

# SUSTAINABLE BUILT ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE

## What is the SBEI?

The Sustainable Built Environment Initiative (SBEI) (formerly Small Town Design Initiative) began as a pilot in 2013 as a means of assisting communities to address physical planning, design and land use issues. It offers a graphic visioning process that provides citizens with a set of images and recommendations to guide improvements in their community with a sustainability theme. The SBEI builds on more than a decade of success of the Small Town Design Initiative by providing a “go-to” source for Michigan’s communities for physical sustainable design assistance in community development and land use.



Stockbridge Urban Trails Plan project image.



Franklin Historic Village Center project image.

MSU Extension (MSUE) and the School of Planning, Design and Construction (SPDC) have jointly developed SBEI to address sustainability challenges and improve the quality of life in Michigan’s communities. The partnership allows for an integrated approach to solving complex community problems through the diverse expertise found within SPDC, including Construction Management, Interior Design, Landscape Architecture and Urban & Regional Planning, along with MSUE’s institutes and Extension educators.

## Objectives

- Work with communities to develop sustainable planning and design ideas for local issues and opportunities;
- Build consensus and generate ideas to address challenging sustainability concerns;
- Act as a bridge between communities and consulting planning and design professionals; and
- Provide in-community student learning, and serve as a creative and scholarly outreach and engagement work endeavor involving campus faculty and field Extension educators.

[www.spdc.msu.edu/about\\_us/SBEI](http://www.spdc.msu.edu/about_us/SBEI)

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Meridian Charter Township project before-and-after images, which are part of their Community Sustainability Plan.

## Project Types

The SBEI seek projects that integrate planning and design elements within a sustainability framework, including regeneration (vacant land reuse, brownfields, placemaking), renewable energy (green development and building technology) and resiliency (economic shock, climate adaptation, natural disasters) using the imaging/visioning umbrella of physical sustainable design. Examples could include downtown streetscapes, parks, bikeways and trails, open space systems, industrial/commercial reuse, beautification, land use, signs, agricultural/conservation land preservation, ecosystem management, and neighborhood/residential development. The scale of the project can vary from a single parcel to a subarea plan.

## Who Qualifies?

Political jurisdictions in Michigan can make application for SBEI assistance. This may include townships and charter townships, as well as villages, cities and counties. Nonprofit organizations are also eligible.

## How to Apply

Communities interested in receiving Sustainable Built Environment Initiative assistance must complete an application package. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, but priority will be given to applications submitted by March 30 and September 30 each year. Complete the application form available for download on the SBEI website.

**R**EGENERATION  
Vacant land,  
brownfields, placemaking

**R**ENEWABLE ENERGY  
Green/blue infrastructure,  
green technology

**R**ESILIENCY  
Economic shock, climate  
adaptation, natural disasters

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