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Chapter 4

Strengthening Communities

Creating a better future depends, in part, on the knowledge and involvement of citizens and on a decision-making process that embraces and encourages differing perspectives of those affected by governmental policy. Steps toward a more sustainable future include developing community-driven strategic planning and collaborative regional planning; improving community and building design; decreasing sprawl; and creating strong, diversified local economies while increasing jobs and other economic opportunities.

FLOURISHING COMMUNITIES ARE the foundation of a healthy society. One measure of America's potential for long-term vitality will be the emergence of communities that are attractive, clean, safe, and rich in educational and employment opportunities. Sustainable development can easily remain remote and theoretical unless it is linked to people's day-to-day lives and seen as relevant to fundamental needs such as jobs, clean air and water, and education.

It is often easier to make these connections in the context of communities. It is in communities that people work, play, and feel most connected to society. Problems like congestion, pollution, and crime may seem abstract as national statistics, but they become personal and real at the local level: for example, people are frustrated by long commutes that take time away from family life. It is in communities that people profoundly feel the effects of shifts in the national and regional economy. Although decisions may be justified based on restructuring or other economic needs, workers experience the loss of wages to provide for themselves and their families when factories or military bases are closed. It is within communities that children gain basic education, skills, and training for jobs in the changing marketplace. It is within communities that people can most easily bring diverse interests together, identify and agree on goals for positive change, and organize for responsive action. While the challenges facing the nation are difficult to resolve at any level of government, local communities offer people the greatest opportunity to meet face to face to fashion a shared commitment to a sustainable future.

The role of local communities is becoming increasingly important as the United States, and much of the rest of the world, moves toward more decentralized decisionmaking. The federal government will continue to bear the responsibility for bringing together diverse interests to establish national standards, goals, and priorities. The federal role is important and necessary in areas such as these because national interests may not always be represented in local decisions, and the effects of community choices are felt beyond one municipality. As discussed

in chapter 2, "Building a New Framework for a New Century," the federal government is providing greater flexibility and expanding the roles played by states, counties, and local communities in implementing policies and programs to address national goals. This new model of intergovernmental partnership will require information sharing and an unprecedented degree of coordination among levels of government. Local government will play a key role in creating stronger communities from planning and facilitating development, to creating community partnerships, to providing leadership.

It is clear that the scope of a problem determines the level at which it is most appropriately solved. For example, some issues have global, regional, and interregional ramifications. Air pollution is one such issue. The air pollutants in acid rain may originally have been emitted hundreds of miles from where the precipitation ultimately falls. The cooperation of more than one region is required to correct this type of problem.

Sustainable communities are cities and towns that prosper because people work together to produce a high quality of life that they want to sustain and constantly improve. While it is not possible today to point to a list and say, "These communities are sustainable," the emerging ideal of sustainable communities is a goal many are striving to achieve. And while there is no single template for a sustainable community, cities and towns pursuing sustainable development often have characteristics in common. In communities that sustain themselves, all people have access to educational opportunities that prepare them for jobs to support themselves and their families in a dynamic local economy that is prepared to cope with changes in the national and global economy. People are involved in making decisions that affect their lives. Businesses, households, and government make efficient use of land, energy, and other resources, allowing the area to achieve a high quality of life with minimal waste and environmental damage. These communities are healthy and secure, and provide people with clean air to breathe and safe water to drink.

In sustainable communities, people are engaged in building a community together. They are well-informed and actively involved in making community decisions. They make decisions for the long term that benefit future generations as well as themselves. They understand that successful long-term solutions require partnerships and a process that allows for representatives of a community's diverse sectors to be involved in discussions, planning, and decisions that respond directly to unique local needs. They also recognize that some problems cannot be solved within the confines of their community and that working in partnership with others in the region is necessary to deal with them.

In sustainable communities, people use a participatory approach to make conscious decisions about design. The concepts of efficiency and liveability guide these decisions. Development patterns promote accessibility, decrease sprawl, reduce energy costs, and foster the creation of built environments on a human scale. Use of environmentally superior technologies for transportation, industry, buildings, and agriculture boosts productivity and lowers business costs while dramatically reducing pollution, including solid and hazardous wastes.

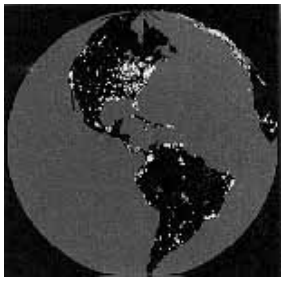
In sustainable communities, partnerships involving business, government, labor, and employees promote economic development and jobs. Participants cooperatively plan and carry out development strategies that create diversified local economies built on unique local advantages and environmentally superior technologies. These efforts can strengthen the local economy, buffering it from the effects of national and international economic trends that result in job losses in a community. Such partnerships also invest in education and training to make community members more productive, raise earning power, and help strengthen and attract business.

Much of what is needed to create more sustainable communities is within reach if people and their community institutions join forces. Many communities are beginning to use sustainable development as a framework for thinking about their future. The big institutions in society-- including federal and state governments, businesses, universities, and national organizations--can and should provide support for local community efforts. And in some cases, these institutions need to review the barriers they sometimes inadvertently have erected that diminish the ability of communities to pursue sustainable development.

The Council was inspired by communities throughout the country that are using innovative approaches to reinvigorate public involvement in finding solutions to community problems. From small towns like Pattonsburg, Missouri, to cities like Chattanooga, Tennessee, to large urban centers like Seattle, Washington, many communities are taking responsibility for meeting their economic, environmental, and equity objectives. While none of these communities has been transformed into a utopia, much can be learned from their efforts and progress. By building upon their leadership and innovation, marshaling and reorienting government resources, and creating new standards for process and participation, strengthened communities can provide the foundation for a stronger, revitalized America.

Building A Community Together

The Council believes that one of the best ways to strengthen communities is to ensure that people have greater power over and responsibility for the decisions that shape their communities. Time and time again, community leaders told us that a fundamental component of implementing sustainable development locally is having people come together to identify a community's needs and then work toward collaborative solutions. Accomplishing this requires both political leadership and citizen involvement. They also told us that creating mechanisms for communities to work together cooperatively is necessary to deal with problems that cross political jurisdictions.



The capacity of democratic institutions to solve problems and create a better future depends on the knowledge and involvement of citizens in a community decision-making process that encourages systemic thought and broad-based action. Systemic thought is required so that economic, environmental, and social problems are recognized as integrated and actions to address them are coordinated. Because these problems are interconnected in daily life, approaching them one at a time does not work. In fact, such a strategy is often counterproductive, leading to short-term fixes and long-term difficulties--a situation society can ill afford. The integration of local decisionmaking offers a way to improve the economy, the environment, and social equity in communities.

Broad-based action is needed because local government alone cannot accomplish long-term solutions to community problems. Nor can individuals, businesses, community groups, or state and federal agencies do so by working in isolation. Lasting solutions are best identified when people from throughout a community--as individuals; elected officials; or members of the business community, environmental groups, or civic organizations--are brought together in a spirit of cooperation to identify solutions to community problems.

But make no mistake: this work is difficult, and there are barriers to its success. The time and energy of many families are already drained by juggling the demands of the workplace and the home. Cynicism toward government is high, and. all too frequently. Participation in civic life is declining.

Despite the obstacles, some communities are succeeding in ambitious efforts to involve citizens in building a stronger community. For example:

- Since 1984, more than 2,000 Chattanooga residents have worked together to identify broad goals to lay out a vision for their city's future.
- In Pattonsburg, which was nearly destroyed by a flood in 1993, residents came together and, with the assistance of experts on sustainable design, decided to rebuild their community on higher ground.
- In Seattle, a local citizens' group spearheaded an effort to measure the progress or decline of key social, economic, and environmental indicators that were identified by the community as priorities.
- Metropolitan areas like Portland, Oregon, and states like Minnesota have begun to use broad-based goal-setting and benchmarking projects in planning their collective future and measuring their progress.

By listening to the stories of communities throughout the country, the Council learned that there are fundamental steps to a community-driven strategic planning process. A critical first step is to assemble a broad cross section of the community to participate in an open, public process. Through a series of meetings and events, the community develops a vision for its future. It then conducts an inventory and assessment of its economic, natural, and human resources. Specific economic, environmental, and social goals are determined; these build on the community's vision, resources, and needs. Next, the community sets priorities for its goals, identifies specific actions, and establishes indicators or benchmarks to measure progress toward the goals. If successful, the strategic planning process results in a clear sense of direction and timing. It specifies the actions and responsibilities to be undertaken by business, residents, government, and community groups.

Fundamental to the long-term success of community-driven solutions is the opportunity for all residents to participate, including people who have been historically underrepresented in decisionmaking. While citizen participation is primarily an individual decision, government and the private sector can encourage people to be more involved by addressing barriers to participation. By developing a strategic plan that involves the diverse sectors of the community and generates leadership to bring about specific actions, communities have taken steps to create a better future for their residents.

Cooperation among communities in a metropolitan area is also necessary. For some time, there has been a trend toward increased concentration of the U.S. population in metropolitan areas. This trend is linked both to population growth and people's migratory patterns. The number of Americans living in metropolitan areas rose from 140 million in 1970 to more than 203 million in 1992.[1] This trend affects such concerns as congestion, urban pollution, and

high demand for public space and services, which together lower the quality of life in cities and contribute to the exodus from central cities that is occurring in many parts of America. By working together, communities can tackle issues--like transportation planning--that affect, and whose resolution can benefit, an entire region. This collaborative approach is not only an opportunity, it is a necessity. Community leaders who met with the Council emphasized that without regional approaches to solve many critical problems that affect communities--such as economic development, transportation, land use, sprawl, and water quality--little long-term progress can be made.

By creating incentives to encourage communities to work together, state and federal governments can improve the decision-making process and promote long-term, holistic solutions to regional problems. Building stronger links among people, communities, and the decisions that affect them can revitalize grassroots democracy and thereby strengthen communities, regions, and the nation. The actions listed below need additional commitments of time and resources, but we as a Council believe they are necessary and worthwhile.

CHATTANOOGA: A CITY REMAKING ITSELF

Chattanooga's story of the last 30 years is not unusual. Suburban sprawl beginning after World War II drained the downtown area of much of its retail and almost oil of its residential development. The economic base collapsed as traditional manufacturing jobs moved elsewhere; and many local companies laid off workers, were sold to outside interests, or closed down. Racial conflicts, poor schools, and an eroding infrastructure all signaled urban decline. Further manifestation of this decline came in 1969, when Chattanooga was dubbed the "worst polluted city" in America.

The second part of the Chattanooga story is all too rare among American cities. In recent years, concerted efforts by government, business, community organizations, and citizens have resulted not only in cleaner air but also in a willingness to undertake bold initiatives conceived within a shared vision, integrating Chattanooga's economic, environmental, and social aspirations. During the Council's January 1995 visit to Chattanooga, community leaders shared lessons learned in their quest to become an "environmental city," where everyone works together to generate a strong economic base, nurture social institutions, and enhance the natural and human-made landscape.

Today, public-private partnerships are the norm in Chattanooga. Collaborative efforts have generated the capital resources, political commitment, and civic momentum to tackle such complex problems as affordable housing; public education; transportation alternatives; urban design; air and

water pollution; recycling; job training; human relations; downtown and riverfront development, neighborhood revitalization; and conservation of natural areas, parks, and greenways. Community involvement in the planning of these efforts has been a key factor in the efforts'success.

Since 1984, in a series of planning projects, the city has invited all members of the community to envision what they want for the future. This process has paid off handsomely. In 1990, when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recognized Chattanooga for meeting its clean air requirements, the city was designated on Earth Day as the notion's best environmental turnaround story. An article in Sports Illustrated described Chattanooga as "not a miracle, but a nuts-and-bolts model of how tough government, cooperative businessmen, and a verv alarmed public can make a dirty world clean again."

Chattanooga today sees itself as a living laboratory where ideas can be explored, leaming is ongoing, and both people and nature can prosper. The Chattanooga story is not finished: it is only just beginning. As a new city slogan says, "It takes oil of us ... It takes forever."

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 1

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN STRATEGIC PLANNING

Create a community-driven, strategic planning process that brings people together to identiy , key issues, develop a vision, set goals and benchmarks, and determine actions to improve their community.

ACTION 1. All levels of government and the private sector should build multisector decision-making capacity at the local level. They can do so by providing information and financial and technical assistance to communities that wish to engage in a collaborative, communitywide process to integrate economic prosperity, environmental health, and opportunity in their decisions and actions.

ACTION 2. All levels of government should ensure substantial opportunity for public participation in all phases of planning and decisionmaking to allow those affected to have a voice in the outcome. Specific steps include creating and expanding methods for public participation in legislation, ordinances, and community advisory boards. Special steps should be taken to ensure that historically underrepresented groups are involved.

ACTION 3. All levels of government, especially local government, should identify barriers to greater citizen involvement in decisionmaking -- such as lack of child care or transportation -- and develop strategies to overcome them. Employers should give

employees flexibility and incentives to increase the time they and their families can devote to community activities.

ACTION 4. Community-based coalitions can create educational media campaigns to encourage citizen participation in government, disseminate high-quality information on community issues, and promote public discussions that identify solutions to problems. Coalitions should be as broad as possible, including industry and business, schools, newspapers, television and radio stations, community groups, environmental organizations, labor, and local government.

ACTION 5. Federal and state agencies should help local communities that wish to use profiles of potential environmental risks as a tool to identify and set priorities for solving environmental problems. The agencies should provide information on and facilitate access to communities that have successfully used this tool.

ACTION 6. Community-based coalitions can work together to draft an economic development strategy to fill basic needs and take advantage of new trends as part of the strategic planning process. Coalitions should include businesses, employees, unions, chambers of commerce, environmental organizations. local government, and residents.

ACTION 7. Community-based coalitions can develop and carry out programs to increase voter registration and participation, working with national voter registration projects where possible.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 2

COLLABORATIVE REGIONAL PLANNING

Encourage communities in a region to work together to deal with issues that transcend jurisdictional and other boundaries.

ACTION 1. States, counties, and communities should cooperate to create a system of regional accounts that measures the costs and benefits of local land use, development, and economic trends on a region's economy, environment, distribution of benefits, and quality of life. States and regions can consider the use of collaborative benchmarking, such as those used in Oregon and Minnesota, to look at a broad range of social, environmental, and economic measures. The federal government should work with state and local governments to ensure that federal statistical resources are available and used appropriately to support state and local governments in measuring benefits and costs.

ACTION 2. Federal and state governments should encourage cooperation among communities by providing incentives fo regional collaboration on issues, such as transportation, affordable housing,

economic development, air and water quality, and land use, that transcend political jurisdictions.

In encouraging such cooperation, they should look to the example of the federal Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Community Program, which required communities to draft funding proposals using a collaborative strategic planning process.[2] This kind of cooperation should be encouraged among communities within a region to advance common objectives. Federal and state agencies responsible for environmental protection, economic development, land use, and transportation policies should work with one or more geographic areas to establish planning and development activities. These agencies should create incentives to encourage regional planning and development, such as waivers of state matches for transportation planning funds and more favorable federal and state tax treatment for site cleanup costs.

ACTION 3. Local and county governments can pool resources from local property taxes to increase equity in public services, improve the quality of education, break the exacerbating regional mismatch between social needs and tax resources, reduce local fiscal incentives for sprawl, and end competition for the tax base within a metropolitan area. Local and county actions to accomplish this should receive federal and state incentives.

Designing Sustainable Communities

Society's investments should aim to create places that people want and can sustain The built environment is a critical factor in shaping the quality of life, accessibility, environmental burden, and unique character of a community, which contributes to a sense of place. The ways in which homes are designed and constructed, commercial buildings erected, roads and sewers laid, whole neighborhoods and communities planned and built, and open space allocated and preserved are all fundamental to creating a community that is sustainable. Design and architecture also play an important role in facilitating or discouraging human interaction. Communities built with sidewalks, town history, and culture.

Sustainable building design and community planning make efficient use of existing infrastructure, energy, water, materials, and land. Not only does such use save money, it also safeguards public health and the environment and conserves natural resources. Building codes can shape how much energy, water, and materials a building consumes in its construction and operation. Zoning ordinances frequently influence decisions on the construction, design, and siting of buildings and developments. Efficient land use protects vulnerable environmental areas that provide important benefits to society. For example, coastal areas, watersheds, and floodplains absorb the forces unleashed by nature. And preserved wetlands can filter water far more cheaply than expensive water treatment facilities.[3] In contrast, development in these areas exposes people and their investments to unnecessary risks and natural hazards.

Location efficiency is another important component of sustainable design. Zoning ordinances that allow for mixed-use development, such as having a store, apartment building, and school on the same block, can give people easy access to a range of facilities and the ability to walk to obtain goods and services. This can result in decreased reliance on motorized vehicles, thereby reducing congestion and air pollution.

Sustainable community design is based on an understanding of the powerful effect of the built environment on aesthetics, scale, and a sense of history and culture. Historic buildings give society an important sense of tradition and education about the past. Preservation of existing structures also offers a way to reuse and recycle materials and related infrastructure. By rehabilitating older buildings, communities can save energy and materials and establish a sense of continuity.

Localities have used zoning and other ordinances to foster historical connections. For example, the bay windows contributing to the beauty and character of Boston's Back Bay were the result of a zoning code that allowed one-third of each building to extend to the street. Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia, among many other historic areas, have protected their architectural heritage -- and enhanced their property values -- by using design control measures and by making historic preservation a priority.

Some communities are working together to create regional strategies for transportation, land use, and economic growth. For example, in the Portland, Oregon, metropolitan area, communities are working together to plan for the explosive population growth the area has experienced since the 1980s. By using coordinated decisionmaking and establishing an urban growth boundary, which contains future growth, these communities are conserving open space and prime farmland to preserve the quality of life that has attracted so many people to Portland in the first place. They are also using community impact analyses to inform themselves about proposed development during the planning phase when adjustments can be made more easily.

Design that is coordinated among communities can help address issues related to growth. While some growth is necessary, it is the nature of that growth that makes the difference. Sprawl typically is development situated without regard to the overall design of a community or region. It often results in types of development -- such as rambling, cookie-cutter subdivisions and strip malls -- that perpetuate homogeneity, make inefficient use of land, and rely almost exclusively on automobiles for transportation. Sprawl development provides immediate and direct benefits to the people who move there, but the costs are longer term and borne by society at large. This is a "tragedy of the commons" in which individuals acting logically in their own interest harm a common resource. Sprawl is caused by a combination of incentives established by governmental policies and individual decisions made in response to a complex

array of factors. This combination results in urban decline and is made worse by competition among local jurisdictions with little regional cooperation.

The brownfields issue is an example of the need for regional strategies. Brownfields are abandoned, contaminated, and/or underused land that is often found in the inner city. In contrast, greenfields are relatively pristine, undeveloped land, usually found at the edge of a metropolitan area or in a rural area. A company deciding whether to invest in building or modernizing a plant in a city center or building on rural or suburban open space weighs many factors. What is the cost of development? How much time will it take? What are the uncertainties? What are the operational costs? What is the proximity to the market or the workforce? Answers to these questions depend on a number of factors, such as labor skills and public safety concerns. The economic opportunities presented by brownfield redevelopment are discussed later in this chapter; but the issue of brownfields is clearly linked to sprawl, land use, and regional design as well.

Land use and infrastructure policies have a significant impact on development decisions. If the cost of cleaning up brownfields is borne by the developer but the cost of roads and utilities needed to serve greenfield development is borne by government, the scales tip. If the uncertainty of time and liability associated with brownfield development is greater, the scales can tip further. And if the tax burden in a newer, more affluent suburb is less than in the urban center, the case for greenfield development could be substantial. While it is a private decision made by individuals and businesses, it is greatly influenced by governmental policies that are not always readily apparent.

Benefits of developing open space are experienced one house or one business at a time. These benefits are tangible and immediate. The costs are harder to measure. In contemplating open land for residential or industrial development, an awareness and appreciation of what might be lost and of the environmental costs should be taken into account. Visionary planner Frederick Law Olmsted described urban parks as the lungs of a city.[4] This concept also applies to rural regions. Forests, farmland, mountains, plains, deserts, and swamps give the nation vital breathing room. New development should be based upon the carrying capacity of a region, which is the environment's finite ability to support life and renew itself.

Given the importance of the physical design of communities and their infrastructure, it is essential that communities continue to work cooperatively to understand and evaluate the potential long-term consequences of decisions made and to adapt them for their long-term well-being. State and federal governments should work collaboratively with communities to devise ways to measure these consequences in order to help local governments make their decisions.

Design, by definition, involves planning and making deliberate decisions. This occurs at different scales in the context of a community. The following recommendations are organized along these scales of design. The first scale relates to the design of buildings and other structures within the community. The second relates to the physical layout of streets, transit, residences, stores, and workplaces in the community. The third ties the community to others in the region.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 3	
BUILDING DESIGN AND REHABILITATION	**ACTION 1.** Federal, state, and local governments should work with builders, architects, developers, contractors, materials producers, manufacturers,

Design and rehabilitate buildings to lise energy and natural resources efficiently, enhance public health and the environment, preserve historic and natural settings, and contribute to a sense of community identity.

community groups, and others to develop and enhance design tools that can be used to improve the efficiency and liveability of buildings. These include models for building codes; zoning ordinances; and permit approval processes for residential and commercial buildings, public infrastructure, and landscapes. Model building codes should consider energy efficiency; durability; use of nontoxic materials; indoor air quality; use of recycled and recyclable materials; use of native plants that can reduce the need for fertilizers, pesticides, and water for landscaping; and use of designs that promote human interaction.

ACTION 2. These groups should disseminate these design tools, making the information easily accessible to local decisionmakers in interested communities which can use the model codes as a starting point, adapting them to reflect local conditions and values.

ACTION 3. Groups in communities that have made historic preservation a priority can inventory and prioritize historic properties and identify financing to rehabilitate these buildings. Local governments can enact ordinances to preserve historic buildings and remove incentives that encourage demolishing them. They can create incentives for rehabilitating and adapting historic buildings for new uses, where appropriate.

NOURISHING COMMUNITIES: JORDAN COMMONS

When Hurricane Andrew blew through Homestead, Florida, on August 24, 1992 it left in its wake $2 billion in damages and an immeasurable emotional toll on the rural and agricultural community. About 100,000 homes were severely damaged or destroyed, induding more than 1,600 units of public housing. Today, the tent villages ore gone and many homes have been rebuilt. Yet for thousands of low-income families, life has not retumed to normal. With a continued lack of affordable housing, they still feel the effects of the storm in the most fundamental way. Homestead Habitat for Humanity, a nonprofit ecumenical Christian organization whose mission is to encourage private homeownership for low-income families, hopes to alleviate some of the shortage through Jordan Commons, a pilot project in community building.[5]

Jordan Commons will provide 187 single-family homes built with government support, $15 million in private donations, and the sweat equity of individual volunteers and future homeowners working side by side. As in all Habitat projects, homeowners will reflect the ethnic and racial composition of their community. At Jordan Commons, approximately 40 percent of the owners will be African-American, 40 percent Latino, and 20 percent

white. Moreover, in addition to providing quality housing, the Jordan Commons project aims to tackle a much larger challenge. It hopes to use new principles in design and community planning to build a thriving neighborhood.

Eliza Perry, Homestead city councilwoman and Habitat board chair, describes some of the neighborhood's planned features. "The streets are designed for people. The roads will be narrow an the tree-shaded sidewalks wide. All homes will have front porches. Three small parks will allow children to play near their homes. The town center will draw homeowners out onto their sidewalks. This focal point of the community will house a 10,000-square-foot recreation center. Additional community buildings will hold a day-care center, a food co-op, continuing education programs, and an after-school program, all aimed at supporting fomilies and encouraging social interaction."

Jordan Commons also plans to design environmentally sound homes. Scientists from Florida lnternational University and the Florida Solar Energy Center have developed a list of energy-efficient approaches for building homes. With these innovations, the new homes are expected to be 38 to 48 percent more energy efficient than most homes of comparable size. Water heating will be supplied primarily through solar systems, and water will be recaptured and, after treatment, returned to the groundwater system. Alternative transportation will be encouraged through bike paths and racks, as well as a shaded bus stop station along nearby U.S. Route 1.

Underlying the thoughtful planning and family-friendly design is one central goal: citizen participation. As Dorothy Adair, Homestead Habitat president, states, "Simply building a community hall or neighborhood park does not necesscirily create or encourage community. It is the common identity, public concern, and ultimately the collective action of residents that truly sustains and nourishes an evolving community. The facilities and services of Jordan Commons have been designed to engender such elements. and this is the true message of the lordan Commons model."

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 4

COMMUNITY DESIGN

Design new communities and improve existing ones to use land efficiently, promote mixed-use and mixed-income development, retain public open space,

ACTION 1. Local jurisdiction should structure or revise local zoning regulations and permit approved processes to encourage development located along ransit corridors, near a range of transit alternatives, and in rehabilitated brownfield sites, where appropriate. Where there is demand for it, zoning should allow mixed-use development siting including residences, businesses, recreational facilities, and households with a variety of incomes within close proximity.

and provide diverse transportation options.

ACTION 2. Federal and state governments and the private sector should offer the assistance of multidisciplinary design teams to local jurisdictions that want help with sustainable community design. These design teams should include leading experts in a broad range of fields, including architecture, transportation, land use, energy efficiency, development, and engineering. Design teams should work with state and local governments and community residents with related experience to design, develop, and make accessible to communities alternatives to sprawl development, models for regional cooperation, and sustainable building practices.

ACTION 3. The federal government should work with lenders to expand research on location-efficient mortgages. Such a mortgage would increase the borrowing power of potential homebuyers in high-density locations with easy access to mass transportation. A borrower would quality for a larger loan based on expected higher disposable income from a reduction in or absence of automobile payments, insurance, and maintenance.

ACTION 4. Federal and state governments -- in consultation with local government, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations -- should support local planning that integrates economic development, land use, and social equity concerns and engages significant public participation through existing planning grants. These principles, which were integrated in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, should be reaffirmed during the act's reauthorization and expanded as requirements for federal and state funding and tax incentives for economic development, housing, transportation, and environmental programs.[6]

ACTION 6. The federal government should give communities credit toward attainment of national ambient air quality standards under the Clean Air Act when they use community design to lower traffic by adopting zoning codes, building codes, and other changes that encourage more efficient land use patterns to reduce pollution from motor vehicles and energy use.

ACTION 7. All levels of government should work with community groups and the private sector to ensure that no segment of society bears a disproportionate share of environmental risks in a community. Collaborative partnerships could periodically conduct evaluations to ensure that desirable transportation and infrastructure investments -- such as those in roads, buildings, and water projects -- do not disproportionately deliver greater benefits to wealthier, more politically active communities and disproportionately fewer benefits

to poorer, less politically active communities or communities of color.

PATTONSBURG: A TOWN RENEWAL

In Pattonsburg, Missouri, a small community of 250 that was nearly destroyed by the Midwest floods of 1993, a federally supported design team is working with residents to move the town -- literally -- to higher ground.

The community seized this opportunity to incorporate concepts and technologies for sustainability at oil levels of their relocation scheme, from the physical structure of the new town to economic strategies for redevelopment.

Pattonsburg adopted a Charter of Sustainability -- a set of principles to guide the town's development -- as well as building codes to ensure energy and resource efficiency while preserving the community's character. It also created a privately funded Sustainable Economic Development Council to spearhead the expansion of environmentally responsible industry in the town.

Plans for the new town include use of the latest environmentally sensitive technology and eco-efficient design to meet the community's social and physical needs. The street layout is designed to be pedestrian-oriented and to maximize southern exposure to each home, giving residents the best opportunity to use passive solar heating to lower energy needs. A system of artificial wetlands will use the natural contours of the land to capture and treat polluted urban runoff, thereby saving money on sewer construction. A methane recovery system will help nearby swine forms convert an odor and pollution problem into energy.

Pattonsburg is an example of collaboration among loccil, county, state, and federal governments. It is also a noteworthy public-private sector partnership. Most importantly, it is grounded in broad-based community involvement and support. It shows how a rural community can turn tragedy into an extraordinary opportunity to shape a sustainable future.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION

5

COMMUNITY GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Manage the geographical growth of existing communities and siting of new ones to decrease sprawl, conserve open space, respect nature's carrying capacity, and provide protection from natural hazards.

ACTION 1. States and communities should evaluate the costs of infrastructure in greenfield or relatively undeveloped areas to examine subsidies and correct market incentives in the financing of capital costs of infrastructure, such as sewers and utilities, for development of land bordering metropolitan areas.

ACTION 2. All levels of government and nongovernmental organizations can conserve open space through acquisition of land and/or development rights. For example, public water departments can budget to acquire land necessary to protect public water supplies. Private land trusts can expand their acquisition of wetlands or other valuable open space.

ACTION 3. Local governments and counties can create community partnerships to develop regional open space networks and urban growth boundaries as part of a regional framework to discourage sprawl development that threatens a region's environmental caffying capacity.

ACTION 4. Local governments and counties can work together to use community impact analyses and other information on the environmental carrying capacity of a region as the foundation for land use planning and development decisions.

ACTION 5. All levels of government should identify and eliminate governmental incentives, such as subsidized floodplain insurance and subsidized utilities, that encourage development in areas vulnerable to natural hazards.

ACTION 6. The federal government should redirect federal policies that encourage low-density sprawl to foster investment in existing communities. It should encourage shifts in transportation spending toward transit, highway maintenance and repair, and expansion of transit options rather than new highway or beltway construction.

CALIFORNIA SPRAWL

Unchecked development accompanied growth and prosperity in California over the past three decades. Today, along with many states and communities across the country, California must deal with the consequences of that kind of post growth - chief among them, the problem of sprawl. "As we approach the 21st century, it is clear that sprawl has created enormous costs that California can no longer afford," says the 1995 report Beyond Sprawl: New Patterns of Growth to Fit the New California.

"Ironically, unchecked sprawl has shifted from an engine of Califomia's growth to a force that now threatens to inhibit growth and degrade the quality of our life."

Sprawl takes its toll on society as well as on the landscape. The report identifies a variety of consequences. There is a dramatic increase in automobiles and time spent in traffic jams. Irreplaceable prime agricultural land and forest land are lost. Taxes and other costs for individuals and businesses increase to provide new infrastructure. Sprawl frequently widens the distance between where people live and work. It also results in abandonment of investments in older communities, which continue to suffer long-term decline.

This appraisal comes from a joint study undertaken by the Bank of America, California's Resources Agency, the Greenbelt Alliance, and the Low Income Housing Fund. It makes a compelling argument for reorienting growth to create more compact, efficient communities. The net effect would be to improve the business climate, conserve agricultural land and natural areas, and revitalize cities. Beyond Sprawl sheds light on problems faced by communities not only in California, but in the Rust Belt and the Sun Belt, in the Midwest, Southwest, and Northwest.

"This is not a call for limiting growth, but a call for California to be smarter about how it grows -- to invent ways we can create compact and efficient growth patterns that are responsive to the needs of people at all income levels, and also help maintain California's quality of life and economic competitiveness," says the report. Community action, public policy, private business practice, and individual effort will all be necessary to attain this objective. The report also recommends multi-stakeholder collaborative efforts to create a constituency to build sustainable communities.

Promoting Economic Development and Jobs

Sustainable development is premised on improving how society meets human needs for all people in a manner consistent with protecting the natural environment. A strong local economy is at the core of a sustainable community because economic development and the jobs it creates are the vehicles for meeting human needs. Before anything else, people must be able to provide for the basic necessities of food and shelter for themselves and their families.

The economy of the nation as a whole depends significantly on the success of its many interconnected local and regional economies. In recent years, dramatic changes in the global economy have resulted in major shifts in local economies as both national and local markets adjusted to the trends. In some cases, the nation became more competitive. In the process, however, many local economies lost jobs and/or income; for some, the future of their communities was endangered. Government has, in some cases, an obligation to address the

human consequences of policy decisions on environmental, trade, or defense issues that result in job losses in a community. For example, economic assistance and retraining for new business opportunities have been provided to fishermen whose income has been drastically reduced because of unsustainable harvesting that necessitated strict conservation measures. Assistance has also been given to communities where military bases have closed, or that have been adversely affected by trade agreements. These situations can be seen as opportunities to direct government aid to help communities take advantage of new kinds of economic development.

Strategies to create strong, diversified local economies are needed to weather -- and even take advantage of -- fundamental shifts in national and international economies. The communities that prosper will be those that develop strategies to create resilient local economies that make the unique strengths of their people and their place a source of competitive advantage. Local economic development proposals should fill a niche in the regional economy. Local economic health is often strengthened by partnerships among the private sector, employees, educators, and government. These efforts can create an environment that promotes entrepreneurship, innovation, and small business growth to marshal resources within the community to fill local economic needs.

Given that perhaps the only natural resource that can be considered unlimited is human intellectual capacity, training and lifelong learning are essential if sustainable communities are to develop a flexible, well-educated workforce, a subject explored further in chapter 3, "Information and Education." Education and training are arguably the most valuable pieces of any economic development strategy because they are the only way to build the intellectual capacity necessary for a trainable and employable workforce. This capacity, in turn, allows a community to adapt to the fundamental shifts in national and international economies that will continue in the years ahead. Partnerships that involve employers, unions, educators, and workers are key to ensuring that employees can take advantage of the opportunities offered by emerging industries.

A key part of a local economic development strategy is encouraging businesses and industries that are at the forefront of environmental economic development opportunities. Environmental technologies promise both cleaner traditional industries and an important opportunity for creating jobs for the future based on cleaner and more efficient technologies. Strategies include investments in resource efficiency to improve the profitability of small businesses, using the solid waste stream to develop community-based recycling businesses, supporting eco-industrial parks, and targeting the benefits of increased efficiency to create economic opportunity and social equity. A systems approach to communitywide economic development promotes maximum resource and energy efficiency of businesses, the community, and the region. Economic growth is achieved and human needs are met with improved efficiency and environmental performance. Pursuing such concepts requires imagination and effort. Initially, extra resources may be called for, but the rewards can be significant.

The creation of an eco-industrial park is an example of a new form of development that pays both economic and environmen- tal dividends. Eco-industrial parks are an environmentally effi- cient version of industrial parks. They follow a systems design in which one facility's waste becomes another facility's feed- stock, and they ensure that raw materials are recycled or disposed of efficiently and safely.

Increased efficiency in resource use provides an opportunity to target some of the benefits from innovation to produce jobs and social equity. The benefits and avoided costs that will accrue to society from more efficient use of existing resources can provide the basis for an economic expansion that will increase economic prosperity for all. By preventing pollution, reusing and recycling materials, and conserving energy, new technologies can increase profits, protect and create jobs, and reduce threats to the environment.

There will also be opportunities to target the benefits from regulatory flexibility to encourage social equity and economic development. An example is a cash-for-clunkers program in which companies that own stationary sources of air pollution can purchase and scrap older, more polluting cars rather than make expensive investments in pollution control in their facilities.[7] Such a program benefits industry by allowing a more cost-effective method for reducing air emissions and benefits the environment by removing some higher polluting cars from the road. This program could provide further social benefit if some of the economic savings were targeted to provide training and jobs to low-income workers to repair older vehicles to meet air quality requirements.

Urban communities around the country are also working to redevelop brownfield sites to improve public health and the economic competitiveness of these sites and surrounding neighborhoods. Cleveland, Ohio, Detroit, Michigan, and Chicago, Illinois, are examples of cities that are cleaning up brownfield sites as a strategy for revitalizing their local economies. By targeting economic development in otherwise wasted brownfield areas, these cities are hoping to create jobs, generate tax revenue, and improve the environmental quality of the inner city. They are working to identify and eliminate barriers to redeveloping brownfield sites and to create partnerships among city, state, and federal environmental agencies, residents, local businesses, and lenders. They are also using incentives to attract and retain business activity. Closely tied to issues of sprawl, brownfield sites are often not competitive with greenfield sites -- undeveloped suburban or rural areas -- because the true costs of development are not clear. For example, developers often do not consider the infrastructure costs of undeveloped areas, such as the cost of sewers, roads, and electrical lines that need to be built to support the growth.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 6

CREATION OF STRONG, DIVERSIFIED LOCAL ECONOMIES

Apply economic development strategies that create diversified local economies built on unique local advantages to tap expanding markets and technological innovation.

ACTION 1. As part of a broader community-driven strategic plan, a community can conduct an inventory and assessment of its economic, natural, and human resources to identify its unique comparative advantages and strategic niche in the larger regional economy.

ACTION 2. State and federal governments should promote labor force development when they fund physical infrastructure projects for transportation, public housing, and sewer and water systems within a community by hiring locally and providing skills training for workers.

ACTION 3. Federal, state, and local governments should assist low-income workers through programs to improve access to education and training and tax and development strategies targeted at the creation of jobs in new markets integrating economic and environmental goals.

ACTION 4. Federal and state governments should review and where appropriate, strengthen labor standards by ensuring an adequate minimum wage and proper health and safety standards and by encouraging greater flexibility in work hours to allow more time for community participation and/or parenting.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 7

TRAINING AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Expand and coordinate public and private training programs to enable all people to improve their skills to match future job requirements in communities on a continuin basis.

ACTION 1. Businesses, unions, schools, students, and local government within a community should develop and integrate training programs to ensure that workers -- especially those who need it most -- have the necessary skills to take advantage of current and future economic development opportunities. They should work together to integrate current programs and acquire funding from the private sector, schools, and government to fill identified gaps. Training programs that should be integrated and potentially expanded include school-to-work arrangements, apprenticeships, community service, summer employment, and job corps opportunities.

ACTION 2. Federal and state governments should help those who want to pursue further education and lifelong leaming by providing individuals with tax deductions for tuition, assistance with financing, or other incentives.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 8

ENVIRONMENTAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Capitalize upon economic development opportunities from businesses and industries that target environmental technologies, recycling, and pollution prevention to create jobs.

ACTION 1. Federal and state agencies should work with the private sector to create a one-stop shop for financial and technical assistance to small businesses that would identify cost-effective investments in resource efficiency and financing and help make pollution prevention standard practice. The federal government should work with lenders to develop ways to validate the outcomes of investments in resource efficiency to address their concerns and so improve access to capital.

ACTION 2. Federal and state agencies should assist communities that want to create eco-industrial parks that cluster businesses in the same area to create new models of industrial efficiency, cooperation, and environmental responsibility. Assistance should include making relevant information available, allowing flexibility in permitting and other regulator areas while ensuring that environmental goals are met or exceeded, and

enacting mixed-use zoning that allows for eco-industrial parks that have low or no emissions.

ACTION 3. Local communities can adopt programs to reuse materials and collect and recycle secondary materials diverted from what some call the urban mine - the municipal solid waste stream. Such programs minimize wastes, prevent pollution, provide opportunities for new businesses and industries such as recycling-related manufacturing, generate jobs and revenue from recycling collection and processing, create high-skill industrial jobs and sizeable sales revenues from manufacture of recycled products, and conserve landfill space. The federal government should work with state and local governments to establish related guidelines and model programs and create incentives to promote secondary materials use and recycling-related manufacturing.

ACTION 4. The public, private, and nonprofit sectors should work together to identify innovative opportunities to target some of the economic benefits from more efficient use of resources and greater regulatory flexibility in terms of creating jobs, opportunity, and social equity in communities.

CREATING CLEAN JOBS

Clean Cities Recycling, Inc. (CCR), is a nonprofit community development corporation formed as a joint venture involving 2-Ladies Recycling, Inc., of Hobart, Indiana; the Gary Clean City Coalition, a community-based environmental organization, and Brothers Keeper of Gary, a shelter for homeless men. CCR's stated mission is 'to benefit the public interest and lessen the burden on government by creating permanent employment by utilizing the economic opportunities available through the processing and marketing of residential recyclables."

The joint venture was formed in 1993 to compete for a two-year contract awarded by the Lake County Solid Waste Management District to set up and operate 2S drop-off recycling centers. The district and its board were established in 1 99 1, when Indiana set a goal of reducing trash to landfills by 35 percent by 1996 and 50 percent by the year 200 1.

To date, the firm has set up I 0 drop-off centers at grocery stores, The sites are open Monday through Saturday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., and are serviced daily. They collect clean, source-separated household recyclables: glass, aluminum, steel cons, newspaper, cardboard, and some plastics. Materials are sold to local markets and established scrap dealers in the Greater Chicago area. Fiber is purchased by

a paper mill in Lake County, glass is bought by a company just over the county line in Illinois, and steel returns to the steel mills.

Clean Cities Recycling now employs six full-time and two part-time workers who are paid $6.SO to $ 1 0. 00 an hour. It provides job training, work experience, and letters of recommendation to homeless shelter residents, who are paid a stipend for their work. The venture also helps provide continuing financial support for Brothers Keeper. Benefits from the business flow to the city of Gary and surrounding communities.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 9

REDEVELOPMENT OF BROWNFIELD SITES

Revitalize brownflelds -- which are contaminated, abandoned, or underused land -- by making them more attractive for redevelopment by providing regulatory flexibility, reducing process barriers, and assessing greenfleld development to reflect necessary infrastructure costs.

ACTION 1. All levels of government should work in partnership with community residents, environmental organizations, community development corporations, industry, and businesses to redevelop or stabilize brownfield sites by eliminating barriers and creating incentives for environmental cleanup and by reorienting existing state and federal economic development funding and programs to include these sites.

ACTION 2. Federal and state agencies should encourage investment in brownfield redevelopment by using the polluter pays principle, assuring prospective purchasers and lenders that they will not be held liable for cleanup in cases in which they did not contribute to contamination.

ACTION 3. The federal government should work with states, counties, and communities to develop tools that compare, on a site-specific basis, the local economic and environmental costs of developing a greenfield versus redeveloping a brownfield site.

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[1] U.S. Department of Commerce, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1994), p. 97, table 39.

[2] Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, Pub. L. 103-66, 107 Stat. 312. Under this statute, businesses and employers of the nine empowerment zones are eligible for three major tax benefits, including employer wage credits, increased Section 179 spending, and tax-exempt bond financing for qualified properties.

[3] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *Wetlands Fact Sheet #4: Economic Benefits of Wetlands* (Washington, D.C., 1993), p.1.

[4] Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr., and Theodora Kimball, eds., *Forty Years of Landscape Architecture: Central Park* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973), p. 45. The passage is from a report Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., submitted to the Department of Public Parks in 1872.

[5] For more information, see Homestead Habitat for Humanity, *Concept and Background, Jordan Commons: A Pilot Program for Sustainable Community-Building* (Homestead, Fla., 1995).

[6] Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, Pub. L. 102-240, 105 Stat. 1914.

[7] U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, *Retiring Old Cars: Programs to Save Gasoline and Reduce Emissions* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1992); Environmental Law and Policy Center, *Components of a Model Accelerated Vehicle Retirement Program*, report to the Energy Foundation (Chicago, 1994); and President's Commission on Environmental Quality, *Partnership to Progress: The Report of the President's Commission on Environmental Quality* (Washington, D.C., 1993), pp. 30-31. Examples of cash for clunkers programs include the Accelerated Vehicle Retirement project and, in the private sector, the Union Oil Company of California in which 7,000 model-year 1970 and older vehicles registered in the Los Angeles Basin were scrapped.

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