Concepts of sustainability are numerous, widely discussed, and necessary, but sustainability needs to be applied to development projects to succeed. However, few applications are made and their measures are unclear. Sustainability indicators are typically used as measures, but they are poor guides for making decisions related to development applications. Application to development of the built environment has been attempted primarily through use of smart growth and green building principles that are intended to produce cleaner environments, produce less waste, and lead to sustainability. However, the primary issue that development of the built environment incrementally and cumulatively causes rapid, severe, and irreversible losses of natural capital which is not sustainable is never addressed, even though the structure to address this issue exists in the form of the planning process which is typically used to plan such projects. The planning process is the appropriate tool to make development decisions conditional upon criteria. Typically such criteria restrict or require decisions that assure conformance with efficient or safe land use or use of a structure, but they could also relate to sustainability of natural systems. Identification of criteria related to sustainability enables the planning process to inform how the built environment can be developed to meet human needs without compromising the biophysical environment that sustains human life. Derivation of this strategy and its first application is presented.