Strengthening Your Sustainable CT Application: Lessons from Pre-Application Reviews

Sustainable CT

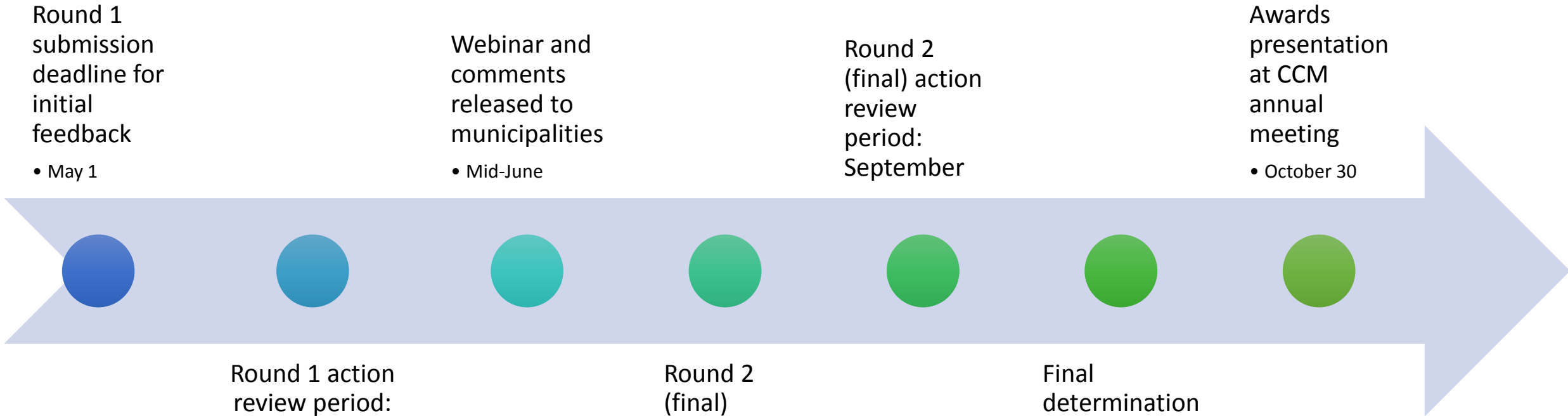
Local Actions. Statewide Impact.

Webinar Series

Agenda

- **Certification Timeline**
- Review Process Overview
- Round 1 Statistics
- Support for Municipalities
- Substantive Clarifications
- How to Access Feedback
- Avoiding Errors in Final Submission
- Next Steps

2018 Certification Timeline



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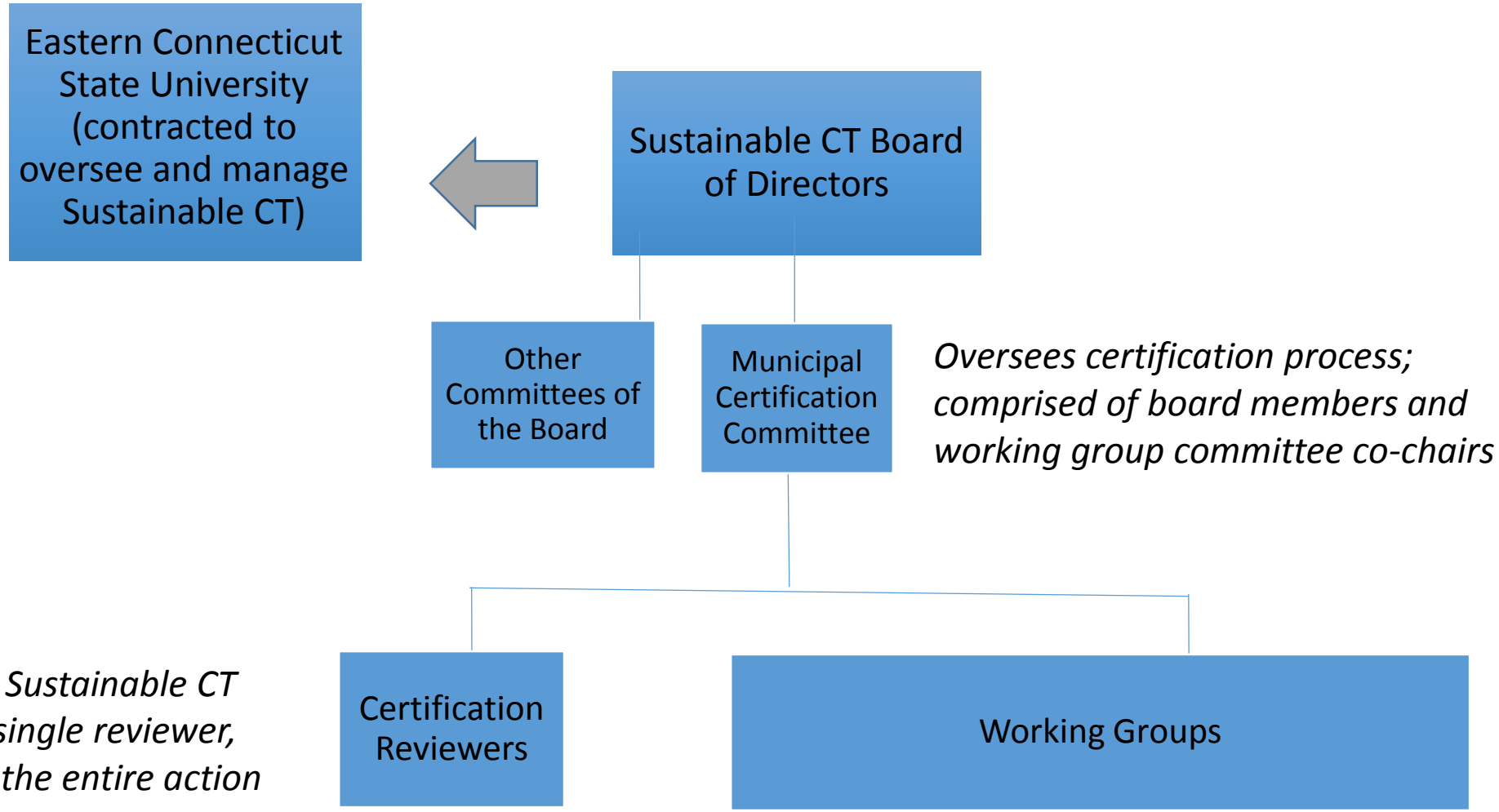
Roles and Responsibilities



Each of the 55 Sustainable CT actions had a single reviewer, who reviewed the entire action

Tenets of Certification Process

- Supportive: Many resources offered
- Rigorous: Strict interpretation of substantive criteria (with opportunity for feedback; potential revisions in 2019 and beyond)
- Inclusive: Lots of external reviewers/subject matter experts
- Regional collaboration and external partnership valued
- Breadth: 1 action/category, including equity
- Ongoing: Rolling work on application with 2 rounds of review and 1 round of awards annually

Principles for Action Inclusion in Sustainable CT

Developed by the Municipal Certification Committee from the 2017 Working Group criteria used to determine whether an action should be considered for inclusion in Sustainable CT

Optimizing the action

- *Collaboration*: The action enables/encourages multi-town collaboration.
- *Multisolving*: The action generate multiple, co-existing benefits. Those benefits may extend to other categories of Sustainable CT.
- *Equity:* The action has the potential to reduce disparities for the most marginalized populations while improving well-being for all.
- *Policy Alignment*: The action aligns with state goals.
- *Measurement:* There are reliable existing or easily obtainable data indicators available to measure progress over time.
- *Applicability/Replicability:* The action is applicable to and easily replicable for most towns (small/large, rural/urban).
- *Forward-Looking*: The action is forward-looking (e.g., awards points for something framed in the positive, rather than ban).

*Actions included in Sustainable CT or **awarded points as innovation actions** should meet all or most of these guiding principles, with flexibility in the discretion of Sustainable CT staff, who will collaborate with thought leaders to help make determinations.*

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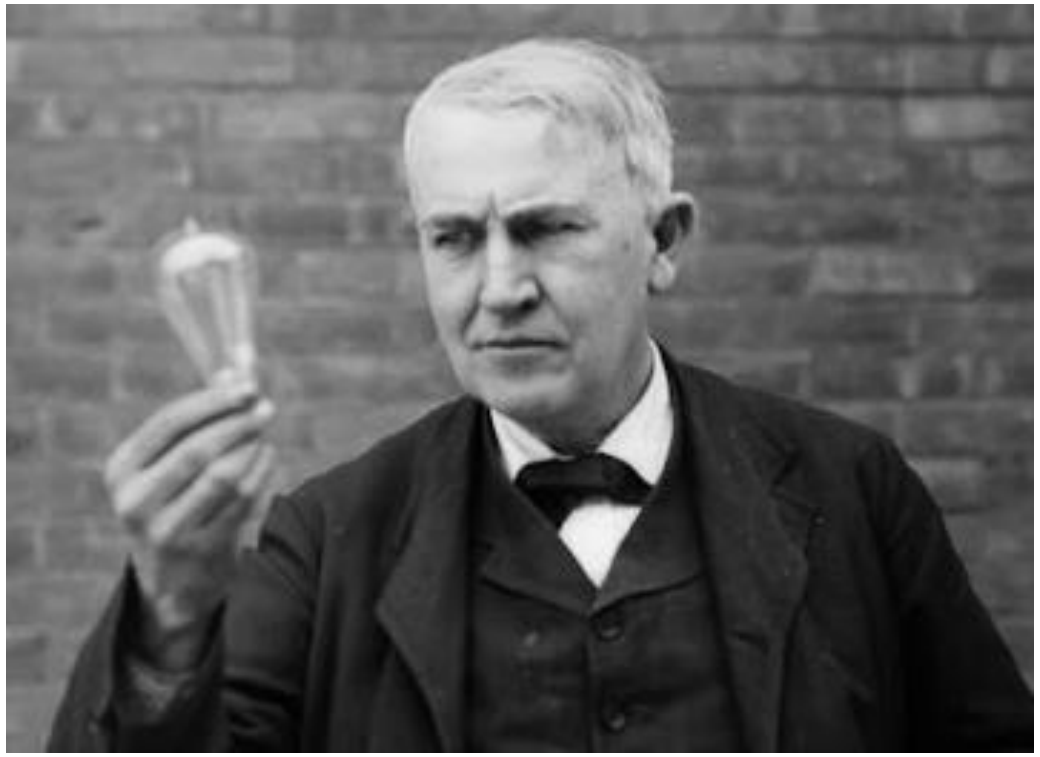
If at first you don’t succeed… you’re normal



Certification: Round 1 Review

- 48 municipalities registered (~28%)
- 18 municipalities (~38% of registered municipalities) submitted applications
- Total of 188 actions (average ~10 per application)
- 23% approved vs. 77% must revise
- Categories with the greatest need for additional support:
  - Healthy, Efficient and Diverse Housing
  - Inclusive and Equitable Community Impacts
  - Vibrant and Creative Cultural Ecosystems

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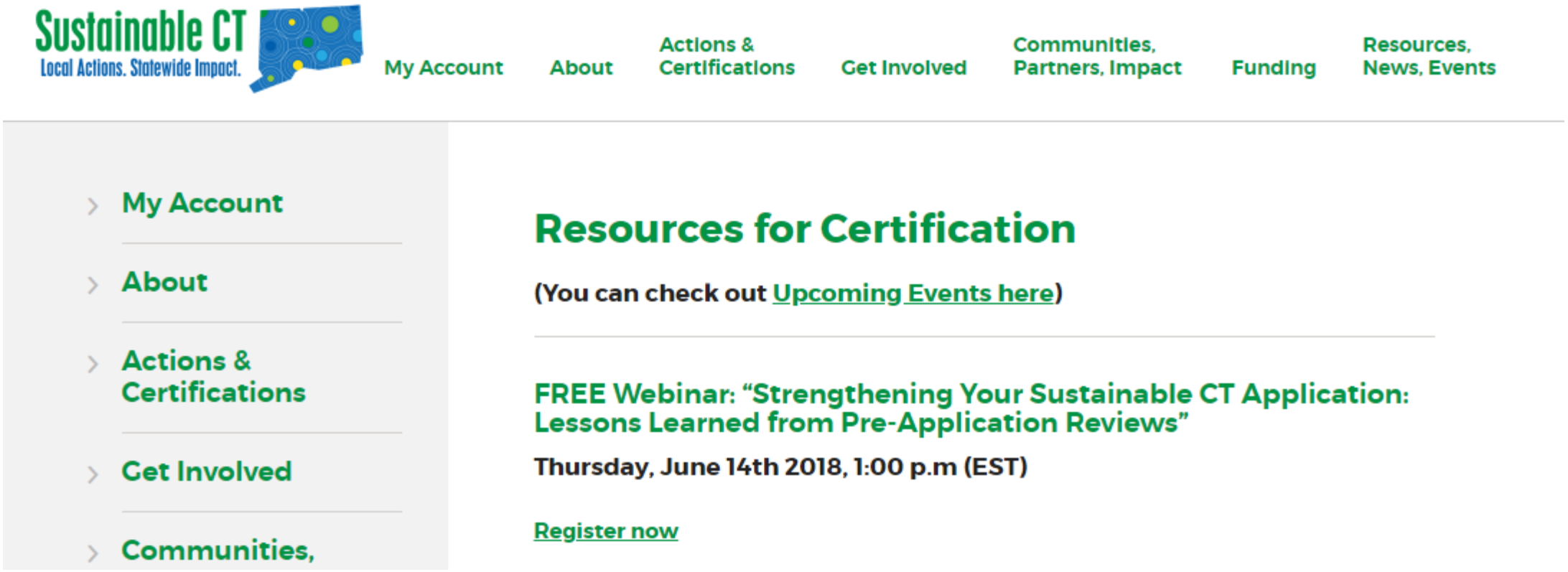
Available Support

Free technical support resources: https://sustainablect.org/resources-news-events/



Available Support: Sustainable CT Fellows

Contact your regional council of governments. Consider additional municipal and regional intern support.

Sustainable CT Application Q & A Sessions

- Sustainable CT will hold application Q & A sessions. Attend any session that's most convenient. Come with your questions, and if your application is near-complete, receive an informal review, with feedback on what to fix before submitting. Sessions are open to all but especially encouraged for municipalities that did not submit for round 1 review.

- Register at https://tinyurl.com/y97rooyn

    - **Monday, July 30, 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**: Northwest Hills COG
    - **Monday, July 30, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.**: Western COG
    - **Tuesday, July 31, 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**, Lower CT River Valley COG
    - **Tuesday, July 31, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.**, South Central Regional COG
    - **Tuesday, August 7, 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.**, Northeastern COG
    - **Tuesday, August 7, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 pm.**, Capitol Region COG

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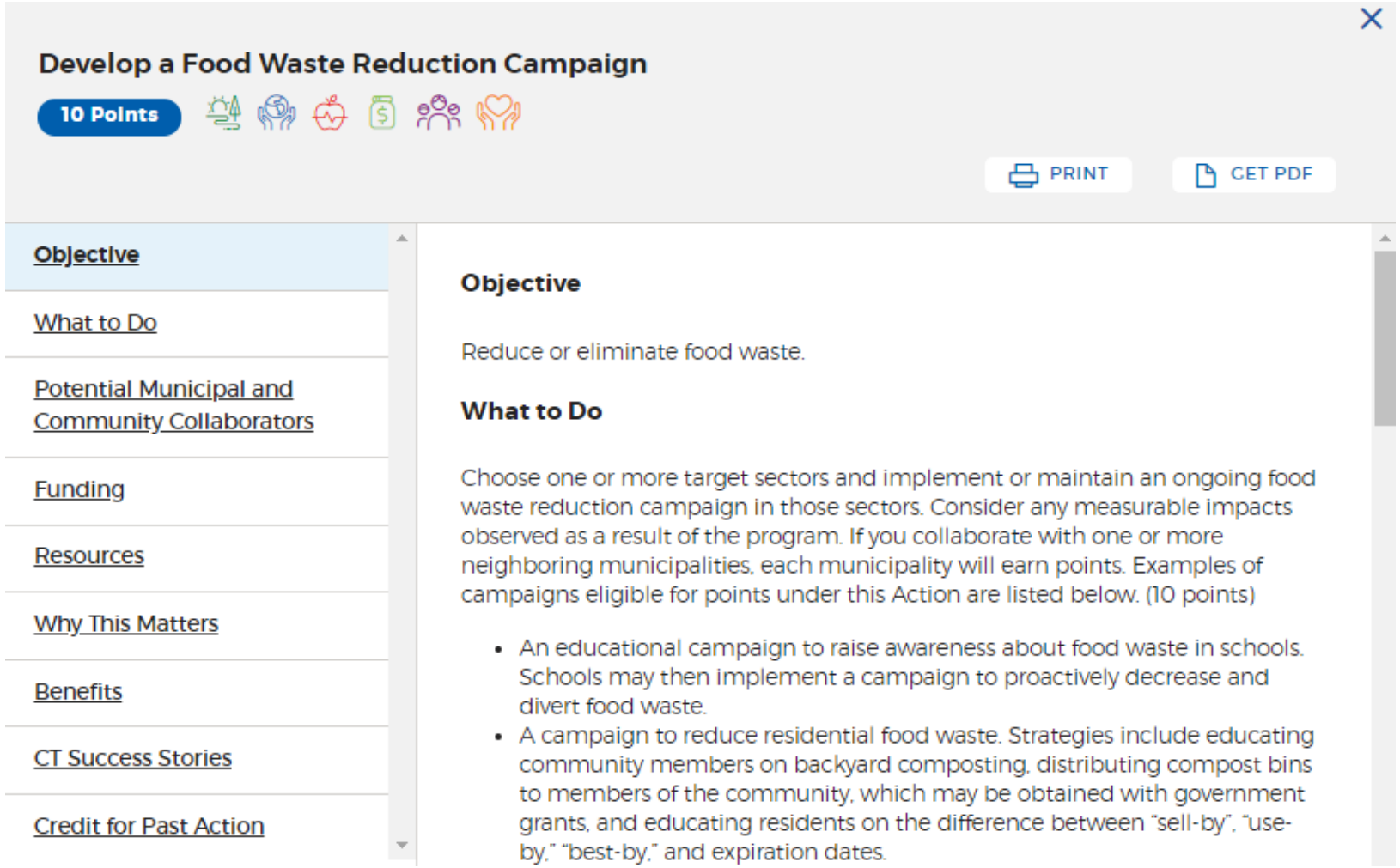
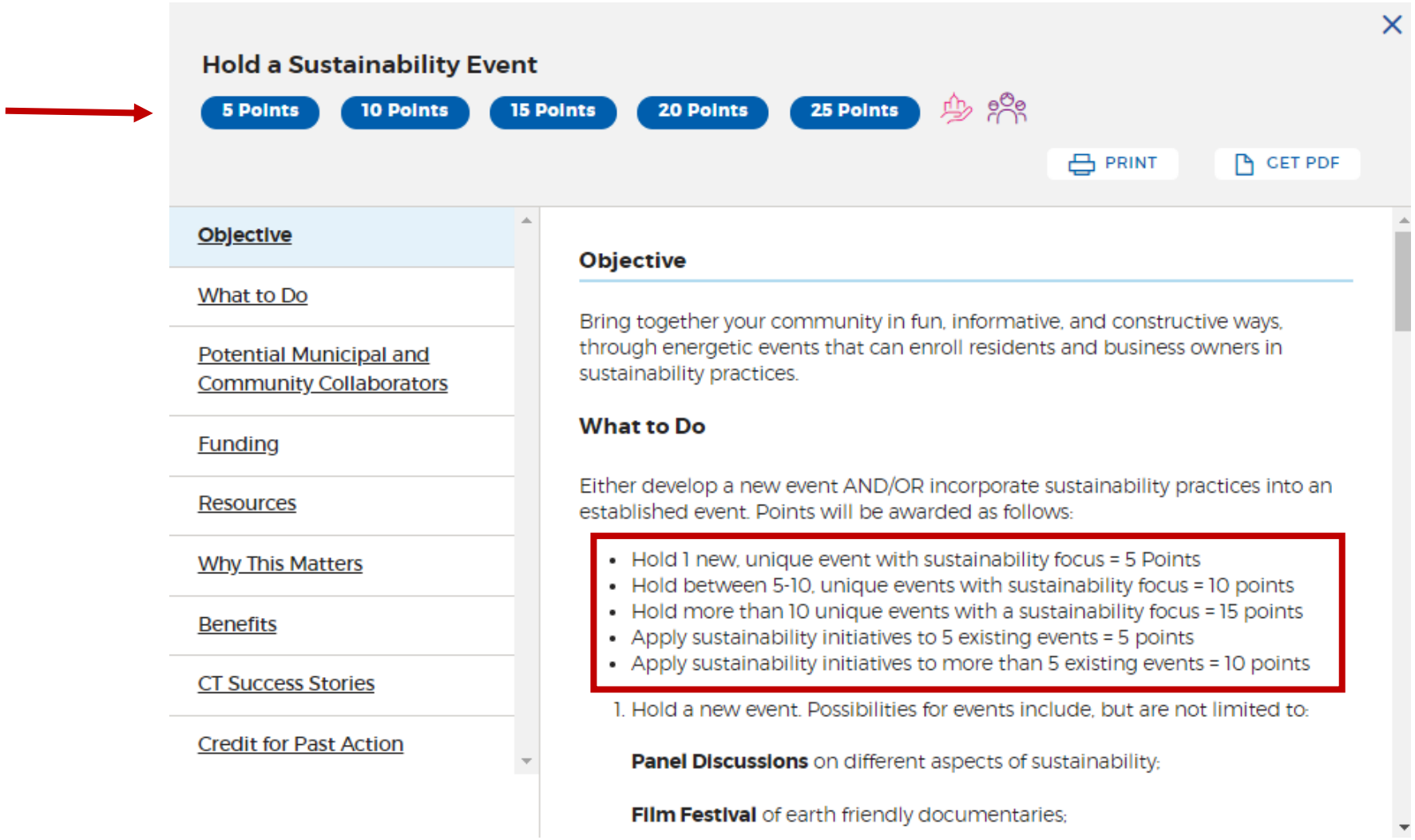
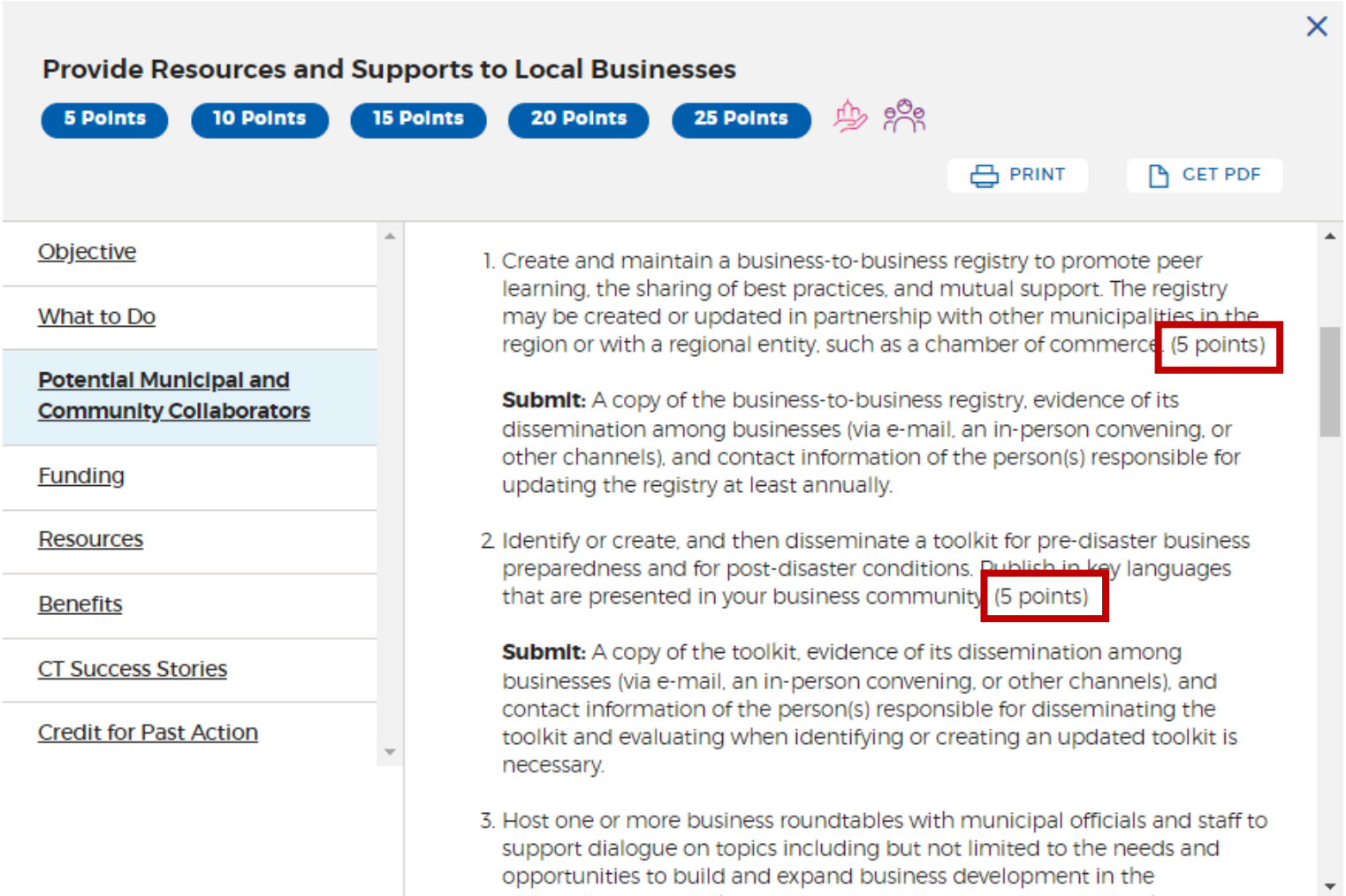
Single Point Actions



Variable Point Actions



Variable Point Actions, continued



Provide Resources and Supports to Local Businesses

5 Points | 10 Points | 15 Points | 20 Points | 25 Points

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- Objective
- What to Do
- **Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators**
- Funding
- Resources
- Benefits
- CT Success Stories
- Credit for Past Action

1. Create and maintain a business-to-business registry to promote peer learning, the sharing of best practices, and mutual support. The registry may be created or updated in partnership with other municipalities in the region or with a regional entity, such as a chamber of commerce. (5 points)

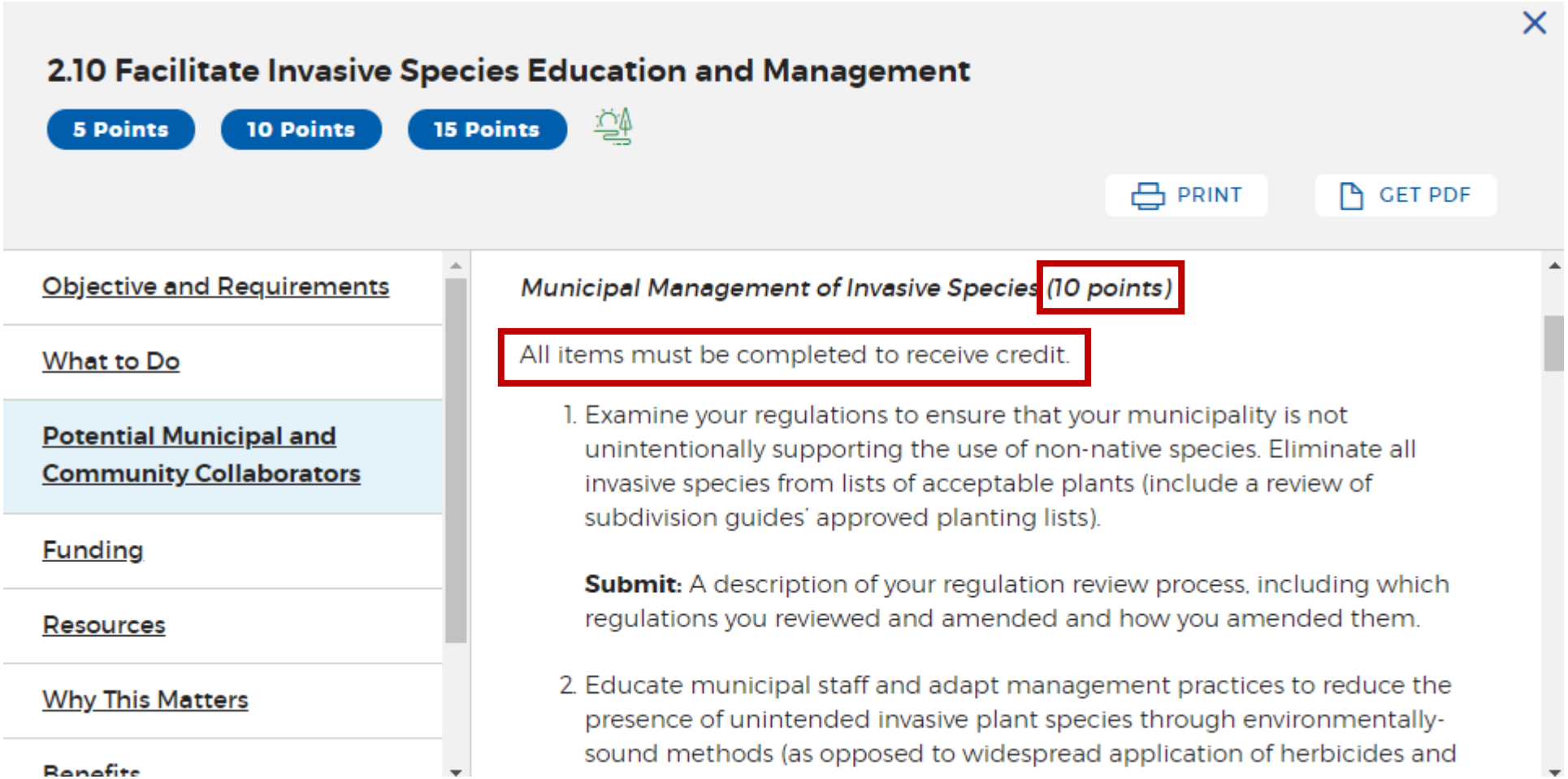
   Submit: A copy of the business-to-business registry, evidence of its dissemination among businesses (via e-mail, an in-person convening, or other channels), and contact information of the person(s) responsible for updating the registry at least annually.

2. Identify or create, and then disseminate a toolkit for pre-disaster business preparedness and for post-disaster conditions. Publish in key languages that are presented in your business community. (5 points)

   Submit: A copy of the toolkit, evidence of its dissemination among businesses (via e-mail, an in-person convening, or other channels), and contact information of the person(s) responsible for disseminating the toolkit and evaluating when identifying or creating an updated toolkit is necessary.

3. Host one or more business roundtables with municipal officials and staff to support dialogue on topics including but not limited to the needs and opportunities to build and expand business development in the

Variable Point Actions, continued



2.10 Facilitate Invasive Species Education and Management

5 Points | 10 Points | 15 Points

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- Objective and Requirements
- What to Do
- **Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators**
- Funding
- Resources
- Why This Matters
- Benefits

Municipal Management of Invasive Species (10 points)

All items must be completed to receive credit.

1. Examine your regulations to ensure that your municipality is not unintentionally supporting the use of non-native species. Eliminate all invasive species from lists of acceptable plants (include a review of subdivision guides' approved planting lists).

   Submit: A description of your regulation review process, including which regulations you reviewed and amended and how you amended them.

2. Educate municipal staff and adapt management practices to reduce the presence of unintended invasive plant species through environmentally-sound methods (as opposed to widespread application of herbicides and

Optimize for Equity

- The Equity Toolkit must be applied to a new Sustainable CT action (one initiated after November 28, 2017).
- You must include this new action in your application submission materials (for the appropriate action, not “Optimize for Equity”)
- Registered communities each have 4 hours of free Equity Coaching available. Email us at info@sustainablect.org or call 860-465-0258 to schedule!
- Upcoming Equity/Housing Workshop: Work session to apply the Equity Toolkit to the “Design and Implement a Housing Needs Assessment” action (Morning of July 11th, Manchester Community College)

Energy Actions

- 6.1. Benchmark and Track Energy Use
  - Originally, this action required 100% of muni buildings. Revising to list building categories that must be tracked (categories as defined by Energy Star, e.g., K12 schools, police stations…), eliminates small energy users.
  - Sustainable CT is creating a standard report in Portfolio Manager – you will open report in your PM account, select buildings, and data will populate the report. You will export this report into excel, then upload it into Sustainable CT to document that you completed this action.
- 6.2. Reduce Energy Use Across All Municipal Buildings
  - Sustainable CT is creating a standard report in Portfolio Manager – you will open report in your PM account, select buildings, and data will populate the report. You will export this report into excel, then upload it into Sustainable CT to document that you completed this action.

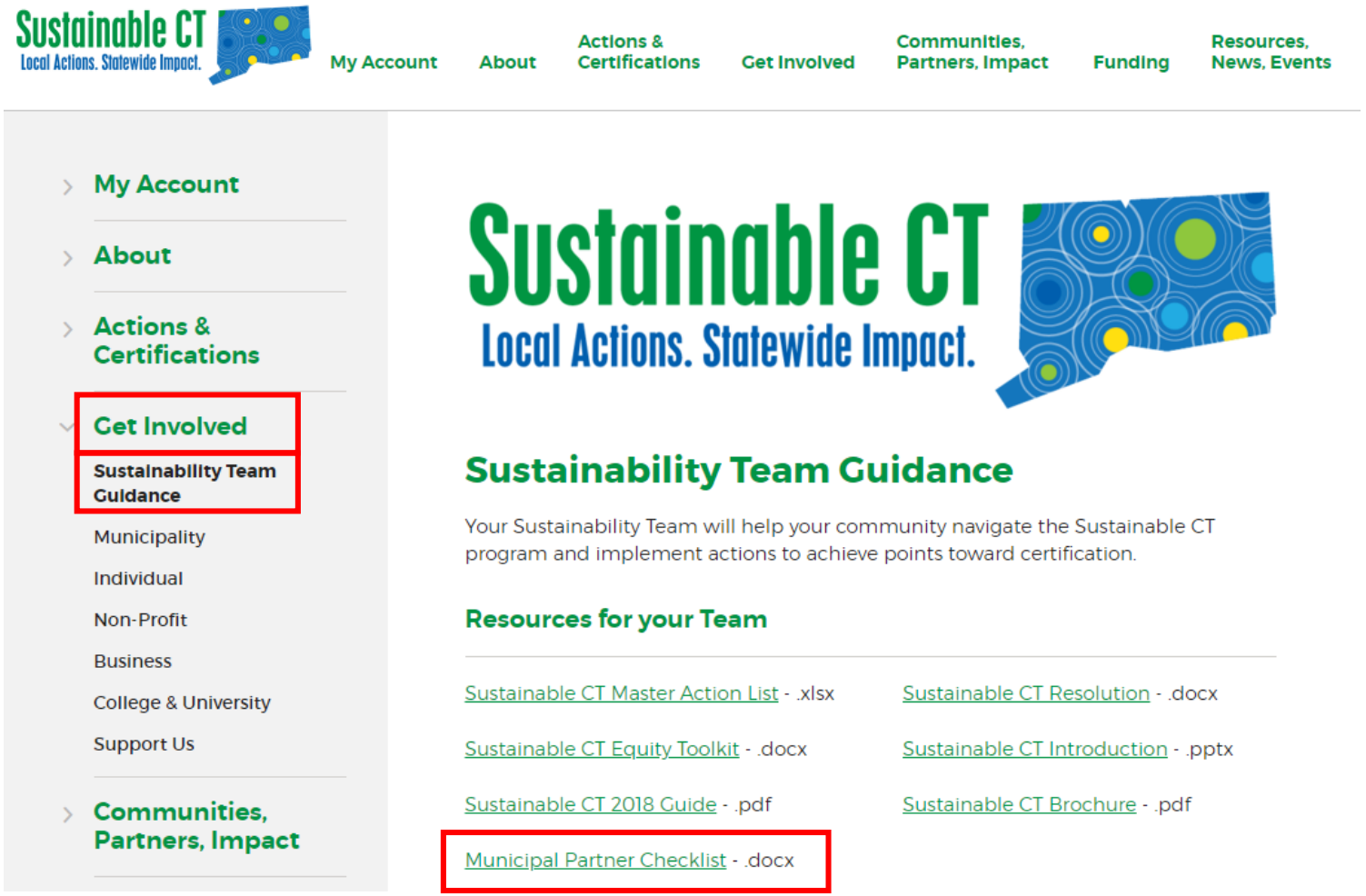
Collaboration with Other Municipalities

- Regional collaboration is encouraged!
- Each municipality in a collaborative to implement a specific Sustainable CT action is eligible to receive full points for implementing that action.
- Each municipality must submit the appropriate documentation for that action when submitting for certification.
- Examples: Multi-town events, educational campaigns, etc.

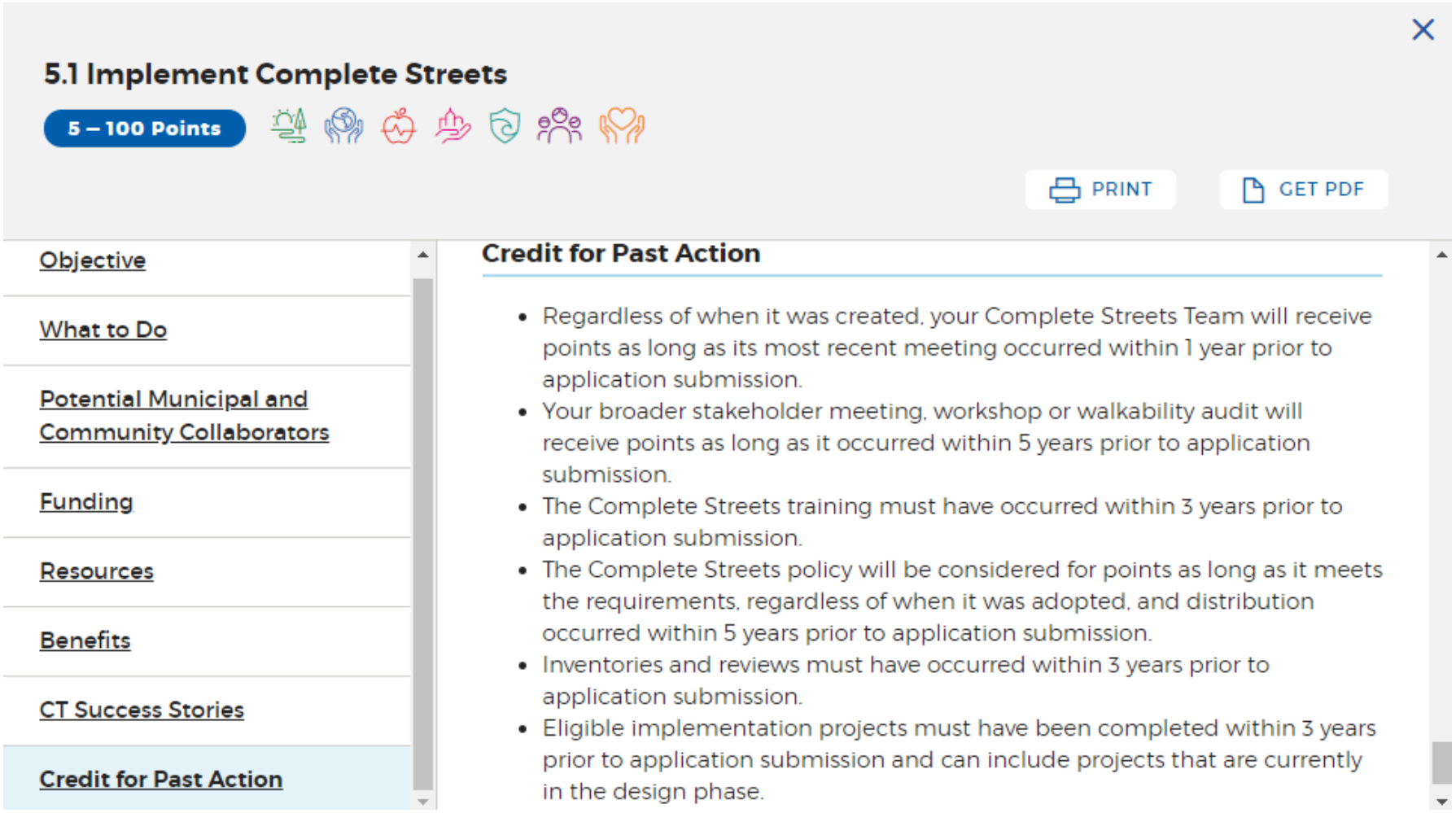
Collaboration with Non-Municipal Stakeholders

- This is also highly encouraged!
- Examples:
  - ❑ Schools
  - ❑ Health districts
  - ❑ Councils of governments
  - ❑ Public utilities (e.g., regional water companies, etc.)
  - ❑ State agencies
  - ❑ Nonprofit organizations
  - ❑ Academic institutions
  - ❑ Businesses
- If your municipality requests points for an action completed with a non-municipal stakeholder, ***you must submit a partnership letter, signed by both your municipality and the non-municipal stakeholder, articulating the role of the municipality in action implementation.***

Partner Letter Template and Checklist



Look-Back Period



Count back from the final submission deadline of August 24, 2018, to determine whether or not you're in the look-back period.

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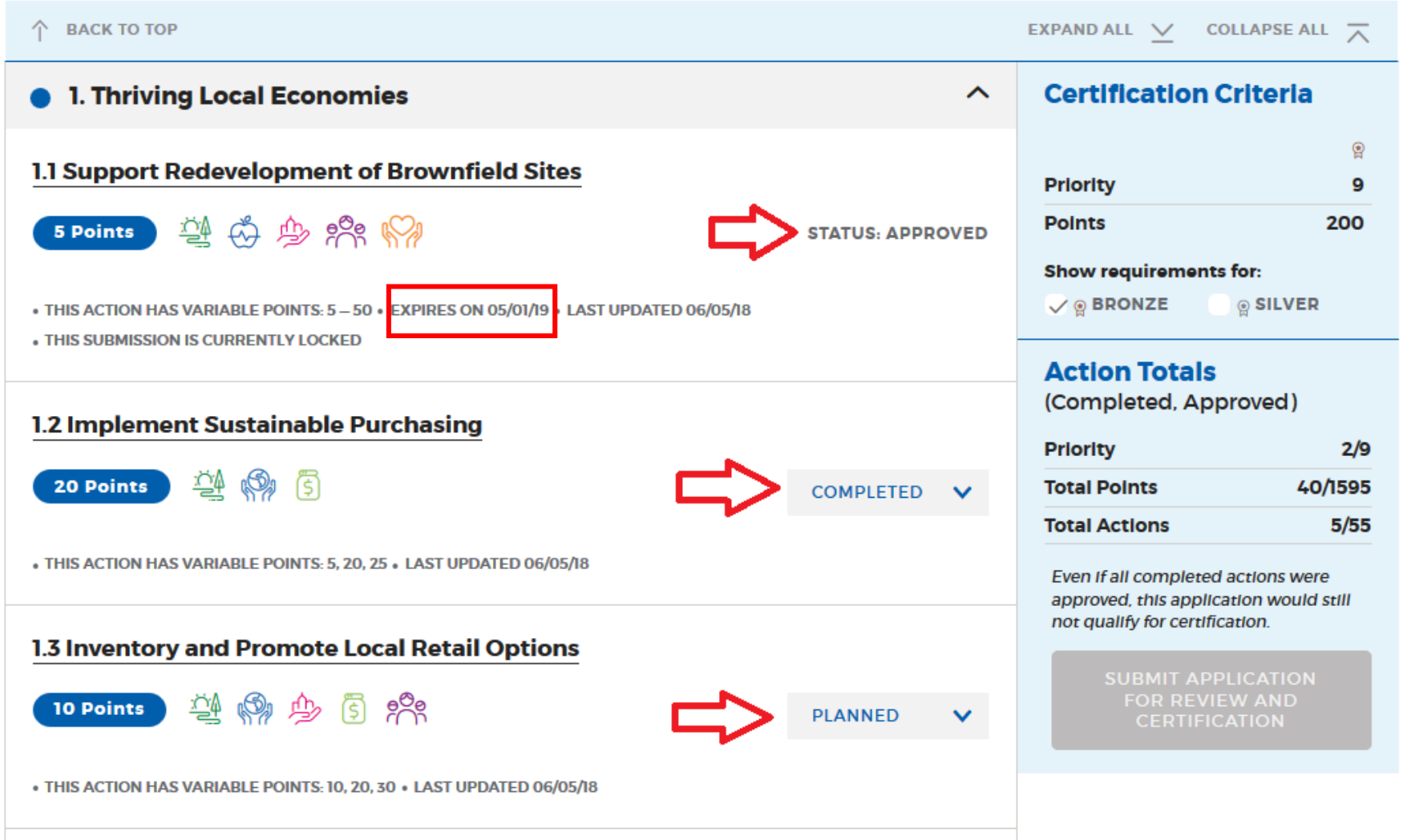
Accessing Feedback

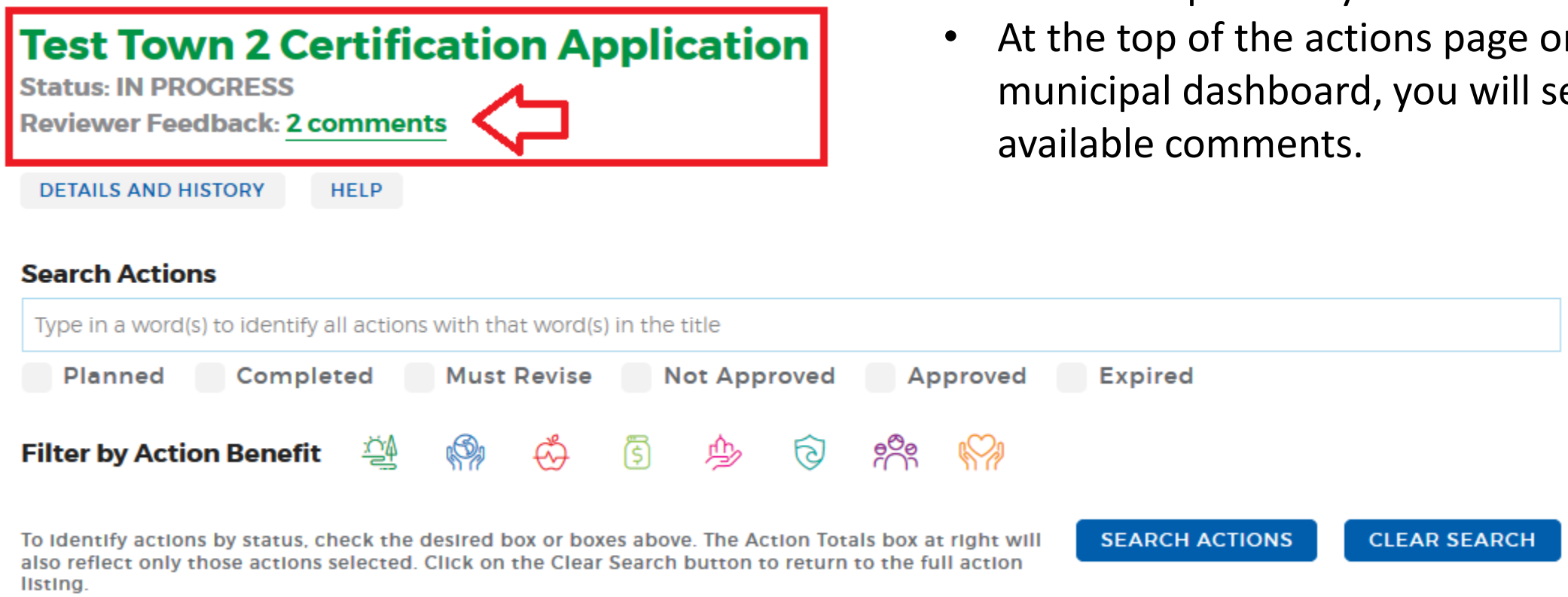
- Comments will be published after today's webinar (by midday tomorrow)
- Reviewers are anonymous, unless they provided contact information. Contact certify@sustainablect.org or a Sustainable CT staff member directly for clarification on a reviewer comment
- Even if an action is marked "must revise", you may have been approved for points for some elements of the action
- All actions reviewed will be marked either "approved" or "must revise."
- "Approved" actions need no further changes; you've earned those points!

Reviewing Feedback

- To submit for more points on approved actions, e-mail certify@sustainablect.org to unlock them
- Ignore the “expiration date” listed; it will change after the Municipal Certification Committee recommends processes on future certification cycles



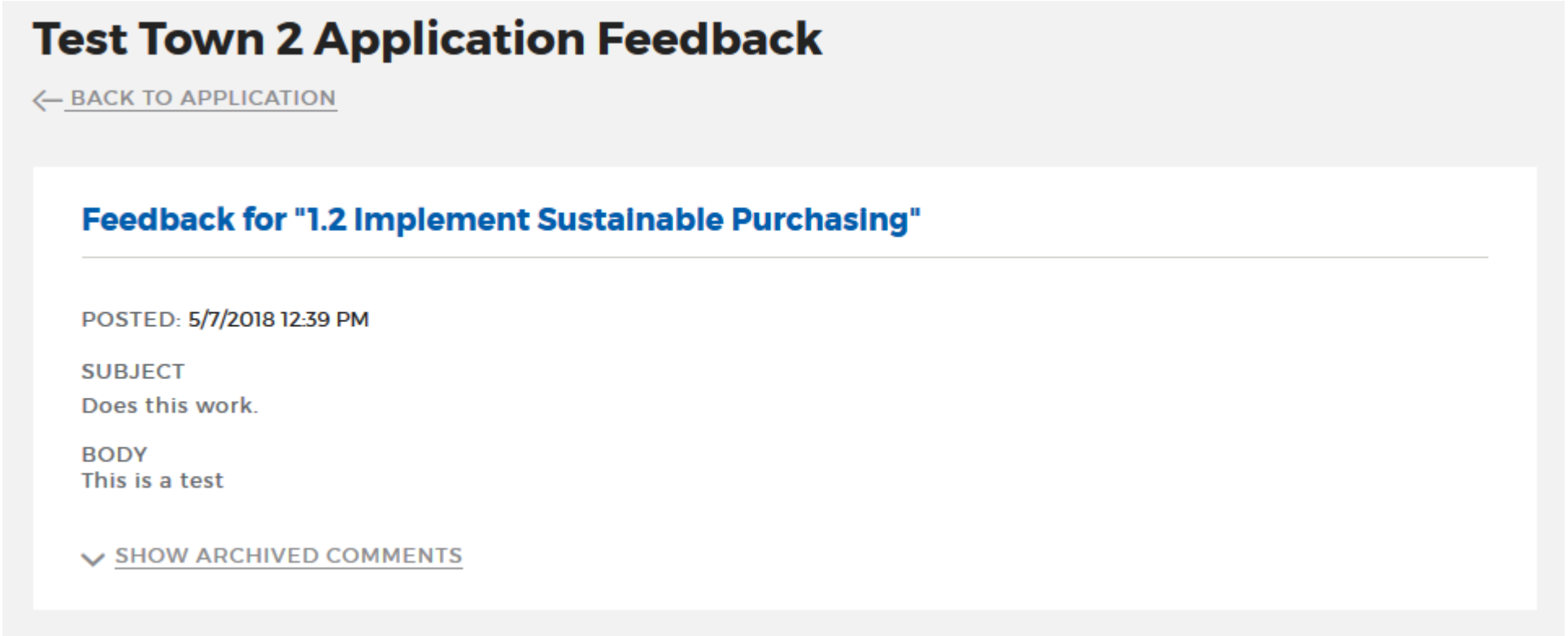
Reviewing Feedback



- All actions marked “must revise” should have an explanatory comment.
- At the top of the actions page on your municipal dashboard, you will see available comments.

Reviewing Feedback

- Once you click on “comments,” a list of available comments will appear.
- Comments are listed in the same order as the actions.



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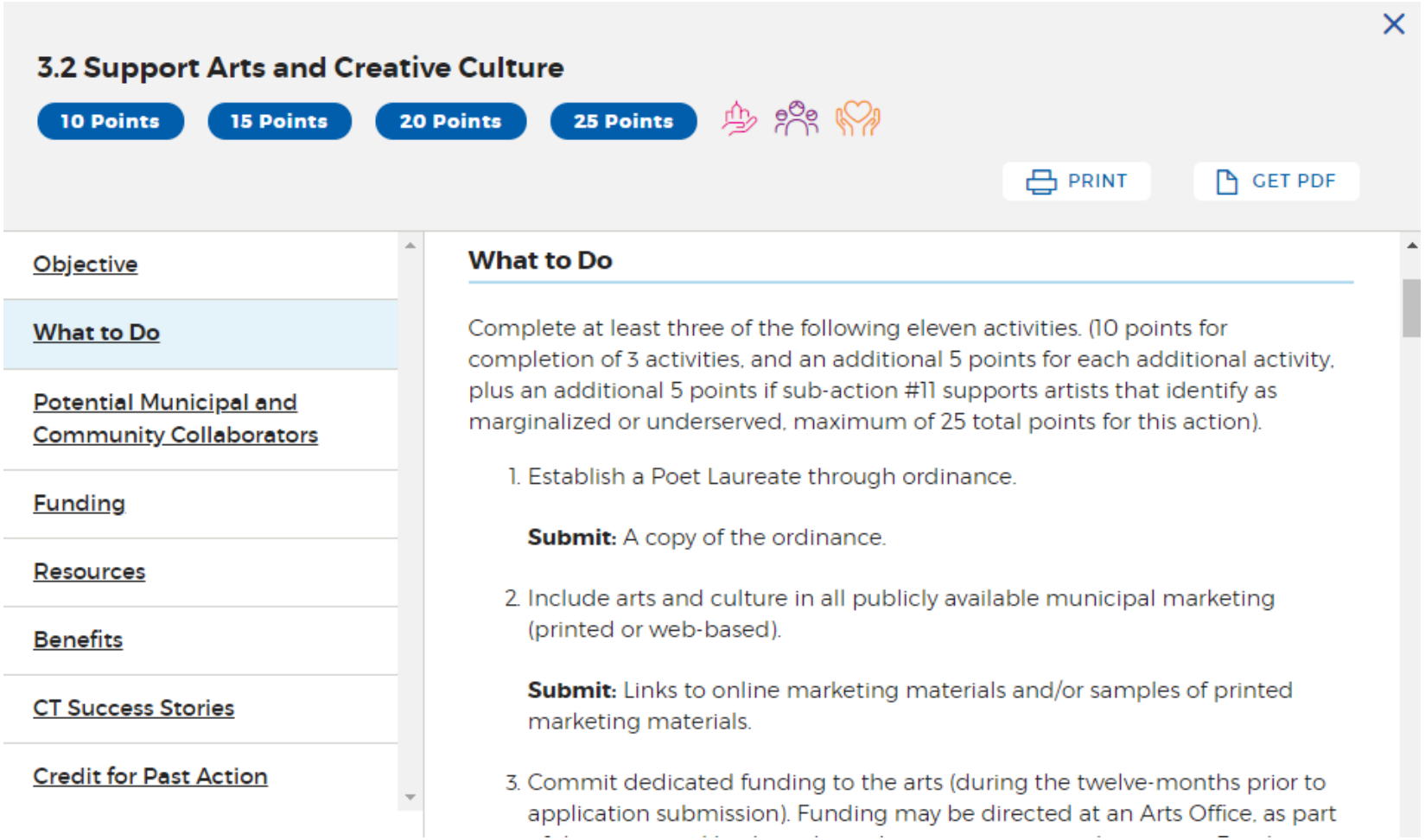
When Submitting…

- Check you've completely met the **action requirements** and are **submitting all appropriate documents**.
- Provide pdfs over website links (so others can learn from your efforts, even if websites go offline), when possible; no shared drive documents.
  - Contact us if you're unable to upload something.
  - File size limits have been increased to 30 MB, and up to 10 files.
- For long documents, note relevant page numbers and/or highlight relevant text portions.
- All items should be accessible with just one click.
- Think from the perspective of promoting ease for the reviewer (e.g., use "Additional Information" section to elaborate on uploaded documents, as needed).

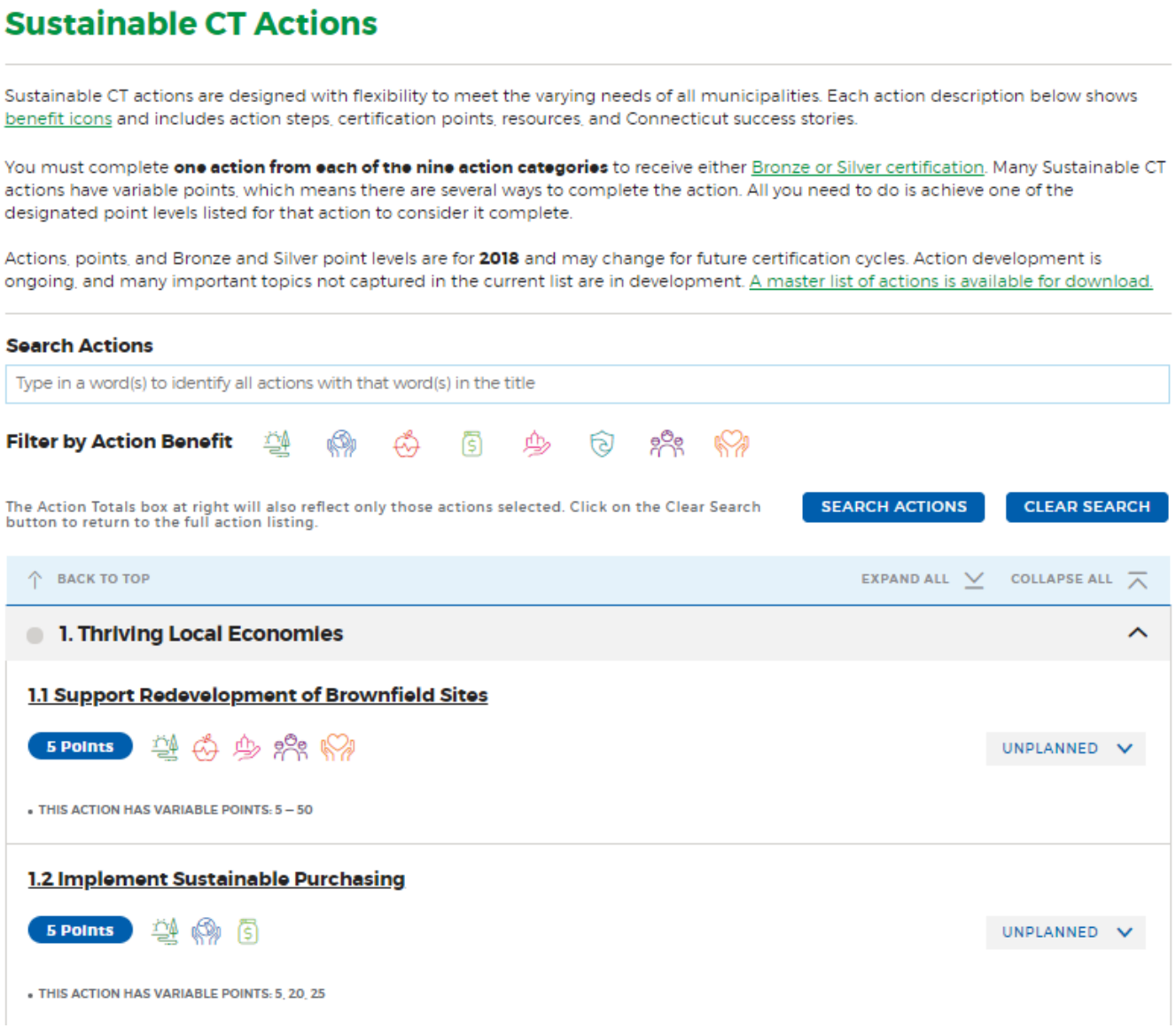
Numbering of Actions

- Please clarify which supporting documents are for which part of the action by numbering them. Examples:
  - 1.PoetLaureateOrdinance
  - 5a.Letter
  - 5b.StaffList
  - 5c.MissionAndWorkPlan
  - 5d.Budget+FundingProof



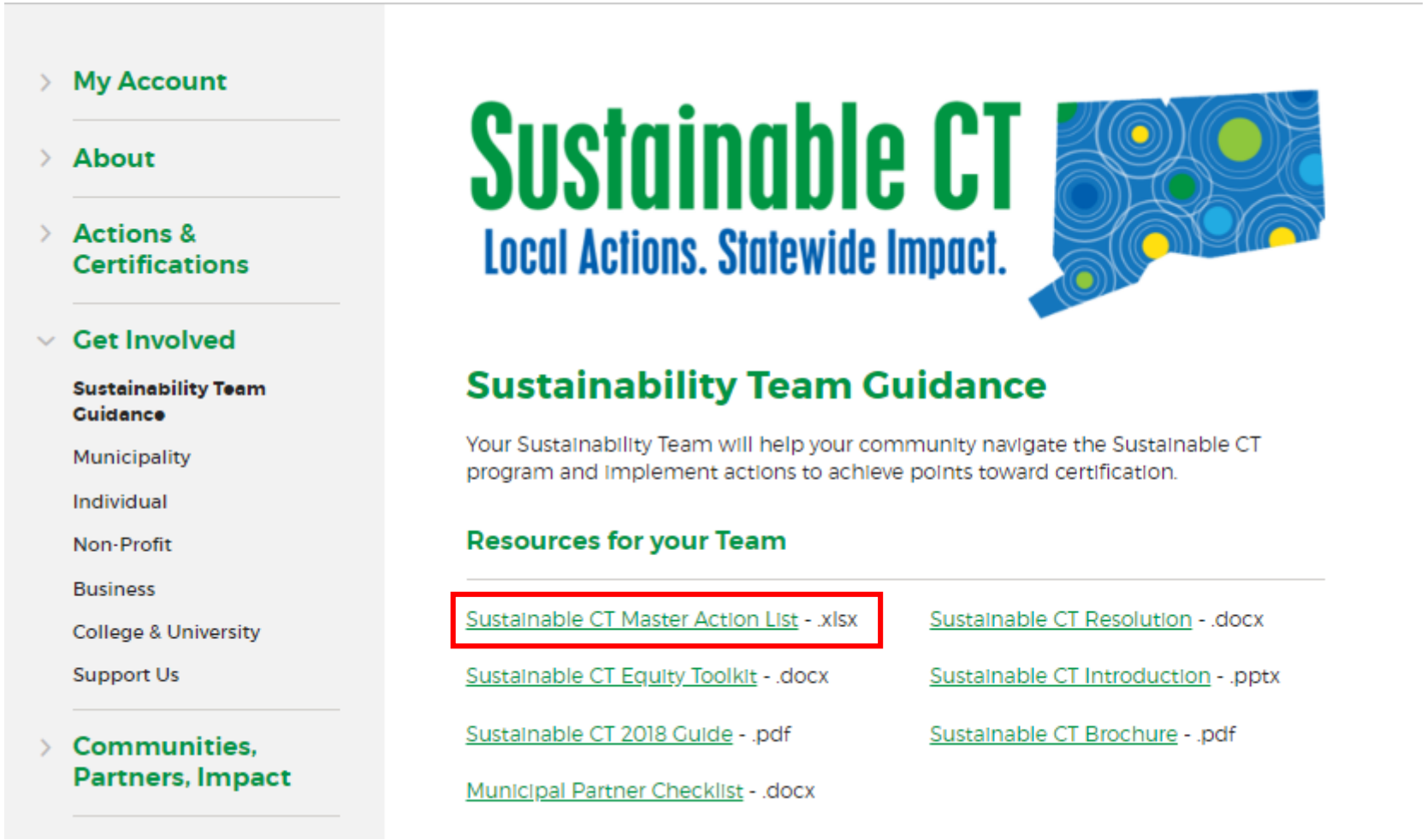
Clarifying Actions

- Action drafts updated with clarifying language (based on municipal and reviewer feedback)
- Some requirements eased (e.g., establishment of a Poet Laureate in the Arts and Culture category can now occur by ordinance *or* resolution)
- ***Look online for the most recent action drafts***

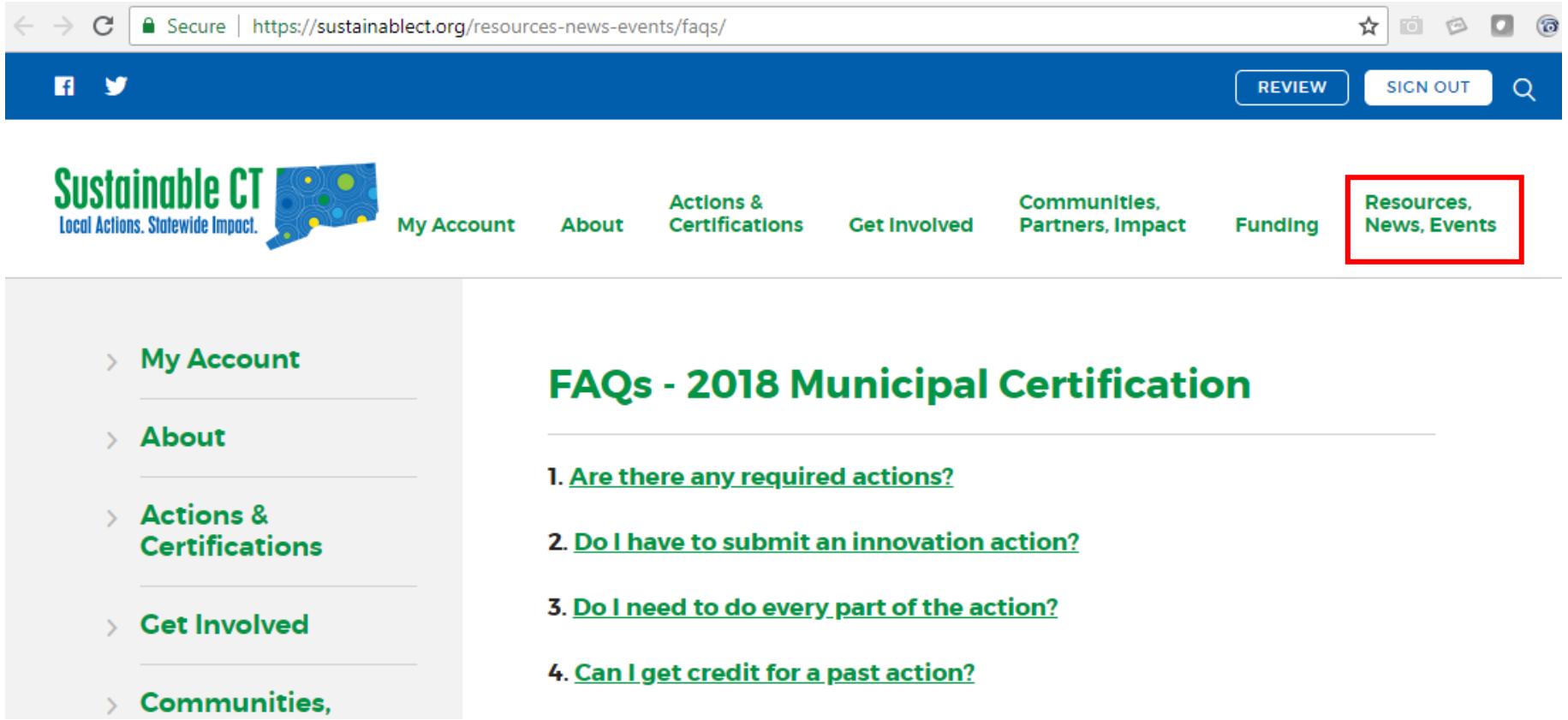


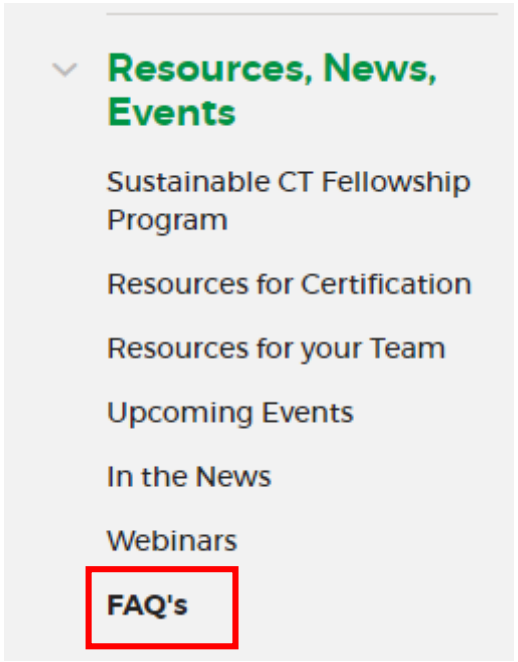
Clarifying Actions

- Master Action List Excel spreadsheet (short-hand checklist) updated to reflect changes
- No additional changes (even small clarifying ones) to Excel spreadsheet for 2018 after July 20th



Frequently Asked Questions





https://sustainablect.org/resources-news-events/faqs

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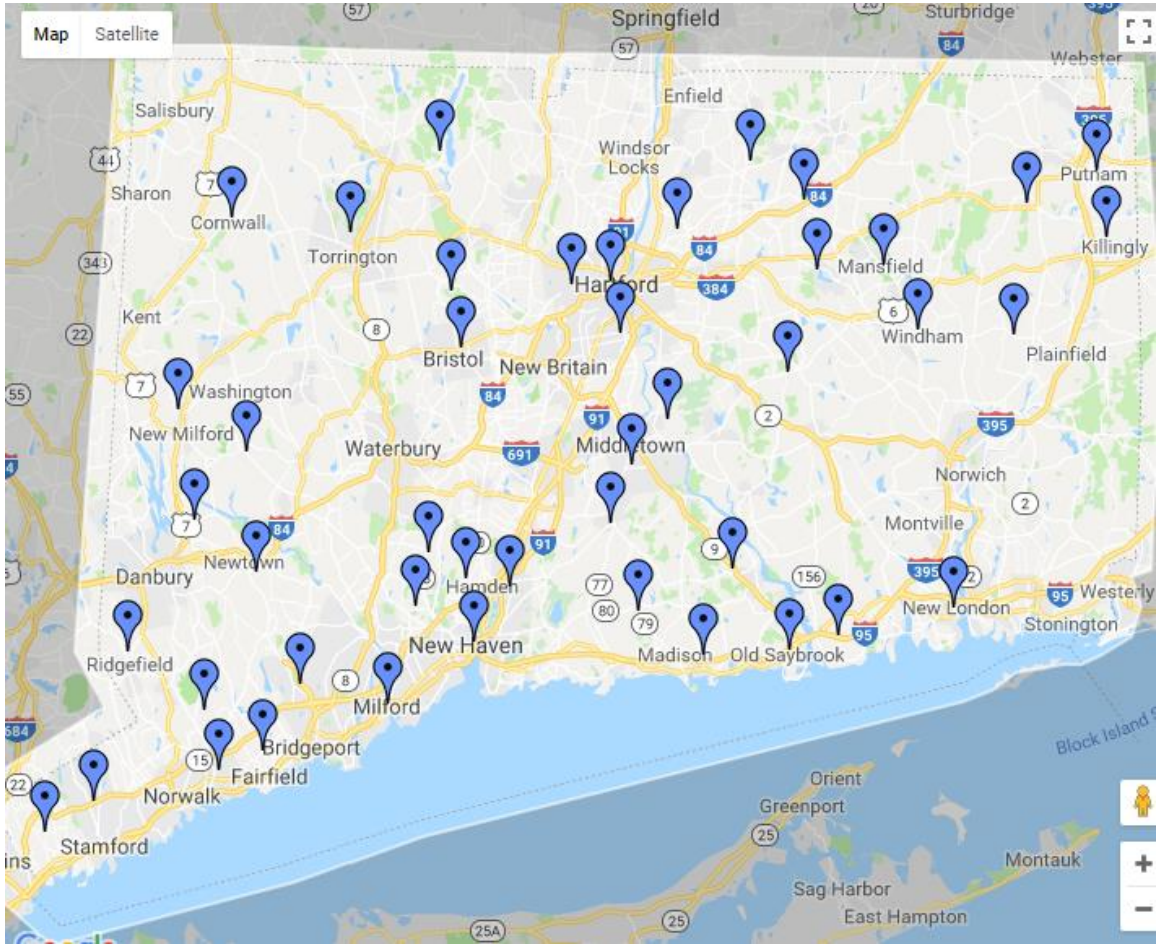
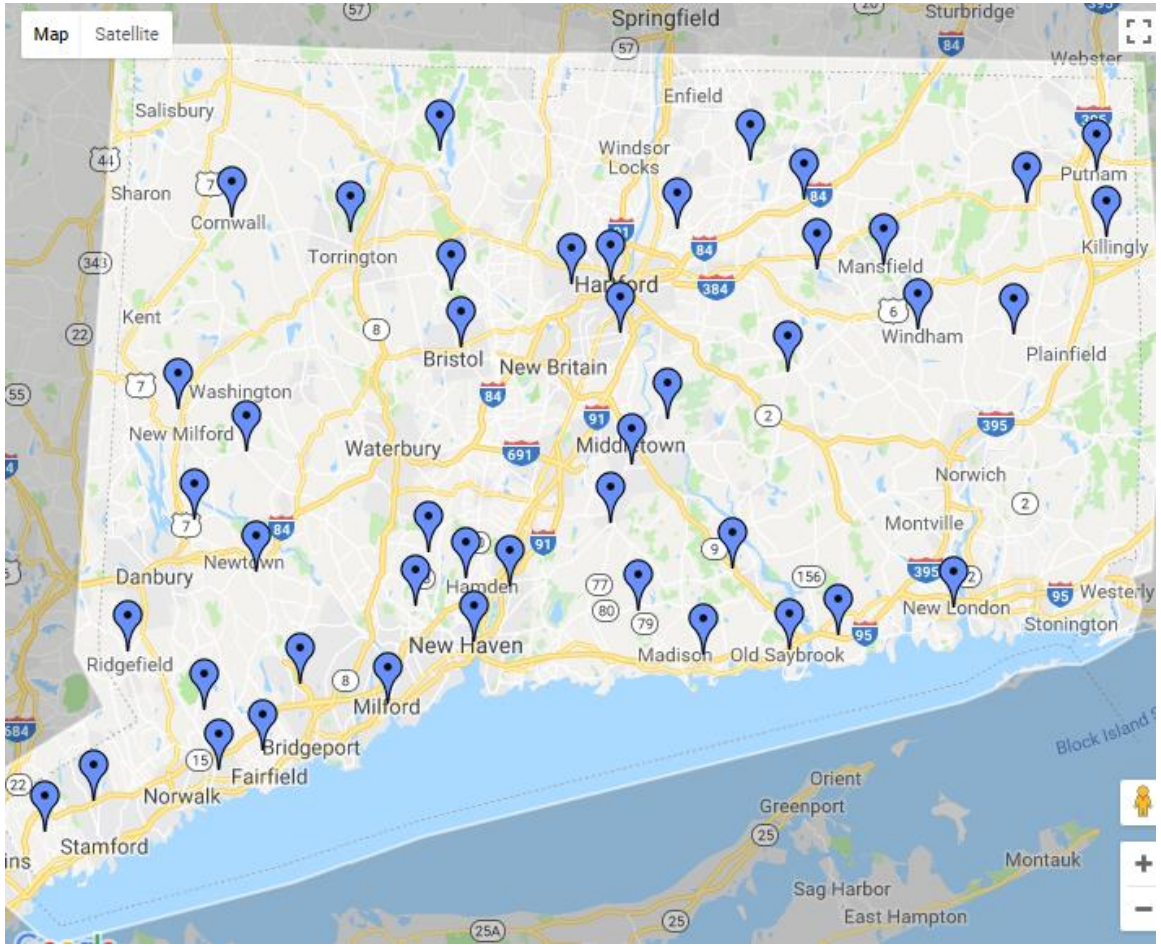
Celebrating Participation



Mission

To provide municipalities with a menu of coordinated, voluntary actions, to continually become more sustainable; to provide resources and tools to assist municipalities in implementing sustainability actions and advancing their programs for the benefit of all residents; and **to certify and recognize municipalities for their ongoing sustainability achievements**.

Celebrating Participation



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Certification Overview

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2018 *Bronze* Certification Requirements

Complete at least **1 action** in each of the 9 categories.

Successfully complete actions totaling **200 or more points**.

2018 *Silver* Certification Requirements

Complete at least **1 action** in each of the 9 categories.

Successfully complete actions totaling **400 or more points**.

Note: Actions, points, and certification point thresholds are for **2018** and may change for future certification cycles.

Looking Forward

- When you submit, you'll be asked to (1) affirm that the information given is true and accurate, and (2) grant permission to Sustainable CT to use the photographs and electronic media images in your Sustainable CT application for presentation in web content, social media, print materials, etc.
- Certification lasts for 3 years, but if you earn bronze-level certification, you can apply for silver-level certification as early as next year.
- If you are certified, all elements of your documentation will be publicly available on the Sustainable CT website.

Looking Forward

- Action requirements, point values and other program elements may change in the 2019 certification cycle.
- If you registered this year, you can always choose to apply for certification in a different year. Certification opportunities are annual, so work at your own pace.
- If you are not successful this year, try again next year! You'll need to resubmit everything but will likely re-earn many of the same points you earned this year (subject to look-back periods and future programmatic revisions).

Sustainable CT

Local Actions. Statewide Impact.

Lead for certification process; your primary contact as reviewers

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Executive director; primary contact for interested partners and funders

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