



Shaaray Tefila Sustainability Philosophy

The Temple Board has adopted a Sustainability Philosophy to strongly state that Shaaray Tefila will move in the direction of becoming an environmentally sustainable congregation

Intended outcomes:

- To be better aligned with Jewish environmental values
- To save operating money for the congregation
- To attract new members whose values are aligned
- To model action that congregants can do themselves in their homes and lives
- To be a leader within the broader Jewish community

To do this, we will work to:

- Seek alternatives to current and historical practices
- Increase energy efficiency of its buildings
- Explore changes to the way we heat and cool our buildings
- Reduce waste and make a commitment to compost and recycle
- Use the property to generate renewable energy
- Take other actions that become available to reduce emissions and preserve natural resources
- Measure our results

This will permeate the life of the Temple, with actions taking place across all parts of the Temple, including all three buildings and the ECC and Religious School

Range of actions:

- The most meaningful changes we can make are to get off of oil, to use the cleanest energy sources to run our electricity
- Smaller efforts, like eliminating single-use water bottles, are gateways to make bigger impact

Shaaray Tefila Sustainability Philosophy

ADOPTED January 2022

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1. Overall

Temple Shaaray Tefila adopts this “Sustainability Philosophy” to formally accept its responsibility as a congregation as stewards of the earth in accordance with Jewish values.

Shaaray Tefila recognizes that its operations contribute to climate change and intends to seek ways to contribute to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from its activities and an increase in the preservation of natural resources. It will do this by: seeking alternatives to current and historical practices; increasing energy efficiency of its buildings; exploring changes to the use of materials (including those for heating, cooling and water); reducing waste and improving the disposal of waste of all types; using its property to generate renewable energy; and other actions that become available to reduce emissions and preserve natural resources.

The Temple intends to use its actions as a way to improve its sustainability directly and to provide a model for members of the congregation to take action individually. All actions taken by clergy, staff and volunteers at the Temple will be viewed through a sustainability lens and will serve as a model for others and the leadership team agrees that it is essential for adherence to set policies.

This document is intended to provide guidance to Temple leadership as it relates to setting policies and taking actions that directly or indirectly affect the greenhouse gas emissions of the Temple’s buildings, grounds, congregants, and visitors.

The Temple will use information provided through energy audits, vendor analyses, expert advisors and other means to make informed decisions when taking action.

2. Measurement

The Temple will seek to measure its baseline emissions so that it can monitor its progress. It will do this as best as it can with data that can be obtained from NYSEG and Robison Oil for direct energy use and will incorporate water usage, transportation data and waste that are directly associated with Temple activity, along with other available data. While this baseline inventory may not be all-inclusive at the outset, it will be done as best as it can be so that there is no delay in taking action and measuring results. Refinements may be made over time.

The measurement of the Temple's baseline emissions and comparisons at future dates to monitor progress will be shared with the Temple leadership and congregation periodically to evaluate the success or failure of actions of the Temple.

Actions taken by members of the congregation will not be included in the Temple's own progress reporting, however, the emissions reductions from members' actions can be included and shared as additional information.

3. Buildings

The Temple will seek to reduce its use of energy, to use renewable energy sources when possible and to work toward electrification.

Energy Efficiency

The Temple will seek ways to improve its energy efficiency, including exploring how to add insulation and seal air leaks that cause it to need more heating and cooling.

Energy Sourcing

The Temple will seek to source its energy from renewable sources. These include selecting renewable sources from providers (NYSEG) and investigating the installation of renewable energy generation on Temple property, including but not limited to solar installations.

Controls

There is a strong need for better temperature controls for each of the Temple's buildings. This is important for comfort as well as for reducing energy use.

Lighting

The Temple should seek to have all LED lighting as soon as possible. If there is any lighting that is not changed to LED, there should be a written reason for that decision.

Water

The Temple uses a well system [add details]. The Temple will seek ways to reduce its water use including through changes to its water filtration system . . .

Hot water?

Heating

The Temple's heating system is set up as two units, with one for the main building and the school building and a second one for the sanctuary, each of which uses oil as its fuel supply. The Temple will seek to reduce its use of fossil fuels, including working to move to electrification of its heating needs.

Cooling

The Temple uses central air conditioning for the main building, the sanctuary and part of the school building. It also uses individual air conditioning units for the main office and the second floor of the school building. The Rabbi's office has a mini-split heating and air conditioning unit to supplement the building's system.

Cleaning Supplies

The Temple should seek to reduce the exposure of building occupants and maintenance personnel to potentially hazardous chemical, biological, and particulate contaminants, which adversely affect air quality, human health, building finishes, building systems and the environment. These include products which contain no phosphates, chlorine, artificial fragrances and artificial colors and which are available in biodegradable or recyclable packaging.

4. Grounds

Shaaray Tefila has a beautiful property, and its beauty is a major asset to the congregation. Maintenance of the property must take into account its beauty, but must also adhere to this Sustainability Philosophy.

Pesticides and other Chemicals

Scientific analysis underscores the harmful impact of pesticides, fertilizers and other chemicals on our ecosystem and in humans. Therefore, Shaaray Tefila pledges to use no chemicals on its property unless it is determined that not using them will cause irreparable harm to the property and its congregation. Any decisions about using chemicals on its property will be documented and signed off on by the Executive Director and [certain members of the Board].

Plantings

The Temple recognizes that its campus has a range of plantings and trees. Thoughtful design, plant selection, and maintenance practices must take into account their environmental impact. New plantings must not only be beautiful, but also functional. The right plants in the right place require fewer resources. Additionally, we must protect and care for existing plants by removing invasives and through proper pruning, recognizing that mature trees and shrubs are more valuable (for shade, ecological value, carbon sequestration, etc). The Temple should also seek to minimize turf grass in order to maximize the carbon drawdown potential of the property.

Garden

The Temple has a vegetable garden and gardening practices that promote soil health and water conservation should be used. Compost for use in the garden is also a goal (see waste herein).

Maintenance

Leave leaves, use leaf mulch (rather than purchasing, or at least avoid mulch with harmful additives or sourced using harmful practices), eliminate gas powered leaf blowers and mowers, use mulching mowers.

Water

Water conservation, prevention of runoff, thoughtful irrigation practices, and stream and pond protection on the property will be a reflection of our sensitivity to the impact we have on the surrounding ecosystem.

Lighting

Consider impacts that exterior lighting can have on neighbors and local and migrating wildlife. Avoid light pollution and conserve electricity with thoughtfully designed lighting locations and timing. Aim for direct, rather than 'ambient' exterior lighting.

Hardscapes

Permeable surfaces are preferred.

5. Waste

Shaaray Tefila wants to reduce waste, including food waste. The Temple also wants to find ways to reduce its impact by diverting waste from landfills through more careful recycling and composting.

The Temple should have zero tolerance on plastic bottles and should only use compostable single use materials when single use supplies are necessary.

Overall Approach to Waste

The Temple participates in recycling; however waste is not always properly separated so that recycling sometimes ends in the landfill.

The Temple will set up Waste Stations in each of the buildings. These Waste Stations will have receptacles for recycling, compost and landfill. Clear and easy to understand signage will be placed above each Waste Station, with images of what is acceptable in each receptacle. The creation of this signage might be a fun religious school project. No bins will be placed unless all three are placed together in one location.

Recycling

The Temple will maintain a relationship with a carter to ensure that recyclable materials are kept separate from landfill and will review that relationship periodically to ensure compliance.

Compost

The Temple collects compost at large food preparation events and in the Temple's vegetable garden. There is a desire to collect food and yard scraps and to generate compost to use on Temple property.

The Temple will develop a relationship with a composting service that will pick up compostable food scraps and other compostable waste on a regular basis. On site we will create a large compost area for natural material from the garden and surrounding land, as appropriate. This will have signage so that Temple members gain a better understanding of the benefits of composting both their food and yard scraps.

Reduce

Explore Temple usage of paper and plastic water bottles and provide alternatives. These can include water cooler stations, a reusable water bottle campaign and a water bottle swap program where Temple members can bring in all their old unused water bottles and those without can take.

In an effort to help our Temple community become more aware of additional actions they can be doing at home, we will create a board with various resources and information: For example:

Tips on how to cut down on using plastic water bottles – Learn about the negative impacts from creating them to where they end up- in our oceans. Did you know it takes about 2 minutes to drink a water bottle, but each year the making of plastic water bottles used in the US takes enough oil and energy to fuel one million cars?

How to Pack a Waste Free Lunch – tips on containers and proper amounts of food to go into a lunchbox

Catalog Choice – Find out how to cut down on the number of catalogs that come in the mail. Save trees and reduce the energy it takes to recycle all those useless catalogs.

6. Events

Shaaray Tefila will apply its Sustainability Philosophy to events through intention to consider food sources, reduce waste and minimize energy use. This will apply to events that are sponsored by the Temple itself and to others that use the Temple for their own events (celebrations, etc.).

The goal is to minimize waste overall, avoiding single use items as much as possible. In any event, there should be no use of single use plastic and compostable items should be used instead.

In order to model best practices, all clergy, board members, staff, teachers and committee members should be instructed to only use reusable water bottles or containers at the Temple.

7. Vendors/Renters

Shaaray Tefila will develop a policy that Vendors will need to agree to in order to be accepted as a vendor. This will be adopted after coordination with stakeholders to ensure that this policy will not prevent the acceptance of vendors, however, this Sustainability Philosophy will govern vendor policies.

Those who rent the space must agree to adhere to these sustainability policies.

The goal is to minimize waste overall, avoiding single use items as much as possible. In any event, there should be no use of single use plastic and compostable items should be used instead.

8. Education

The Temple has a goal of providing education through our Religious School and ECC. Shaaray Tefila has a large group of children ranging in ages from 3 to 18 years of age and part of Jewish education is teaching sustainability. The curriculum in both the ECC and Religious School will have a hands-on-approach in incorporating positive ecological practices, tying actions back to Jewish values of caring for the earth. There will also be initiatives undertaken by our Teen population and incorporated into their ongoing activities.

9. Environmental Justice

The Temple recognizes that its actions affect much more than just its campus and congregation and that it must utilize its agency and voice to advocate for environmental justice across our local communities. The Temple will seek opportunities within the Interfaith Council to advocate for action to improve the environmental health for all people in our area.

10. Clergy Involvement

The Temple's clergy will use their platform to provide advocacy and learning for the congregation, including relevant teachings from the Jewish scriptures, at least twice per year on the topic of sustainability and stewardship of the earth. These can also be associated with Jewish holidays that are inherently connected to environmental goals, Tu b'shevat, Shavuot and Sukkot.

11. Amendments

This Sustainability Philosophy may be amended by the Board as appropriate, primarily with the intention to make changes reflecting new technologies or actions to combat climate change.

[End of Sustainability Philosophy]

Adopted by the Board of Temple Shaaray Tefila

(Date)