

Sustainable Communities Task Force

Purpose

Flourishing communities are the foundation of a healthy society. The Sustainable Communities Task Force was established to articulate and emphasize the leadership role of communities in developing integrated approaches to address critical social, economic and environmental issues while creating opportunities for legitimate public participation. The Task Force is drawing constructive guidance from actual community experience to develop policy recommendations that, when implemented, will invigorate our communities to be more livable in the broadest sense -- environmentally, economically and socially.

Integrated Scope of Issues

The broad range of sustainability issues, which serve as basic building blocks for communities, are represented in the six working groups of the Task Force. Over 130 additional participants, representing diverse sectors of society and areas of expertise, have been recruited to work on the Task Force's six working groups:

- Economic Development and Jobs
- Making It Happen (financing, planning and participation)
- Environmental Justice
- Social Infrastructure
- Housing and Land Use
- Transportation and Infrastructure

Goals

The Sustainable Communities Task Force has compiled 13 draft goals. The goals support the Task Force's vision of communities which are successfully creating vibrant local economies, and environmentally and socially healthy environments with the meaningful participation of its residents. The Task Force draft goals are organized in the following categories: economic development and jobs; education and training; technology; sustainable community design; full cost accounting and valuation; secure and healthy communities - natural environment and environmental justice; public safety; support for individuals and families; and community involvement and decision-making.

Case Studies

The Task Force is conducting approximately a dozen case studies of a diverse set of communities throughout the country. A broad set of community leaders including the corporate government, non-profit and labor communities, community development and environmental sectors, and elected leaders are being asked to participate in compiling the lessons learned from each community's work on integrating economic, social, and environmental issues and fostering

substantive public participation. In addition to contributing to the Task Force's policy development, the case studies will be included in the Task Force report. Currently, the case study communities include: Brownsville, TX, Charlottesville, VA, Chattanooga, TN, Chicago, IL, Cleveland, OH, Denver, CO, Haymount, VA, New Bedford, MA, Pattonsburg, MO, Piney River, VA, Portland, OR, Sarasota, FL, and Seattle, WA. To ensure broad applicability of the case studies, nine categories were established to look at many different types of communities: border, coastal, indigenous, industrial, inner-city, rural, suburban, and urban.

Policy Development

The Task Force is focusing on the March 31, 1995 deadline for policy recommendations which will serve as the "how to's" for achieving the goals drafted by the Task Force. The six working groups have addressed their policy areas by drafting a series of documents including vision and problem statements, policy papers and policy recommendations, which were brought up as suggested goals. This work will serve as the foundation for Task Force policy recommendations. During the March integration meetings, Task Force Liaisons, Working Group Co-Chairs and Additional Task Force members are evaluating and integrating the draft working group policy recommendations into a comprehensive Task Force policy document.

Task Force Report

The Task Force is organizing its work products into chapters of the Task Force report and will use the contents as an organizing structure. The draft Task Force Report will be submitted to the full Council for consideration in April 1995 and will include draft goals, policy recommendations, case study reports, chapters on each working group's issues, and synopses of all Task Force sponsored events.

Task Force Council Membership

Co-Chairs

- **Ronald H. Brown**, Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce
- **Thomas Donahue**, Secretary-Treasurer, AFL-CIO

Members

- **John H. Adams**, Executive Director, Natural Resources Defense Council
- **Richard Barth**, President & CEO, Ciba-Geigy Corporation
- **Carol M. Browner**, Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- **Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.**, Environmental Justice Advocate
- **Dianne Dillon-Ridgley**, Co-Chair, Citizens' Network for Sustainable Development
- **Madeleine M. Kunin**, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Education
- **Michele Perrault**, International Vice President, Sierra Club