

Leveraging partnerships between regional networks  
of municipalities and academic institutions to  
increase both capacity and impact in communities

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Emily Mello  
University of New Hampshire

# Outline

- Land Acknowledgment
- Local Government Climate Action Roadblocks
- Municipalities & Academic Partnerships
- UNH Sustainability Institute Fellowship Program
- Regional Networks
- New England Municipal Sustainability Network
- NEMS Network & UNHSI Partnership
- Conclusions

# University of New Hampshire Land Acknowledgement

As we all journey on the trail of life, we wish to acknowledge the spiritual and physical connection the Pennacook, Abenaki, and Wabanaki Peoples have maintained to N'dakinna (homeland) and the aki (land), nibi (water), lolakwikak (flora), and awaasak (fauna) which the University of New Hampshire community is honored to steward today. We also acknowledge the hardships they continue to endure after the loss of unceded homelands and champion the university's responsibility to foster relationships and opportunities that strengthen the well-being of the Indigenous People who carry forward the traditions of their ancestors.

I would also like to acknowledge the Timucuan People who resided in the Daytona Beach area from about 2,000 BCE until the arrival of Spanish colonists.

**Local Government** is the government below State-level (i.e., the government of a city or town)

A **Municipality** is “a city or town that has corporate status and local government”

I will use these terms interchangeably throughout the presentation

# The work of local governments is more important than ever in addressing climate change

Municipal climate action can be

High-impact

Community-  
based

Scalable

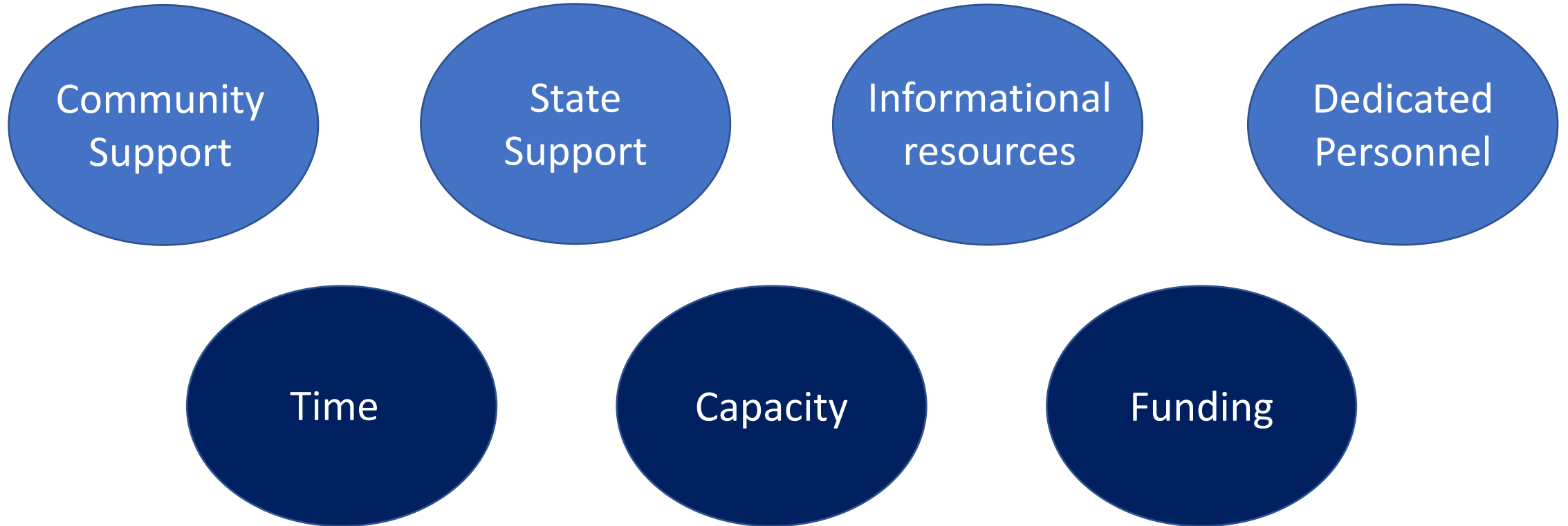
Tangible

Efficient

Faster

Less political

# Many municipalities lack the necessary resources to do this work



By partnering with academic institutions and working on projects with students, municipalities can more effectively take on sustainability initiatives

## Student-led projects...

Innovative & applicable  
research

Tangible results

Shorter time scales

More affordable

Create “Dedicated  
Personnel”

With many benefits for  
the student as well!

The UNHSI Fellowship Program offers students hands-on experience, working directly with partner organizations on transformative sustainability initiatives.

Projects are developed :

- in collaboration between UNHSI & the partner organization
- to have immediate impact, with tangible, scalable results

Partner Organizations include:

- Municipalities
- Schools
- Businesses
- Non-profits



# Networks can also help to provide municipalities with the resources they need

Information  
Sharing

Professional  
Support

Funding

Best  
Practices

Trainings

Collaboration

Grants

# A few examples of Sustainability-based Municipal Networks include...



Nation-wide



Regional

Florida Sustainability  
Directors Network

State-wide

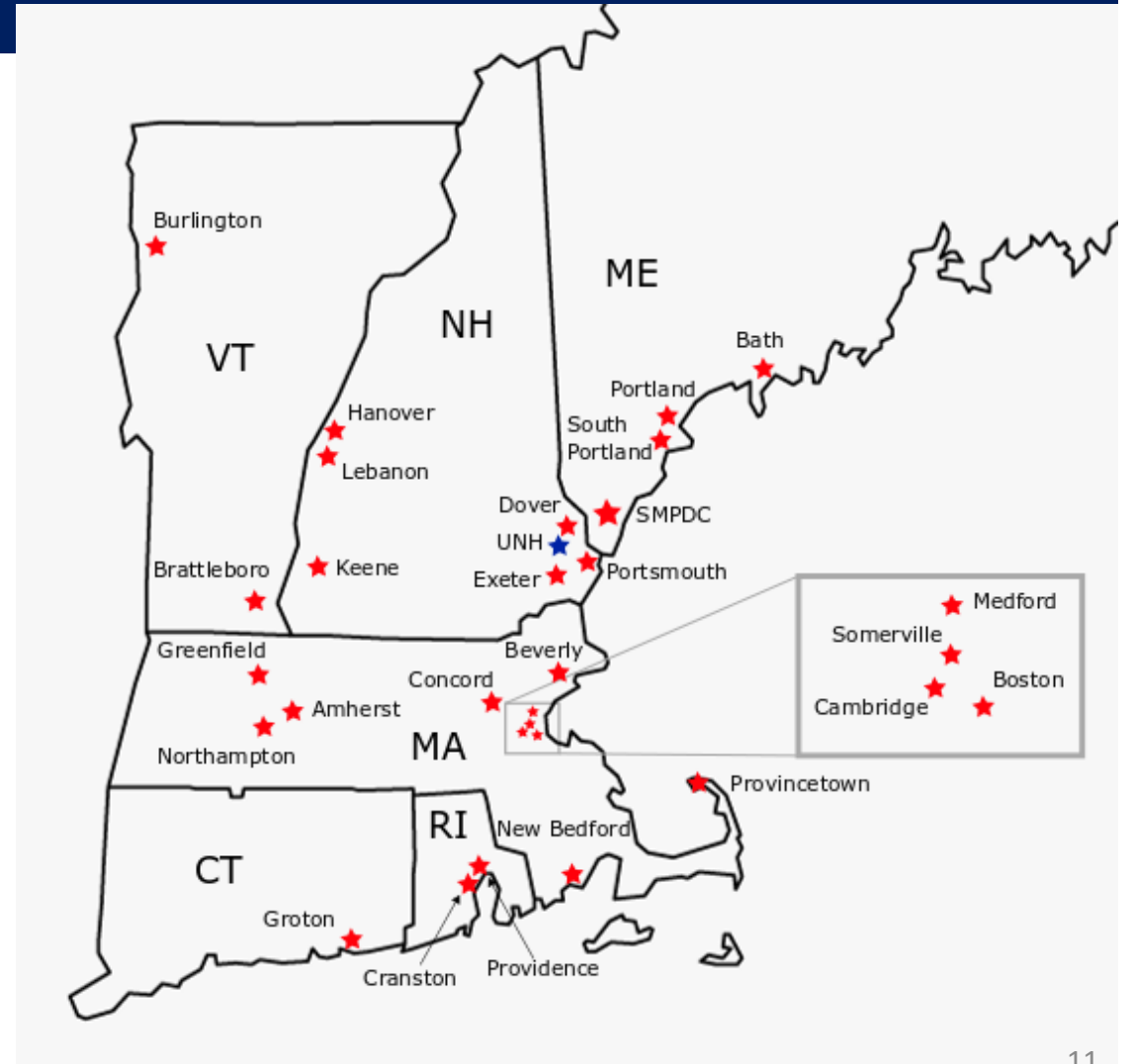
New England Municipal  
Sustainability Network  
(NEMS Network)

Regional

# The New England Municipal Sustainability Network

(NEMS Network)

- Formed in 2010 by 5 New England municipalities
- Now has over 25 members and growing!
- Since 2017, NEMS has been supported & coordinated by the UNH Sustainability Institute
- The Network & individual member communities have hosted fellows from the UNHSI Fellowship program



# As part of their Strategic Initiatives, the NEMS Network will be expanding on their involvement with the UNHSI Fellowship Program

- Projects can range in length and complexity
  - From summer or semester-long to multiple-year
  - From undergraduate level up to PhD level work
- Can be focused on one municipality, up to the entire network

# UNHSI will pair municipalities with students based on municipal needs and student interests & abilities

- This lessens the burden on municipalities, and increases the capacity of the member communities and the network
- Projects can easily be scaled to include other members or to be network-wide
- Results and Best Practices can easily be shared throughout the network

# Participating in regional networks that have partnered with academic institutions provides municipalities with the resources necessary to take on sustainability initiatives

- Increases capacity, decreases burden
- Better exchange of knowledge
- Cost effective
- Increases community impacts
- More focused
- Scalable to multiple communities or entire regions

# Questions?

“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”  
-Jane Goodall

## Resources

<https://www.unh.edu/sustainability/sustainability-institute/unh-land-acknowledgement>

<https://www.unh.edu/sustainability/student-education-engagement/sustainability-fellowships>

<https://www.usdn.org/history.html>

<http://www.nemsnetwork.org/>