



Every community in America – regardless of its size, geographic location, demographic composition, or economic base -- aspires to become a place where families are safe, enjoy personal and environmental health, can select from a range of housing and transportation choices, and have access to educational and economic opportunities. These are the building blocks of livable communities.

Unfortunately, the federal government has all too often hindered or even blocked the ability of local communities to achieve these goals. In fact, federal policies have often led to today's unproductive and even destructive patterns of community neglect, inefficient energy use, economic dislocation, and environmental damage. Sadly, in many cases, American taxpayers have paid for it.

It's time to change this relationship. It's time to create a new, dynamic partnership in which the federal government enables and helps local governments create livable communities where people are safe, healthy and economically secure.

The Livable Communities Task Force recognizes that federal policies – from transportation to tax incentives to environmental regulations and everything in between – have a profound effect on the livability of communities. This Task Force seeks to identify the ways in which the federal government can affect community livability and improve Americans' quality of life. This includes reducing the nation's dependence on oil, protecting the environment, improving public health and investing in housing and transportation projects that create jobs and give people more commuting choices.

With significant resources, and in coordination with the administration's new Partnership for Sustainable Communities (which includes the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Transportation, and the Environmental Protection Agency), the Federal Government is poised to help communities take advantage of federal and local investment opportunities to provide a range of housing and transportation choices, create safer and healthier communities, strengthen their economies, and protect their environment.

In accordance with the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, the Livable Communities Task Force endorses the following six livability principles. Successful incorporation of these principles into policy making at all levels of government will greatly enhance the livability of all rural and urban American communities. It will also help communities across the country proactively address and adapt to the threats of climate change, preserve natural resources and open space, and contribute to cleaner air and water.

- **Provide more transportation choices.** Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.

- **Promote equitable, affordable housing.** Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.

- **Enhance economic competitiveness.** Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.

- **Reinvest in existing communities.** Target federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit oriented, mixed-use development, and land recycling—to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.

• **Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment.** Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.

• **Value communities and neighborhoods.** Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.