SustainRT to take a more active/direct role in providing support for librarians looking to integrate sustainability into their communities. It could really help us gain more members, increase our impact and audience, and provide additional programming opportunities, since librarians that get the grant can then present on their projects.

Unit/Person Responsible: Taskforce: Jen Embree & Mandi are committed to helping with this

Actions:
1. A Task Force/Committee/Responsible party will need to be established. I am happy to chair/lead the project, but definitely would love to have a task force and/or have this program fall under an already existing committee so that more feedback and perspectives can help build the program.
2. Criteria for the grant program will have to be created. This will include purpose, scope, eligibility, funding amount, submission materials required, etc.
3. Rubric and additional evaluation criteria for the grants will need to be created for those that will be reviewing the grants.
4. Funding will need to be officially approved by the Executive Board, as well as all materials related to the launch of the grant program.

5. Promotional materials and contacts for disseminating grant information will need to be compiled (i.e. social media posts, blog posts, website page, etc.)

Timing:

2024-2025	
2025-2026	X
2026-2027	X

Evaluation:
The project could be considered complete once the grant program has finished its official inaugural cycle, meaning that the first grant has been successfully awarded and the final product/service/program has been completed. Since this is a brand new program that will be created from scratch, it will take some time to develop metrics that will determine if its successful, but some that can be kept in mind are: 1) # of application submissions, 2) # of completed projects and metrics/feedback gathered that determine local impact of individual projects (ex: if a website, number of site visits), 3) qualitative feedback gathered from grant applicants about the grant submission process, etc.

Status:

Not Started	In progress	Complete

Resources / Allies:
Affiliates like APALA, REFORMA, AILA, BCALA, etc. could potentially be co-sponsors. Other roundtables may also be interested in co-sponsoring a grant like this, as well.

Other Notes:
This would be a long-term project that would probably need multiple years to get off the ground. I can see it taking a full year just to get official approval of the grant program up the chain to ALA and getting all of the initial materials drafted. This would mean that the first time the call for grants would go out would be Summer/Fall of 2025, with our first awardee starting a project in the Spring of 2026. Depending how much time we want to give for a project to be rolled out, we may not see a "final product" from this grant until the Spring of 2027.

Project # 2: Highlight the Citation of Wellness in the Workplace Award

Highlight Citation of Wellness in the Workplace Award via interviews or write ups in blogs, newsletters, etc.

Intended Outcome:
Spread awareness of the CWW award and what libraries are doing to promote employee wellness and sustainability in a way that other libraries feel empowered to recreate the efforts of the winner.

Unit/Person Responsible: Awards Committee

Actions:

1. Discuss options with the Publicity and Outreach Committee.
2. Work with award winner to create a piece to post/publish., etc.

Timing:

2024-2025	X
2025-2026	X
2026-2027	X

Evaluation:
At least one in-depth piece about the award winner

Status:

Not Started	In progress	Complete

Resources / Allies:
SustainRT Publicity and Outreach Committee

Project #3: List of Sustainable Awards for Libraries

Intended Outcome:
A solid list of awards that libraries can apply to (outside of ALA - SustainRT) that features awards for sustainability, equity, social justice, etc.

Unit/Person Responsible: Awards Committee

Actions:

1. Gather list of resources
2. Publish on the website

Timing:

2024-2025	X
2025-2026	X
2026-2027	X

Evaluation:
The project will be ongoing with awards added as they are found

Status:

Not Started	In progress	Complete
	x	

Resources / Allies:
SustainRT Web Maintainers
SustainRT Sustainability Resources Committee

Project # 4: American Libraries Sustainability Summit

Intended Outcome:
The outcome of this project would be an opportunity for SustainRT to connect and coordinate with the other sustainability-related organizations in library land. This could include IFLA ENSULIB, the ALA Council on Sustainability, SLI, the ALA-SLI National Climate Action Working Group, Social Responsibilities Roundtable, ALA caucuses who are interested in attending. We could organize a "summit" every so many years (maybe 4 or 5?) to connect and align our work. It would be a chance to share resources, identify points of collaboration, and celebrate wins. It would be helpful to have a facilitator who specializes in this sort of work to lead us.

The outcomes would be 1) reduced duplication of effort, 2) clearer sense of what the role and strengths of each group is, 3) shared talking points and goals for external stakeholders, 4) connection and celebration. Another possible outcome: learning that is relevant to attendees (if we wanted to invite a keynote or presenter to teach us something).

Unit/Person Responsible: Taskforce: Mandi, Tina, Shalini, Pixie, other volunteer, The Steering Committee

Actions:

- Make a list of groups that would need to be involved.
- Contact the groups and get a sense of their interest in this.
- Work out the practical details, like who will facilitate, how long the event will be, when it will be, etc.
- Decide on a very clear output (document, set of principles/talking points, action steps, etc.).
- Have the event.
- Evaluate and plan for the next event (if it went well).

Timing:

2024-2025	X
2025-2026	X
2026-2027	

Evaluation:
The project is complete if we run one event and there is positive feedback such that most or all participants would like to run another one.

Status:

Not Started	In progress	Complete

Resources / Allies:

IFLA ENSULIB, the ALA Council on Sustainability, SLI, the ALA-SLI National Climate Action Working Group, Social Responsibilities Roundtable, ALA caucuses who are interested in attending

Other Notes:
There is no single home for this project, but I think it would be great for the SustainRT steering committee to take on the planning. There are some roles on the steering committee that are not super active, at least not for portions of the year. Those folks might like to volunteer to take on some of the planning and coordination. Another option would be to form a short-lived task force consisting of representatives from all involved organizations.

Information about 2025 Summit: https://libguides.ala.org/SustainableLibraries/ROOTS

Project # 5: Increasing Participation in SustainRT Mentoring Program / Creating Monthly Drop-In Meet-Ups

Intended Outcome:
More interpersonal connection and sharing

Unit/Person Responsible: SustainRT Membership Committee

Actions:

- Due to participation issues and feedback, we are sunsetting the mentoring program but launching an easier, more casual “monthly meet-up” for all.
- Autumn 2024 we will initiate this new program, which unlike mentoring, does not require registration.
- A rotating member of the membership committee will facilitate the set-time drop-in meet-ups.
- We will have a list of optional conversation starters at the ready.

Timing:

2024-2025	X
2025-2026	X
2026-2027	X

Evaluation:
We hope and expect better participation in this new format versus the mentoring pairs or groups. We will note attendance and use annual surveys.

Status:

Not Started	In progress	Complete
	X	

Resources / Allies:
SustainRT Education & Programming Committee
SustainRT Publicity and Outreach Committee

Project # 6: Highlight SustainRT Member Best Practices

Intended Outcome:
The outcome is to provide a monthly member-driven program that informs SustainRT members on ways to mitigate climate change, respond and adapt to climate emergencies, and promote climate justice. Our work could highlight libraries that are leading the way and encourage others. This could be shared in the quarterly newsletter as well.

Unit/Person Responsible: SustainRT Education and Programming Committee

Actions:

1. Determine the best way to highlight member projects and activities.
2. Solicit speakers from among the membership.
3. Advertise the event(s) for sharing best practices.
4. Hold the event(s).
5. Assess how it went and capture any ideas or resources in the Zotero library.

Timing:

2024-2025	X
2025-2026	X
2026-2027	X

Evaluation:
Positive responses on post-event participant survey
Positive responses on post-event presenter survey

Status:

Not Started	In progress	Complete

Resources / Allies:
SustainRT Publicity and Outreach Committee
SustainRT Membership Committee?
SustainRT Sustainability Resources Committee
Sustainable Libraries Initiative, the NAACP, and the Environmental Protection Agency

Project # 7: 100% ALA Organization Sustainability Pledge Adoption

Intended Outcome:
The intended outcome is for all state library and other library organizations to include the sustainability pledge in their communications and annual conferencing.

Unit/Person Responsible: Public Advocacy & Awareness Committee

Actions:

1. Reach out to ALA staff liaison correct and direct contact details for leadership/conference organizers in relevant organizations.
2. Request adoption of sustainability pledge.

Timing:

2024-2025	X
2025-2026	X
2026-2027	X

Evaluation:
The project could be considered complete once 100% of the organizations on the committee's list have adopted the pledge. This might not be possible in the 3 year time span.

Status:

Not Started	In progress	Complete
	X	

Resources / Allies:
ALA SustainRT Staff Liaison
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Project # 8: Increasing Carbon Offsets Related to ALA Annual Conference

Intended Outcome:
The intended outcome is for carbon offsets to become a mandatory part of conference registration, and for conference exhibitors to be incentivized to purchase carbon offsets and take other sustainable actions.

Unit/Person Responsible: Public Advocacy & Awareness Committee

Actions:

1. Follow up with Alicia Hamann, Registration Services Manager (ahamann@ala.org) about an option for donating to the carbon offset fund during exhibitor registration
2. Choose and facilitate one or more incentives to exhibitors for donating, such as different tiers (silver, gold, platinum) and/or promotional prizes, like a page spread in the conference planner booklet
3. Advocate to ALA leadership to make carbon offsets a part of conference registration for both members and exhibitors.
4. Organize and co-facilitate an annual social media campaign to raise awareness about carbon offsets before/during the annual conference each year (see the Emerging Leaders Team content).

Timing:

2024-2025	X
2025-2026	X
2026-2027	X

Evaluation:
The project could be considered successful when members and exhibitors who register for ALA Annual also pay a mandatory carbon offsets fee.

Status:

Not Started	In progress	Complete
	X	

Resources / Allies:
ALA SustainRT Staff Liaison
ALA SustainRT Publicity and Outreach Committee

Project # 9: Greater Focus on Social Justice / Climate Justice

Intended Outcome:
Greater awareness among the membership of the overlap between social justice and climate and inspiration to engage more deeply at this intersection both on the job and personally.

Unit/Person Responsible: Outreach and Publicity Committee

Actions:

1. Amplify day-to-day climate-justice work and successes of SustainRT members to make it more visible and inspiring.
2. Surface relevant news and resources within and outside libraries, including news, awards, inspiring movements, and people.

Timing:

2024-2025	X
2025-2026	X
2026-2027	X

Evaluation:
The project is ongoing but for the sake of measurement, we can track the number of posts relating to social justice made to our social accounts.

Status:

Not Started	In progress	Complete
	X	

Resources / Allies:
SustainRT Committees: Public Advocacy & Awareness, Online Education & Programming
Other possible partners could be: ALA Social Responsibilities Round Table, PLA's Committee on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice; Black Caucus; American Indian Library Association; etc.

Project # 10: Social Media Engagement Analysis

Develop and begin executing a user research/assessment strategy to evaluate ongoing trends in engagement on SustainRT's current social/comm channels and to develop a plan for aligning future publicity efforts with desires and expectations of SustainRT's membership.

Intended Outcome:
Increased engagement rates on the communication/social channels employed by the committee.

Unit/Person Responsible: Outreach and Publicity Committee

Actions:

1. Look at metrics on current platforms over the last 3-5 years to gauge trends and patterns in engagement
2. Explore the possibility of conducting a survey of SustainRT membership to learn about their current communication habits and preferences
3. If a survey is administered, use the results to adjust the channels employed by the committee and/or the types and frequency of content shared.

Timing:

2024-2025	X
2025-2026	X
2026-2027	

Evaluation:
Engagement rates/metrics show indications of steady increase.

Status:

Not Started	In progress	Complete
	X	

Resources / Allies:
SustainRT Steering Committee and Membership Committee

Project # 11: Network of Sustainability Ambassadors

Intended Outcome:
Build a robust network of sustainability ambassadors to help us with the work of contacting ALA chapters and reaching these organizations to encourage them to implement the Sustainability Pledge in their conferences/events

Unit/Person Responsible: Public Advocacy & Awareness Committee

Actions:

1. Support/highlight groups that are doing this work already.
2. Build a clear method of communication, contact list, and system for continually updating the contact list.
3. Goal to coordinate a sustainability contact from each ALA state chapter - build a robust network of sustainability ambassadors across state chapters/groups.
4. Consider working with past members of SustainRT who have robust networks/knowledge.

Timing:

2024-2025	X
2025-2026	X
2026-2027	X

Evaluation:
The PAA committee has a spreadsheet to track progress with reaching state chapters of ALA.

Status:

Not Started	In progress	Complete
	X	

Resources / Allies:
SustainRT Publicity and Outreach Committee
SustainRT Sustainability Resources Committee

Other Notes:

- Continue the work of developing the list of ALA Chapter contacts and continue with the goal of reaching these organizations to encourage them to implement the Sustainability Pledge in their conferences/events.
    - How do we get accurate information (contact info) to support this work? How do we reframe the work for states where legislation/politics have made the environment hostile to these initiatives?

- Build a robust network of sustainability ambassadors
    - Support/highlight groups that are doing this work already. Build a clear method of communication, contact list, and system for continually updating the contact list.
    - Goal to coordinate a sustainability contact from each ALA state chapter - build a robust network of sustainability ambassadors across state chapters/groups.
    - Consider working with past members of SustainRT who have robust networks/knowledge.

Project # 12: Increase Use / Reach of SustainRT Book List

Intended Outcome:
Develop established partnerships with one or more other ALA roundtables and publishers in order to create robust and predictable promotional opportunities for the annual book list.

Unit/Person Responsible: Sustainability Resources Committee

Actions:

1. Formalize a list of criteria for book list selection.
2. Reach out to publishers of relevant materials to request lists of materials to be considered each year.
3. Invite authors and illustrators to an award presentation event (i.e., hold a webinar or dedicate part of a virtual or in-person SustainRT Membership Meeting).

Timing:

2024-2025	X
2025-2026	X
2026-2027	X

Evaluation:
This project could be considered successful when there is sufficient demand to justify additional book lists (i.e., to sub-divide the current book list into smaller age groups, to add additional lists for teens and/or adults, etc.). This project could also be considered successful when we can get our list mentioned at the ALA Youth Media Awards.

Status:

Not Started	In progress	Complete

Resources / Allies:
ASLC
AASL
YALSA
SustainRT Publicity and Outreach Committee
Publishers
ODLOS