
PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Information Packet

April 1997

Membership	2
Overview	3
Revised Charter	6
Original Charter	9
Executive Order No. 12852	11
Amendments to Executive Order No. 12852	13
Statement by the President Upon Receipt of <i>Sustainable America</i>	14
Message from the President on the Continuation of PCSD	15
Publications	16

for further information please contact us:

President's Council on Sustainable Development
730 Jackson Place, NW
Washington, DC 20503
202 408 5296, fx 202 408 6839
email <infopcsd@aol.com>
web site <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/PCSD>>



MEMBERSHIP

Co-Chairs

Ray C. Anderson, Chairman, President and CEO, Interface, Inc.
Jonathan Lash, President, World Resources Institute

Members

John H. Adams, Executive Director, Natural Resources Defense Council
Aida Alvarez, Administrator, U.S. Small Business Administration
Bruce Babbitt, Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior
Scott Bernstein, President, Center for Neighborhood Technology
Carol M. Browner, Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
David T. Buzzelli, President and Corporate Director, Environment, Health & Safety, Public Affairs, and Information Systems, The Dow Chemical Company
Andrew Cuomo, Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
William Daley, Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce
Dianne Dillon-Ridgley, President, Zero Population Growth
Randall Franke, Commissioner, Marion County, Oregon
Samuel C. Johnson, Chairman, S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc.
Fred D. Krupp, Executive Director, Environmental Defense Fund
Kenneth L. Lay, Chairman and CEO, Enron Corporation
Harry J. Pearce, Vice Chairman, General Motors Corporation
Federico Peña, Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy
Michelle Perrault, International Vice President, Sierra Club
Richard W. Riley, Secretary, U.S. Department of Education
William D. Ruckelshaus, Chairman and CEO, Browning-Ferris Industries, Inc.
Susan Savage, Mayor, City of Tulsa, Oklahoma
John C. Sawhill, President, The Nature Conservancy
Rodney Slater, Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
Theodore Strong, Executive Director, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

Ex-Officio

James D. Baker, Undersecretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, NOAA, U.S. Department of Commerce
Richard E. Rominger, Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Timothy E. Wirth, Undersecretary for Global Affairs, U.S. Department of State

Emeritus

Richard Barth, President, Chairman, and CEO (retired), Ciba-Geigy Corp.
Judith Espinosa, President for Public Policy, Alliance for Transportation Research Institute
Jay D. Hair, President, World Conservation Union

Liaison to the White House

Kathleen McGinty, Chair, Council on Environmental Quality

STAFF

Martin A. Spitzer, Executive Director
David Monsma, Task Force Coordinator
Angela Park, Director for Communications and Constituency Development
Jane Siegal, Task Force Coordinator
Patricia Sinicropi, Administrative Officer

OVERVIEW

The President's Council on Sustainable Development was created in June, 1993, by President William Jefferson Clinton to advise him on sustainable development and to develop bold, new approaches to integrate economic, environmental, and equity issues. The council is a ground-breaking partnership of diverse leaders from business; multiple levels of government; and community, environmental, labor, and civil rights organizations. Formally established by Executive Order 12852, the council is administered as a federal advisory committee under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).

First Phase: June 1993 through March 1996

During the first phase of council's work, from June 1993 through March 1996, the President charged the council to:

- draft recommendations on a national action strategy on sustainable development;
- create and implement an awards programs honoring achievements toward sustainable development;
- conduct outreach to educate the American public on the importance of sustainable development.

To draft the national action strategy, the PCSD created eight task forces, created opportunities for public input into their draft documents, and held meeting throughout the country. The seven policy task forces involved 500 additional participants, and held more than 50 public meetings and hundreds of informal meetings around the country over a 24-month period. The task forces focused on the following topic areas: Eco-efficiency; Energy and Transportation; Natural Resources; Population and Consumption; Public Linkage, Dialogue, and Education; Sustainable Agriculture; and Sustainable Communities. The council also established a task force to draft overarching Principles and Goals on sustainable development. Each of the task forces involved outside participants as well as council members and their liaisons. Drafts of the evolving principles, goals, and policy recommendations were publicly circulated for comment.

In addition to meetings held in Washington, DC, the council met in four cities throughout the country: Seattle, Washington; Chicago, Illinois; Chattanooga, Tennessee; and San Francisco, California. Each of these meetings drew between 200 and 500 persons, and more than 5000 persons have followed the council's work through its newsletters, announcements, and public comment surveys.

In March, 1996, the council released to the public and transmitted to the President its first report, *Sustainable America: A New Consensus for Prosperity, Opportunity, and A Healthy Environment for the Future*. The 186-page report represents a remarkable consensus of all members of the council. Two and a half years of inquiry, observation and discussion produced unanimous agreement on:

- A vision statement and fundamental beliefs on sustainable development;
- Recommended changes in business, community institutions, individuals, and at all levels of government that must occur to achieve sustainable development;
- Ten goals and indicators of sustainable development; and
- Scores of wide-ranging recommendations and actions to implement them.

Taken as a whole, this report attempts to define sustainable development and recommends how to move the nation toward achieving it.

Second Phase: May 1996 through January 1997

Upon receiving the council's report, *Sustainable America*, on March 7, 1996, the President thanked the council for their efforts that culminated in the report's completion, asked them to continue their work to promote sustainable development domestically, and to report on progress made through December, 1996. (See page 15 for the President's formal announcement on March 7, 1996.) He specifically asked the council to:

- spend the rest of 1996 working on first steps to implement recommendations in the report;
- support the creation of the Joint Center for Sustainable Communities, a project of the National Association of Counties and the U.S. Conference of Mayors; and
- work with Vice President Al Gore who will lead efforts within the administration to support sustainable development:

To work on implementing recommendations in the report, the council created three task forces:

- Innovative Local, State, and Regional Approaches Task Force
(with working groups on: Joint Center for Sustainable Communities, Metropolitan Approaches, and Pacific Northwest Regional Council on Sustainable Development);
- New National Opportunities Task Force
(with working groups on: Eco-Industrial Parks, Extended Product Responsibility, and Lessons Learned from Collaborative Approaches); and an
- International Leadership Task Force.

Vice President Al Gore created an Interagency Sustainable Development Working Group—co-chaired by Katie McGinty, Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality; and Laura D'Andrea Tyson to begin coordination with federal agencies to promote and support sustainable development. All agencies currently members of the Community Empowerment Board participate. In addition, many federal agency staff participate in one of three federal working groups on: Education for Sustainability, Materials and Energy Flows, and Sustainable Development Indicators.

In January 1997, the council issued its second report, *Building on Consensus: A Progress Report on Sustainable America* and transmitted it to the President.

Third Phase: 1997 and 1998

On April 25, 1997, a revised charter was signed extending the council for two more years, through 1998. President Clinton has asked the council to continue to forge consensus on policy; demonstrate implementation of policy; conduct outreach and constituency building; and evaluate and report on progress.

In the policy arena, the council will advise the President on:

- the next steps in building the new environmental management system for the 21st century;

- the domestic implementation of policy options to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, without debating the science of global warming;
- policies and approaches that promote sustainable communities, in particular, multi-jurisdictional and community cooperation in metropolitan and rural areas;
- policies that foster U.S. leadership in sustainable development internationally.

The revised charter also directs the council to ensure that social equity issues are fully integrated into all of its efforts, and to develop appropriate linkages with the ongoing federal working groups on "Education for Sustainability," "Sustainable Development Indicators," and "Materials and Energy Flows."

At the April 29, 1997 council meeting, members will discuss options for how they will balance their activities and develop a workplan to carry out its new mission. Task forces will begin work shortly thereafter.

REVISED CHARTER, President's Council on Sustainable Development

April 25, 1997

1. Official Designation

The committee is designated as the President's Council on Sustainable Development and was established by Executive Order No. 12852 on June 29, 1993, as amended.

2. Vision Statement

The Council should carry out its work in accordance with the vision statement contained in the Council's report, Sustainable America:

"Our vision is of a life sustaining Earth. We are committed to achievement of a dignified, peaceful, and equitable existence. A sustainable United States will have a growing economy that provides equitable opportunities for satisfying livelihoods and a safe, healthy, high quality of life for current and future generations. Our nation will protect its environment, its natural resource base, and the functions and viability of natural systems on which all life depends" (Sustainable America, p. iv).

3. Mission

The Council will carry out its mission to advise the President on matters involving sustainable development by carrying out four essential objectives:

(a) Forging Consensus on Policy. The Council shall continue to bring together diverse interests to identify and develop innovative economic, environmental, and social policies and strategies that advance sustainable development;

(b) Demonstrating Implementation of Policy. The Council shall work with diverse interests to encourage and demonstrate implementation of sustainable development in real world settings. It should report on successes and recommend strategies to replicate those successful projects throughout the United States;

(c) Getting the Word Out About Sustainable Development. Sustainable development depends on the actions of individuals from every sector of society, and on our ability to learn from one another's efforts and experiences. To foster learning and the exchange of ideas, the Council shall gather and disseminate information on sustainable development. It should also build on its previous work to educate Americans on sustainable development.

(d) Evaluating and Reporting on Progress. The Council shall recommend national, community and enterprise level frameworks for tracking sustainable development. For each framework, it shall identify and report on a set of currently available indicators to measure progress, and recommend other appropriate indicators for which data do not exist.

The Council should balance its resources and workplan to carry out its objectives. To the extent the Council carries out these objectives as they pertain to issues and recommendations that it has already addressed, it should build on those previous efforts.

4. Scope of Activities

The Council shall apply its objectives to the following six activities:

(a) Advise the President on the next steps in building the new environmental management system of the 21st century by reviewing current environmental management reforms (including Project XL and other innovations), further developing a vision of innovative environmental management that fosters sustainable development (environment, economy and equity), and recommending policy improvements and additional opportunities to advance sustainable development. The Council shall report its recommendations on environmental management reform to the President no later than Spring 1998 and its broader recommendations on the role of environmental management in sustainable development by December 1998.

(b) Advise the President on domestic implementation of policy options to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Council should not debate the science of global warming, but should instead focus on the implementation of national and local greenhouse gas reduction policies and activities, and adaptations in the U.S. economy and society that maximize environmental and social benefits, minimize economic impacts, and are consistent with U.S. international agreements. The Council should, at a minimum, identify and encourage potentially replicable examples of reductions in greenhouse gas emissions across diverse sectors and levels of society. The Council shall submit its initial recommendations to the President not later than Spring 1998.

(c) Advise the President on policies and approaches that promote sustainable communities. In particular, the Council should promote multi-jurisdictional and community cooperation in metropolitan and rural areas. The Council should create and participate in projects that help forge partnerships among representatives of federal and state agencies, urban centers, suburban areas, and rural communities with the goal of solving, in a comprehensive way, local and regional sustainable development issues. The Council should use the partnership projects to identify barriers to cooperation and innovative sustainable development strategies that engage the constituencies represented by the Council.

(d) Advise the President on policies that foster U.S. leadership in sustainable development internationally. Specifically, the Council shall promote the creation and continuation of national sustainable development councils around the world, advise the President on the promotion of sustainable development in international fora, and gather and disseminate information about U.S. and international sustainable development policies. In addition, given the increasing flow of financial capital from developed to developing countries, the Council shall recommend policies that encourage foreign investment by the U.S. Government, businesses, investors, and, as appropriate, multi-lateral institutions that are consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

(e) Ensure that social equity issues are fully integrated into all of the Council's efforts.

(f) Develop appropriate linkages among the four substantive areas of the Council's agenda, as listed in items a-d above, and with the ongoing Federal working groups on "Education for Sustainability," "Sustainable Development Indicators," and "Materials and Energy Flows."

The Council shall report to the President, in a form to be determined by the Council, no later than December 1998, except where otherwise specified.

The Council chair(s) may, from time to time, invite experts to submit information to the Council and may form subcommittees or task forces to review and report to the Council on sustainable development issues. The subcommittees and teams may include individuals other than members of the Council and shall be balanced in terms of the interests represented.

Members of the Council shall serve without compensation, but shall be allowed travel expenses, to the extent that adequate appropriated funds are available, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by law for persons serving intermittently in Government service (5 U.S.C. 5701-5707).

5. Membership

The membership of the Council shall continue to consist of not more than 35 members appointed or reappointed by the President from the public and private sectors and who represent a diverse range of business, environmental, governmental and not-for-profit organizations with experience relating to matters of sustainable development. The President shall designate from among the Council members such official or officials to be chair(s) or vice-chairs of the Council as he shall deem appropriate.

6. Expected Duration

This phase of the Council's work is extended until February 28, 1999, unless otherwise extended.

7. Agency to Whom the Council Reports

The Council shall report to the President through the chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

8. Agency Responsible for Providing Administrative Support

The Department of Energy, shall, on a reimbursable basis, provide such administrative services for the Council as may be required.

9. Estimated Number and Frequency of Council Meetings

Formal Council meetings shall be convened approximately four times per calendar year (quarterly).

10. The Date the Charter is Filed

The Council's Charter renewal is filed on April 25, 1997.

ORIGINAL CHARTER, President's Council on Sustainable Development

July 20, 1993

1. Official Designation

The "President's Council on Sustainable Development ("Council"). The Council was established by Executive Order No. 12852, dated June 29, 1993

2. Objectives, Scope of Activities, and Description of Duties

The Council shall:

- * advise the President on matters involving sustainable development. In furtherance of the mission, the Council will develop and recommend to the President a national sustainable development action strategy that will foster economic vitality;
- * advise the President on fashioning an annual Presidential Award recognizing exemplary efforts toward the achievement of sustainable development ideals and submit nominations for the award to the President; and
- * advise the President on conducting a public awareness and participation campaign on the importance of and appropriate uses of the nation's natural and cultural resources. The Council shall provide a copy of its advice to the Secretary of the Interior.

The duties of the Council are solely advisory in nature.

The Council may form subcommittees and teams to assist in the accomplishment of its objectives and duties. The subcommittees and teams may include individuals other than members of the Council and shall be balanced in terms of the interests represented and the Council's objectives and duties. The chairperson of the Council may invite experts to submit information to the Council and report to the Council on specific matters concerning sustainable development.

3. Duration

The Council shall exist for a period of at least two years commencing June 29, 1993, unless extended by the President. The Council will have continuing responsibility for advising the President during its Existence.

4. Official to Whom the Advisory Council Reports

In FY 1993, the Council will receive initial administrative and other support from the Department of the Interior through its Take Pride in America Program. In FY 1994 and thereafter, to the extent available, contributions to the Interior Department's Take Pride in America program will be used, as appropriate, to support the Council. The Director of the White House Office on Environmental Policy will name a Designated Federal Official to manage and coordinate the Council's activities. Additional administrative support will be provided, to the extent authorized by law, by the White House Office on Environmental Policy and individuals and organizations serving the Council, its subcommittees, and its working teams.

5. Estimated Annual Operating Costs

The annual operating costs for the Council are estimated to be approximately \$750,000 and five (5)

person-years.

6. Estimated Number and Frequency of Meetings

The Council shall meet approximately four times a year, at regular intervals, and at such other times as the President or the Designated Federal Official may direct. The total number of meetings during the two years of operation will, therefore, be approximately eight.

7. Membership

There shall be not more than twenty-five members of the Council, appointed by the President, and shall include individuals representing the interests of environmental and conservation groups, business and industry, charitable foundations, and governmental and private sectors with experience in matters of sustainable development, and those individuals and entities with expertise concerning the appropriate use of (and appreciation for) Federal, State, and local lands, facilities, and natural and cultural resources. The chairperson of the Council shall be appointed by the President. Each member shall serve for an initial two-year term and may be reappointed for additional terms at the President's discretion.

8. Date: This charter is filed on July 20 1993.

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 12852

June 29, 1993

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment

There is established the "President's Council on Sustainable Development" ("Council"). The Council shall consist of not more than 25 members to be appointed by the President from the public and private sectors and who represent industrial, environmental, governmental, and not-for-profit organizations with experience relating to matters of sustainable development. The President shall designate from among the Council members such official or officials to be chairperson, chairpersons, vice-chairperson, or vice-chairpersons of the council as he shall deem appropriate. The Council shall coordinate with and report to such officials of the executive branch as the President or Director of the White House Office on Environmental Policy shall from time to time determine.

Section 2. Functions

(a) The Council shall advise the President on matters involving sustainable development. "Sustainable development" is broadly defined as economic growth that will benefit present and future generations without detrimentally affecting the resources or biological systems of the planet.

(b) The council shall develop and recommend to the President a national sustainable development action strategy that will foster economic vitality.

(c) The chairperson or chairpersons may, from time to time, invite experts to submit information to the Council and may form subcommittees of the Council to review and report to the Council on the development of national and local sustainable development plans.

Section 3. Administration

(a) The heads of executive agencies shall, to the extent permitted by law, provide to the Council such information with respect to sustainable development as the Council requires to carry out its functions.

(b) Members of the Council shall serve without compensation, but shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by law for persons serving intermittently in the Government service (5 U.S.C. 5701-5707).

(c) The White House Office on Environmental Policy shall obtain funding for the Council from the Department of the Interior or such other sources (including other Federal agencies) as may lawfully contribute to such activities. The funding received shall provide for the administration and financial support of the Council.

(d) The Office of Administration in the Executive Office of the President shall, on a reimbursable basis, provide such administrative services for the Council as may be required.

Section 4. General.

(a) I have determined that the Council shall be established in compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended, except that of reporting to the Congress, which are applicable to the Council, shall be performed by the Office of the Administration in the Executive Office of the President in accord with the guidelines and procedures established by the Administrator of General Services.

(b) The Council shall exist for a period of 2 years from the date of this order, unless the Council's charter is subsequently extended.

(c) Executive order No. 12737, which established the President's Commission on Environmental Quality, is revoked.

William J. Clinton
The White House

AMENDMENTS TO EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 12852

AMENDMENT TO EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 12852

July 19, 1993

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, and in order to amend Executive Order No. 12852, it is hereby ordered that Executive Order No. 12852, is amended by deleting the text of section 3(d) of the order and inserting in lieu thereof the following text: "The Department of the Interior shall, on a reimbursable basis, provide such administrative services for the Council as may be required" and by deleting the words "Office of Administration in the Executive Office of the President" in Section 4 of that order and inserting the "Department of the Interior" in lieu thereof.

FURTHER AMENDMENT TO EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 12852

June 27, 1995

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States and in order to extend the President's Council on Sustainable Development, it is hereby ordered that section 4(b) of Executive Order No. 12852, as amended, is further amended by deleting "for a period of two years from the date of this order, unless the council's charter is subsequently extended" and inserting in lieu thereof "until June 29, 1997, unless otherwise extended."

FURTHER AMENDMENT TO EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 12852, AS AMENDED

November 17, 1995

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, and in order to add four more members to the President's Council on Sustainable Development, it is hereby ordered that Executive Order No. 12852, as amended, is further amended by deleting the number "25" in section 1 of the order and inserting the number "29" in lieu thereof.

William J. Clinton
The White House

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT UPON RECEIPT OF *Sustainable America*

March 7, 1996

I was pleased tonight to accept a report from my Council on Sustainable Development, an advisory group which I established to outline a new direction in environmental policy. In my State of the Union address I said that the era of big government is over, but I also said that we can't go back to a time when citizens were left to fend for themselves. As we move toward a new, smaller government, citizens must work together to tackle the challenges of a new century. We must reach across the lines that divide us to find common ground.

When I first appointed the Council almost three years ago, some of them knew each other only as adversaries. But with this report, they have shown us the power of partnership. They have demonstrated that when business, environmentalists, and government work together in good faith we can pursue simultaneously the goals of economic prosperity, social equity, and environmental quality.

This report will make a major contribution to the challenge I set forth: to enable all our people to make the most of their own lives - with stronger families, more educational opportunities, economic security, safer streets, a cleaner environment in a safer world. I want to thank all who contributed to making this difficult undertaking a success.

The work, however, is not finished. This report will not sit on a shelf gathering dust. Instead, I am announcing the following steps.

First, I ask the Council to continue its work in order to begin implementing some of its recommendations. I hope Jonathan Lash and David Buzzelli will continue to serve as co-chairs through December. Second, I have asked the Vice-President to lead these efforts within the Administration. Finally, I will ask White House offices and federal agencies to support the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National Association of Counties in establishing a Joint Center on Sustainable Communities. This new partnership will work to implement the recommendations in this report in communities across the nation.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT ON THE CONTINUATION OF PCSD

April 25, 1997

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 25, 1997

To the Members of the President's Council
on Sustainable Development:

I am very pleased by your accomplishments since presenting me with your report, "Sustainable America," in March of last year. The remarkable consensus and recommendations contained in that report will serve us well for years to come in our pursuit of economic prosperity, individual opportunity, and a healthy environment for all Americans.

Your latest report, "Building on Consensus," points to many exciting efforts now being undertaken by businesses, state and local governments, and communities throughout America. I share your excitement about this work, which continues to have my full support. At the same time, I agree with your candid assessment that a great deal more remains to be done if we are to realize our vision of a sustainable future. For this reason, I have asked you to continue your important efforts.

The 21st century holds great promise for our nation, and your continued vision and leadership are vital in helping us to reach our potential. As we look to the future, I pledge that the federal government will do its part to build a sustainable America, and I encourage you to seek a similar commitment within your organizations and among your colleagues. I am confident that, working together, we will succeed in this crucial effort.

I thank you for your continued dedication, and I look forward to your future recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Bill Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

PUBLICATIONS

The following PCSD reports are available free of charge by calling 800 363 3732:

Sustainable America: A New Consensus for Prosperity, Opportunity, and A Healthy Environment for the Future, February 1996, (186 pp.)

Building on Consensus: A Progress Report on Sustainable America, January 1997, (57 pp.)

Task Force Reports from first phase of PCSD:

Eco-Efficiency, 1996, (60 pp. plus multiple appendices)

Energy and Transportation, 1996, (93 pp.)

Natural Resources (available June, 1997)

Population and Consumption, 1996, (97 pp.)

Public Linkage, Dialogue, and Education, February 1997, (129 pp.)

Sustainable Agriculture, 1996, (19 pp.)

Sustainable Communities (available June, 1997)

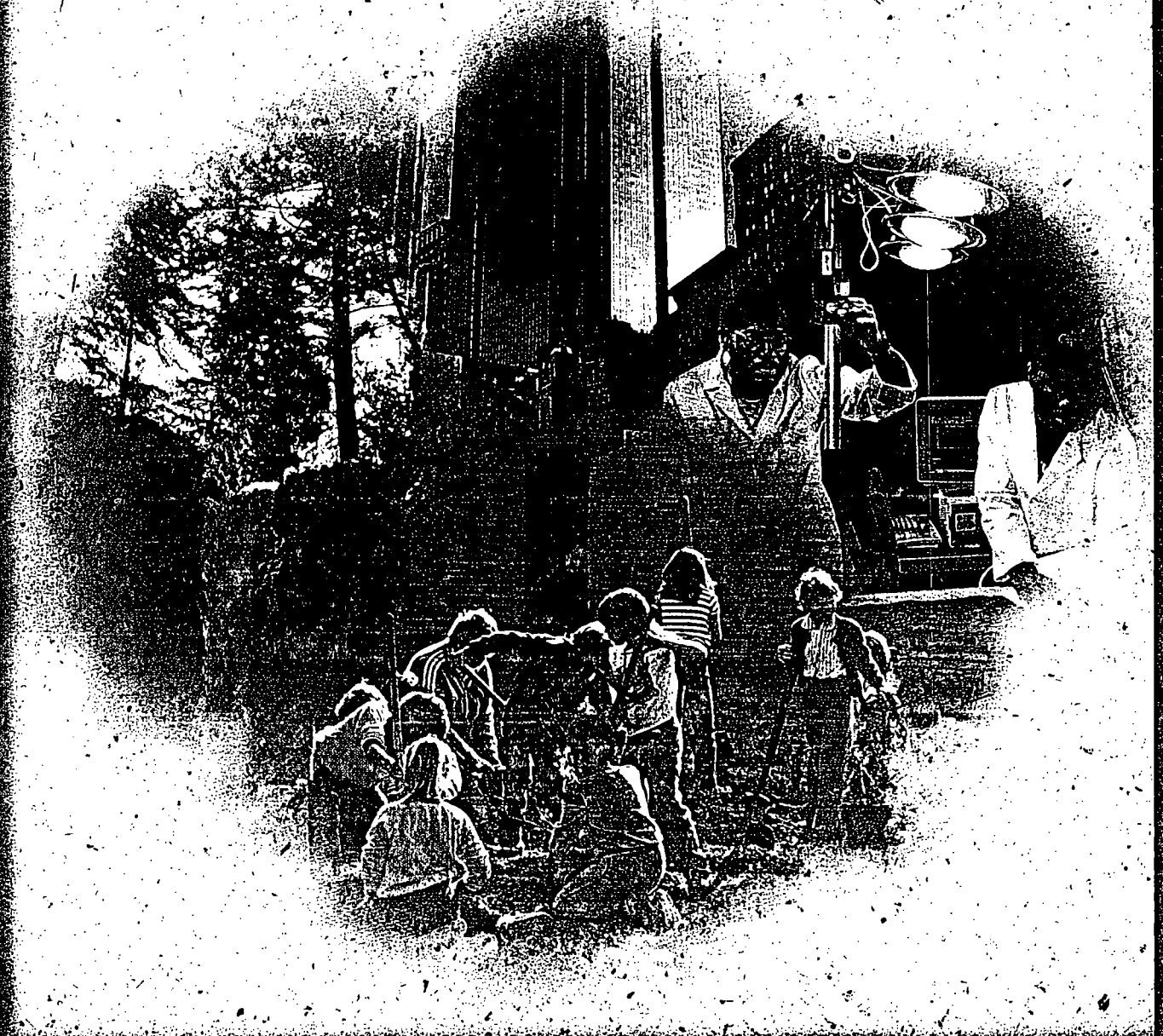
Eco-Industrial Park Workshop Proceedings [held October 17-18, 1996], February 1997, (75 pp. plus appendices)

Proceedings of the Workshop on Extended Product Responsibility [held October 21-22, 1996], February 1997, (47 pp. plus appendices)

Lessons Learned from Collaborative Approaches, April 1997, (15 pp.)

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Task Force Report



The President's Council on Sustainable Development

Membership

CO-CHAIRS

Ronald H. Brown, Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce
Thomas R. Donahue, Former President, AFL-CIO

MEMBERS

John H. Adams, Executive Director, Natural Resources Defense Council
D. James Baker, Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce
Richard Barth, Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer (Retired), Ciba-Geigy Corporation
Carol M. Browner, Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., National Chair, National African-American Leadership Summit
Dianne Dillon-Ridgley, President, Zero Population Growth
Judith M. Espinosa, Former Secretary of the Environment, State of New Mexico
Michele A. Perrault, International Vice President, Sierra Club

TASK FORCE LIAISONS TO COUNCIL MEMBERS

Geoffrey Anderson, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
John Bullard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce
Jacqueline Hamilton, Natural Resources Defense Council
Jeffrey Hunker, U.S. Department of Commerce
Michael McCloskey, Sierra Club
John Mincy, Ciba-Geigy Corporation
Rebecca Moser, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce
Rudy Oswald, AFL-CIO
Harriet Tregoning, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

TASK FORCE COORDINATOR

Angela Park, President's Council on Sustainable Development

The federal officials who served on the task force participated actively in developing the recommendations in this report, but these recommendations do not necessarily reflect Administration policy. This final report represents the consensus of the council members that served on the task force. While the task force delivered its recommendations to the council for its consideration, the entire council did not review or endorse this report.

Executive Summary

.....

Flourishing communities are the foundation of a healthy society. One important 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. But before engaging in any discussion about sustainable communities, an understanding of the shared concepts and definitions of sustainable development must exist.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

The term "sustainable development" and its definitions originated in an international context. The term was popularized by the World Commission on Environment and Development, which is also known as the Bruntland Commission, named after its chair Gro Harlem Bruntland. Established by the United Nations (U.N.) General Assembly in 1984, the commission was asked to learn about the connections between the issues of environment and development. It held meetings on every continent with people from all walks of life and presented its final report, *Our Common Future*, to the U.N. General Assembly in 1987.

In *Our Common Future*, the Bruntland Commission defined sustainable development as development that allows people "...to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." This definition was adopted by the President's Council on Sustainable Development in 1993 as it initiated its work.

Although the Bruntland Commission's definition addresses the intergenerational and long-term aspects of sustainable development, alone it is not a comprehensive definition of the term and its affiliated concepts.

Sustainable development has been described as the integration of the three e's — environment, economy, and equity. In addition, a variety of themes have become closely associated with the concept of sustainable development. For development to be sustainable, it must satisfy five criteria. Decisions must consider and account for:

- • • Long-term impacts and consequences — Sustainable development requires the use of a long-term horizon for decisionmaking in which society pursues long-term aspirations rather than simply making short-term, reactive responses to problems. By keeping an eye out for the long-term, sustainable development ensures that options for future generations are maintained if not improved.

- • • Interdependence — Sustainable development recognizes the interdependence of economic, environmental, and social well-being. It promotes actions that expand economic opportunity, improve environmental quality, and increase social well-being all at the same time, never sacrificing one for another.
- • • Participation and transparency — Sustainable development depends on decisionmaking that is inclusive, participatory, and transparent. It recognizes the importance of process and decisionmaking that includes the input of the stakeholders who will be affected by decisions.
- • • Equity — Sustainable development promotes equity between generations and among different groups in society. It recognizes the necessity of equality and fairness, and it reduces disparities in risks and access to benefits.
- • • Proactive prevention — Sustainable development is anticipatory. It promotes efforts to prevent problems as the first course of action.

Sustainable development is one of those rare ideas that could dramatically change the way we look at “what is” and “what could be.” It is about doing things in ways that work for the long run because they are better from every point of view — better economically, environmentally, and socially. It provides a new framework for working together to expand economic opportunities, rebuild communities, revitalize democracy, develop a new generation of environmentally superior technologies, link entrepreneurship to environmental stewardship, and bring our increasingly urban way of life into balance with nature. Sustainable development challenges us to envision a society superior to today’s society, and to make it a reality for our children and grandchildren.

WHAT ARE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES?

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. They are communities that flourish because they build a mutually supportive, dynamic balance between social well-being, economic opportunity, and environmental quality. 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. Generally speaking, they integrate the five concepts outlined above and demonstrate their application locally. Some communities have adopted sustainable community principles through legislation, executive order, or other actions.

The concept of sustainable communities should be viewed as an ideal for communities to pursue — an ideal whose possibilities are enormously exciting.

In sustainable communities, people are engaged in building a community together. They are well-informed and actively involved in making the decisions that affect their lives. In making decisions, they consider the long-term benefits to 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 effectively.

In sustainable communities, people use this participatory approach to make conscious decisions about design. The concepts of efficiency and livability permeate decisions about physical structure. Development patterns promote accessibility, decrease sprawl, reduce energy costs, and foster a human-scale built environment.

In sustainable communities, all people have access to educational opportunities that prepare them for jobs to support themselves and their families in a local economy that is dynamic and prepared to cope with changes in the national and global economy. In sustainable communities, partnerships involving business, government, labor, and employees promote economic development and jobs. They 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 the effects of national and international economic trends that sometimes result in job losses in a community. Such partnerships also invest in the education and training necessary to make community members more productive, raise their earning power, and help strengthen and attract business. Use of environmentally superior technologies for transportation, industry, buildings, and agriculture boosts productivity and lowers business costs while dramatically reducing pollution, and solid and hazardous wastes.

Businesses, households, and governments in sustainable communities 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 they provide people with clean air, clean water, and safe food.

WHY ARE COMMUNITIES KEY TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Whether the United States and other nations will achieve a sustainable future largely depends on how well the concepts and principles of sustainable development are integrated into decisionmaking at the community level. If efforts to build a sustainable future are to take hold, they must do so in the day-to-day lives of people in their workplaces, stores, neighborhood associations, community organizations, local government, labor unions, schools, and religious institutions.

It is in communities where people work, play, and feel most connected to society. Problems like congestion, pollution, and crime often seem abstract when they appear as national statistics, but they become personal and real at the community level. In the same way, sustainable development may remain a remote theoretical concept for many people until it is described in the context of community. Then it becomes more clear that sustainable development is directly related to aspects of people's daily lives and their fundamental needs, such as educational and job opportunities, health care, affordable

housing, clean air and water, and convenient transportation. It is within communities that children the basic education and skills that will allow them to thrive 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. Nothing could do more to foster sustainable development than a nationwide effort to apply this idea at the community level.

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. 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.

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 1

Community-Based Public Dialogue, Planning, Priority-Setting, and Implementation

Bring people together to identify, prioritize, and learn about key issues in their community; develop a vision of what they want their community to be; set goals for realizing that vision; establish indicators for measuring progress; identify the resources needed to reach the goals; and implement actions that will advance them.

Action 1. Community-based coalitions can create educational, media, and civic journalism campaigns to encourage participation in civil life and voting, disseminate high-quality information on community issues, and promote public discussions that will lead to the resolution of these issues. Coalitions should be as broad as possible, including industry and business, schools, newspapers, television and radio stations, community groups, labor, local government, religious institutions, and organizations working on social, economic, and environmental issues.

Action 2. As part of the dialogue and planning process, community-based coalitions can work to draft an economic development strategy that will fulfill basic human needs by taking advantage of local and regional opportunities and new economic trends, such as the opening up of global markets and the improvement of environmental and communications technologies. Coalitions should include businesses, employees, unions, chambers of commerce, local government, community groups, and residents.

Action 3. Federal and state governments — in consultation with local government, the private sector, and nongovernmental organizations — should support local planning that integrates economic development, environmental protection, and social equity concerns and should promote public participation in planning efforts. For example, they should reaffirm the value of such planning through the reauthorization of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, and they should apply the requirements of such planning to federal and state funding and incentives for economic development, housing, transportation, and environmental programs.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 2***Open and Inclusive Decisionmaking****Encourage and facilitate open and inclusive decisionmaking processes.*

Action 1. All levels government should ensure substantial opportunity for public participation in all phases of planning and decisionmaking to allow those affected by decisions to have a voice in the outcome. Governments should create new methods and expand existing ones for getting the public involved in planning and development decisions, as well as in the legislative process, taking steps to ensure that historically under-represented groups are involved.

For example, regional planning organizations, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), zoning boards, and other government entities that are active in the design of communities should take responsibility for ensuring that local residents have a substantive opportunity to participate in crucial early planning and development decisions.

Action 2. All levels of government, but especially local government, should identify impediments to greater public involvement in decisionmaking — such as language barriers and lack of child care and transportation — and develop strategies to overcome them.

Action 3. Businesses can encourage their managers and employees to participate in community affairs and can establish advisory boards to recruit residents to provide input to the company on issues relevant to the community. In addition, businesses can give employees flexibility to increase the time that they and their families can devote to community activities.

Action 4. While working to minimize all unacceptable environmental risks, all levels of government should work with community groups and the private sector to ensure that environmental risks and benefits are more equitably distributed among and within communities.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 3***Access to Information on Sustainable Communities****Increase the ability of communities to improve their economic, environmental, and social well-being by improving access to usable information about sustainable communities initiatives, and disseminating that information to interested parties and key decisionmakers.*

Action 1. Institutions and individuals with knowledge or expertise in sustainable community development should coordinate efforts to share and provide information to communities, decisionmakers, and other relevant constituencies. They should explore ways to link currently existing databases; coordinate technical assistance; co-sponsor conferences and other meetings; take advantage of emerging communications technologies, such as the Internet; and provide easily accessible points of entry for those interested in this information.

These institutions and individuals include government agencies, elected officials, nonprofit organizations, businesses, academic institutions, economic development and environmental organizations, community groups, and professional associations (from planners, architects, and engineers to ecologists and economists).

Action 2. All levels of government should improve the user-friendliness of government-collected information and technologies to help communities use them to solve problems and to educate the public. Potentially useful information includes census data, Toxics Release Inventory data, other

right-to-know statistics, public investment and lending information, economic statistics, and data derived from remote sensing and satellite technologies. Potentially useful technologies for manipulating this data include mapping tools, geographic information systems (GIS), and customized GIS application databases (e.g., LandView II).

Action 3. Community-based coalitions should work with companies, federal and state regulatory agencies, and health risk assessors to develop profiles of neighborhoods that are environmentally high-risk as a tool for setting pollution abatement priorities.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 4

Cooperation Among Communities

Encourage the communities within a region to work together on issues that transcend their political boundaries.

Action 1. Communities should collaborate to identify, prioritize, and learn about key problems in their region; develop a vision of what they want their region to be like; set goals for realizing that vision; establish benchmarks for measuring progress toward these goals; ascertain the resources needed to reach the goals; and determine the actions that will advance them.

Action 2. States, counties, and municipalities should collaborate to create a system of regional accounts that measures the costs and benefits of local land use, development, and economic trends, and show how these benefits and costs are distributed in the short and long run. The federal government should work with state and local governments to ensure that federal statistical resources are available and used appropriately to support the measurement of benefits and costs.

Action 3. Federal and state governments should provide incentives for communities to collaborate on issues that transcend local political jurisdictions, such as transportation, land use, economic development, and air and water quality. Federal and state agencies responsible for environmental protection, economic development, land use, and transportation policies should work with one or more selected geographic areas to develop integrated planning and development activities, and to require region-wide cooperation in these areas.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 5

Building Design and Rehabilitation

Streamline processes and encourage design and rehabilitation of new and existing buildings to use energy and materials efficiently; enhance public health, preserve historic and natural settings, and contribute to a sense of community identity; and discourage zoning and construction practices that do the opposite.

Action 1. Builders, architects, and engineers should design new buildings and rehabilitate existing ones to be healthy, livable, resource-efficient, and adaptable to new uses. These buildings should feature energy efficiency, daylighting, non-toxic recycled and recyclable construction materials, and designs that promote human interaction. They should also recognize the importance of historic preservation—capturing the resource of the embodied energy of existing buildings—and promote zero-waste building practices.

Action 2. Builders and landscape architects should encourage building design that recognizes the integration between the built and natural environments through landscaping techniques such as

the use of native plants, which can reduce the need for fertilizers, pesticides, and water; and shade trees which can reduce energy use.

Action 3. Federal, state, and local governments should work with builders, architects, developers, contractors, materials manufacturers, service providers, community groups, and others to streamline regulations that allow builders and architects to implement the above-outlined sustainable building and construction practices. They should publish or otherwise make available information about model building codes, zoning ordinances, and flexibility for better building permit approval processes for residential and commercial buildings — so that local decisionmakers can adapt them to reflect local conditions and values.

Action 4. Lenders, community groups, and historic preservation groups can work together to identify financing for retrofitting buildings to be energy-efficient and for rehabilitating historic buildings. Local governments can enact ordinances to preserve historic buildings, adapting them for new uses whenever possible, and removing incentives for demolishing them.

Action 5. Educational institutions at all levels, particularly technical and graduate schools, should provide interdisciplinary training to encourage engineers, architects, landscape artists, and other design professionals to integrate sustainable building and construction practices, as outlined above, into common use.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 6

Community Design

Design new communities and improve existing ones to use land and infrastructure efficiently, promote mixed-use and mixed-income development, retain public open space, and provide diverse transportation options to integrate the places in which people live and work with the natural environment.

Action 1. Local jurisdictions should structure or revise local zoning regulations and permit approval processes to encourage mixed-used, mixed-income development co-located with diverse transportation options in areas that are already developed and especially where transit infrastructure is already in place.

Action 2. Federal and state governments and the private sector should form teams to help local jurisdictions reduce sprawl, and design developments that are resource-efficient and livable.

Teams should include design and financing professionals, engineers, transportation specialists, land use experts, economic development and energy-efficiency experts, retailers, natural resource managers, and others.

Action 3. The federal government should change federal tax policy to provide the same tax treatment of employee parking benefits and employee benefits relating to the use of mass transit, walking, and bike riding. For example, employers currently receive a tax deduction for providing parking and most do not charge for employee parking. While a much smaller tax-free benefit (less than half the amount) is also available for transit, no such incentive exists for those who neither drive nor take transit.

Action 4. The federal government should give credit toward attainment of national Clean Air Act Amendment ambient air-quality standards to communities that lower traffic by adopting zoning, building code, and other changes that encourage more efficient land use patterns that reduce air pollution from motor vehicles.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 7

Reduce Sprawl and Promote Smarter Growth

Reduce sprawl and promote smarter geographical growth of existing communities and the siting of new ones to enhance economic opportunities and meet future needs while conserving open space and respecting the carrying capacity of the natural environment.

Action 1. The federal government should redirect federal policies that encourage low-density sprawl to foster investment in existing communities. For example, 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. It should also change the capital gain provision in section 1034 of the Internal Revenue Service code to allow homesellers to defer tax liability even if they purchase a new home of lesser value. Currently the code allows deferred tax liability on capital gain realized during ownership only if homesellers purchase another home priced at least equal to the one sold.

Action 2. Federal agencies should work with states and communities to develop ways to evaluate the costs of infrastructure in greenfield or relatively undeveloped areas to examine subsidies and to correct market incentives in the financing of capital costs of infrastructure, such as sewers and utilities, for development of land bordering metropolitan areas. In addition, 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.

Federal and state governments should also help local governments develop a metropolitan or regional planning instrument to evaluate alternative modes of development, accounting for the present value and costs of infrastructure, transportation inefficiency, land consumption, provision of social services, environmental quality, congestion, and fiscal impacts, as well as the impact on access to jobs, services, open space, and social and cultural amenities.

Action 3. All levels of government, policy experts, residents, and community organizations can work together to conduct analyses of how public resources for infrastructure are spent to benefit different communities — for example, comparing the center city, outer suburbs, and rural areas. These analyses can be used to reorient priorities, if necessary, and direct future expenditures.

Action 4. 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 carrying capacity. These partnerships 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.



POLICY RECOMMENDATION 8

Creation of Strong, Diversified Local Economies

Promote economic development strategies that capitalize on unique local attributes and on technological advances in energy and resource efficiency to create jobs and build strong, diversified local economies.

Action 1. Communities can conduct an assessment of their economic, natural, and human resources to identify their comparative advantages and niche in the larger regional, national, and global economies. Ideally, this inventory and assessment would be conducted as part of a public dialogue and planning process within the community and the region.

Action 2. Local governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations with relevant expertise should work together to create recycling-related manufacturing in conjunction with community-based projects to collect and recycle municipal solid waste. All levels of government should support these efforts by providing information and incentives, and by supporting pilot projects and leveraging their funding with public-private partnerships.

Action 3. Federal and state agencies should assist communities that want to create eco-industrial parks that enhance economic efficiency and promote environmental responsibility. They can do so by reducing regulatory impediments to the siting of eco-industrial parks that produce low levels of pollution through a zero-waste strategy in areas with mixed-use zoning; sharing information on similar efforts; and funding pilot projects.

Action 4. National business associations, large corporations, environmental groups, and federal and state agencies can work together to promote best practices and techniques in the areas of pollution prevention, materials reuse, and energy efficiency to small- and medium-sized companies.

Action 5. Federal agencies should help communities with former military facilities to convert them to new uses using principles of sustainable development. They can do so by bringing together development experts from multiple agencies and providing information on the range of alternatives for redevelopment.

Action 6. The federal government and businesses should improve working conditions. Government, for example, should set an adequate minimum wage and proper health and safety standards; and businesses could provide greater flexibility to telecommute, set work schedules to provide more time for community participation and/or parenting, and provide assistance with day care.

Action 7. Federal, state, and local government should support job creation and minimize large disparities in the distribution of wealth through tax strategies, health and welfare programs, and other government policies.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 9***Basic Education, Job Training, and Lifelong Learning***

Expand and coordinate education and job training programs to allow all people to expand their knowledge and improve their ability to adapt to the changing job market and participate in community affairs as informed, educated citizens.

Action 1. Businesses, teachers' unions, school officials, students, religious institutions, and local government within a community should develop training programs to ensure that workers have the necessary skills to take advantage of current and future economic development opportunities. They should work together to integrate current training programs, and they should marshal funding from the private sector, schools, and government to fill gaps in these programs. In addition to school curriculum, the programs include school-to-work, community service, summer jobs programs, apprenticeships, and job corps opportunities.

Action 2. Community-based coalitions should work together to invest in education and to link education and the community by sponsoring youth, tutoring, and other programs; directly funding projects; and providing in-kind and volunteer support. These programs should also focus on the needs of local employers.

Action 3. Federal and state governments should help people pursue education and job training throughout their lives by providing tax deductions on tuition, low-interest student loans, and other kinds of financial assistance.

Action 4. Federal and state governments, the private sector, and local communities should promote widespread public access to computers and computer skills training.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 10***Cleanup and Redevelopment of Brownfield Sites***

Create partnerships with community residents, environmental organizations, community development corporations, lenders, businesses, and all levels of government to clean up, redevelop, or stabilize brownfield sites by eliminating barriers and creating incentives for environmental cleanup and reorienting existing state and federal economic development funding and programs to include these sites.

Action 1. All levels of government should continue to encourage investment in brownfields redevelopment by eliminating barriers to and creating incentives for the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfield sites. Current efforts, such as the 1995 EPA Brownfields Initiative, need to continue evolving to work in partnership with diverse parties to clarify important issues and find shared solutions. These issues include: lender liability for cleanup; uncertainties for investors such as consistent and quantifiable cleanup standards, enforceable indemnity agreements, and covenants-not-to-sue; timely and conclusive efforts to detect contamination to allow cleanup and property sales to proceed; realistic cleanup standards appropriate to future uses of sites; and strengthening local workforce development.

Action 2. All levels of government should work with the mortgage bankers and other members of the financial community as well as with community groups to reexamine policies in light of the substantial progress that has been made by EPA and the Congress to respond to the lending

community concerns. Development of innovative financing tools that make inexpensive, renewable capital readily available for brownfields investment should be encouraged.

Action 3. States and local governments should be encouraged to develop revolving loan funds for cleanup activities at brownfield sites. Federal agencies should help provide seed money to capitalize a limited number of state or local revolving loan funds to further encourage their development and use. Federal agencies should continue to provide technical assistance to communities to assess what efforts are needed to inventory, assess, clean up, and redevelop brownfield sites.

Action 4. The federal government should assure that economic development programs that were in existence prior to the emergence of brownfields issues make brownfields projects eligible for those programs' funds.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 11

Financing Sustainable Communities

Create partnerships to remove barriers to and expand access for financing innovative community initiatives.

Action 1. The federal government should work with the housing finance community and with transportation and land use experts to further study, develop, and test pilot a location-efficient mortgage program that will be refined and eventually implemented nationally.

Action 2. The federal government should lead a public/private sector initiative to identify and end barriers to financing mixed-use, transit-oriented development. Participants should include: developers, architects, planners, local government officials, and development finance experts (banks, pension and insurance investors, public corporations which provide secondary markets, and community development corporations).

Action 3. The federal government should expand the home mortgage tax deduction to apply to mixed-use, multifamily units. It should also expand low income housing finance programs to include these facilities.

Action 4. The financing community, policy experts, and all levels of government should work together to establish underwriting criteria and a broader secondary market for loans for buildings retrofitting, mixed-use development, and businesses that harness environmentally sound technologies.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 12

Public Safety

Encourage citizens, law enforcement, and governments to work together to make communities safer.

Action 1. Community-based coalitions — including residents, community groups, and businesses — should work with police to mobilize neighborhoods to prevent violence by initiating community meetings, finding and fixing violence hot spots, reclaiming public spaces, and adopting community policing strategies.

Action 2. All levels of government should work to implement gun control measures, including the use of background checks and mandatory waiting periods to help reduce violent gun uses.

Action 3. Community-based coalitions should work together to address disorder issues such as littering, graffiti, and loitering before they lead to criminal activities. Law enforcement officials and local governments should work with residents and businesses to identify opportunities to prevent potential problems such as improving lighting in specific areas, and cleaning up vacant lots.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 13

Community Environmental Protection Pilots

Explore the feasibility and effectiveness of alternative environmental regulatory systems through community-level pilot programs that set performance-based standards that are more stringent than existing environmental standards, and that give businesses greater flexibility in meeting the new standards.

Action 1. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) should encourage communities to develop pilot programs for attaining one or more environmental standards that are more stringent than those set by EPA. Participants in the programs — including but not limited to industry, government agencies, and community groups — would set the standards; and would work with regulators to ensure and verify that they are met.

Action 2. EPA and state environmental protection agencies should accelerate efforts to conduct a series of demonstration projects to assess the benefits and costs of alternative regulatory approaches.

For example, projects could demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of setting more stringent standards while giving polluters longer time periods to achieve compliance. Another project could research and work to demonstrate the benefits (if any) of environmental performance of an entire facility rather than on separate air, water and soil requirements. Such a project might stipulate that environmental gains for an entire facility exceed what would have been achieved through source-by-source or media-specific regulations. Working with the private sector and nongovernmental organizations, the federal government should review and evaluate the lessons learned from these demonstration projects. Based on the success of the first round of demonstration projects, a second set of projects should be launched within two years.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 14

Pollution Prevention Partnerships

Increase public-private pollution-prevention efforts at the community level.

Action 1. Regulators, businesses, labor unions, community groups, and policy experts can create partnerships to implement programs that encourage pollution prevention.

Action 2. Community-based coalitions can regularly gather data on pollution in a community and combine it with population data and relevant health statistics, including diet and lifestyle choices, to reach agreement on what programs are needed to lower local health risks.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION 15

Prevention and Natural Disaster Reduction

Shift the focus of the federal disaster relief system from cure to prevention.

Action 1. All levels of government should identify and eliminate government incentives, such as subsidized flood plain insurance and subsidized utilities, that encourage development in areas vulnerable to natural hazards.

Action 2. Accurate risk assessments can facilitate development of safe land use policies and management approaches, especially in coastal and riverine environments, and near fault zones and other geologically active sites.

Action 3. Community-based coalitions can develop improved building codes and related enforcement, and create strategic plans for design and maintenance of community infrastructure, and support appropriate agriculture and forestry practices. For example, local regulatory agencies can adopt more rigorous building codes, to ensure that new construction minimizes the impacts of floods, hurricanes, and other natural disasters.

Action 4. Federal agencies, perhaps through a specific interagency effort, should incorporate sustainable re-development principles into the federal disaster relief system. The interagency group should work closely with state, local, and private organizations to create a unified approach within established disaster relief mechanisms. They can package technical assistance programs from existing federal, state, and local programs, utilities, and other public and private resources.

Introduction

.....

Flourishing communities are the foundation of a healthy society. One important 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. But before engaging in any discussion about sustainable communities, an understanding of the shared concepts and definitions of sustainable development must exist.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

The term "sustainable development" and its definitions originated in an international context. The term was popularized by the World Commission on Environment and Development, which is also known as the Bruntland Commission, named after its chair Gro Harlem Brundtland. Established by the United Nations (U.N.) General Assembly in 1984, the commission was asked to learn about the connections between the issues of environment and development. It held meetings on every continent with people from all walks of life and presented its final report, *Our Common Future*, to the U.N. General Assembly in 1987.

In 1992, at the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the countries of the world with participation from non-governmental organizations drafted and agreed to Agenda 21, a global plan of action for better integrating and resolving issues of environmental, economic, and social development. At the conference, national governments agreed to draft their own plans of action with broad participation of nongovernmental organizations. The President's Council on Sustainable Development's mandate from President Clinton to develop a national action strategy is part of the U.S. commitment to that pledge.

The UNCED was the beginning of a series of major international summits that included the Human Rights Summit in Vienna, Austria, in 1993; the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Egypt, in 1994; the World Conference on Social Development in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1995; and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, in 1995. This series culminated in the second U.N. Conference on Human Settlements (also known as Habitat II or "the City Summit") in Istanbul, Turkey in June of 1996. Habitat II was intended to tie together the themes of the previous conferences and connect them to the importance of communities.

In *Our Common Future*, the Bruntland Commission defined sustainable development as development that allows people "...to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."¹ This definition was adopted by the President's Council on Sustainable Development in 1993 as it initiated its work.

Although the Bruntland Commission's definition addresses the intergenerational and long-term aspects of sustainable development, alone it is not a comprehensive definition of the term and its affiliated concepts.

Sustainable development has been described as the integration of the three e's — environment, economy, and equity. In addition, a variety of themes have become closely associated with the concept of sustainable development. For development to be sustainable, it must satisfy five criteria. Decisions must consider and account for:

- • • Long-term impacts and consequences — Sustainable development requires the use of a long-term horizon for decisionmaking in which society pursues long-term aspirations rather than simply making short-term, reactive responses to problems. By keeping an eye out for the long-term, sustainable development ensures that options for future generations are maintained if not improved.
- • • Interdependence — Sustainable development recognizes the interdependence of economic, environmental, and social well-being. It promotes actions that expand economic opportunity, improve environmental quality, and increase social well-being all at the same time, never sacrificing one for another.
- • • Participation and transparency — Sustainable development depends on decisionmaking that is inclusive, participatory, and transparent. It recognizes the importance of process and decisionmaking that includes the input of the stakeholders who will be affected by decisions.
- • • Equity — Sustainable development promotes equity between generations and among different groups in society. It recognizes the necessity of equality and fairness, and it reduces disparities in risks and access to benefits.
- • • Proactive prevention — Sustainable development is anticipatory. It promotes efforts to prevent problems as the first course of action.

Sustainable development is one of those rare ideas that could dramatically change the way we look at “what is” and “what could be.” It is about doing things in ways that work for the long run because they are better from every point of view — better economically, environmentally, and socially. It provides a new framework for working together to expand economic opportunities, rebuild communities, revitalize democracy, develop a new generation of environmentally superior technologies, link entrepreneurship to environmental stewardship, and bring our increasingly urban way of life into balance with nature. Sustainable development challenges us to envision a society superior to today's society, and to make it a reality for our children and grandchildren.

WHAT ARE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES?

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. They are communities that flourish because they build a mutually supportive, dynamic balance between social well-being, economic opportunity, and environmental quality. 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. Generally speaking, they integrate the five concepts outlined above and demonstrate their application locally.

Some communities have adopted sustainable community principles through legislation, executive order, or other actions. (For examples of these principles, see Appendix A.)

The concept of sustainable communities should be viewed as an ideal for communities to pursue — an ideal whose possibilities are enormously exciting.

In sustainable communities, people are engaged in building a community together. They are well-informed and actively involved in making the decisions that affect their lives. In making decisions, they consider the long-term benefits to 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 effectively.

In sustainable communities, people use this participatory approach to make conscious decisions about design. The concepts of efficiency and livability permeate decisions about physical structure. Development patterns promote accessibility, decrease sprawl, reduce energy costs, and foster a human-scale built environment.

In sustainable communities, all people have access to educational opportunities that prepare them for jobs to support themselves and their families in a local economy that is dynamic and prepared to cope with changes in the national and global economy. In sustainable communities, partnerships involving business, government, labor, and employees promote economic development and jobs. They 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 the effects of national and international economic trends that sometimes result in job losses in a community. Such partnerships also invest in the education and training necessary to make community members more productive, raise their earning power, and help strengthen and attract business. Use of environmentally superior technologies for transportation, industry, buildings, and agriculture boosts productivity and lowers business costs while dramatically reducing pollution, and solid and hazardous wastes.

Businesses, households, and governments in sustainable communities 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 they provide people with clean air, clean water, and safe food.

WHY ARE COMMUNITIES KEY TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?

Whether the United States and other nations will achieve a sustainable future largely depends on how well the concepts and principles of sustainable development are integrated into decisionmaking at the community level. If efforts to build a sustainable future

are to take hold, they must do so in the day-to-day lives of people in their workplaces, stores, neighborhood associations, community organizations, local government, labor unions, schools, and religious institutions.

It is in communities where people work, play, and feel most connected to society. Problems like congestion, pollution, and crime often seem abstract when they appear as national statistics, but they become personal and real at the community level. In the same way, sustainable development may remain a remote theoretical concept for many people until it is described in the context of community. Then it becomes more clear that sustainable development is directly related to aspects of people's daily lives and their fundamental needs, such as educational and job opportunities, health care, affordable housing, clean air and water, and convenient transportation. It is within communities that children learn the basic education and skills that will allow them to thrive 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. Nothing could do more to foster sustainable development than a nationwide effort to apply this idea at the community level.

The role of local communities is becoming increasingly important as the United States, and much of the rest of the world, move 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. These federal roles are necessary because national interests may not always be represented in local decisions, and the effects of community choices are felt beyond one municipality. 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 between 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 designates the level at which it is most appropriately solved. For example, some issues have regional, inter-regional, and global ramifications. Air pollution is one of them. Acid rain is caused by air pollutants that manifest themselves in rain that can fall hundreds of miles from where the pollutants were emitted. The cooperation of more than one region is required to correct this type of problem.

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 institu-

tions 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 have (sometimes inadvertently) erected that diminish the ability of communities to pursue sustainable development.

The task force 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.