

# **THE HOUSING TRANSPORTATION CONNECTION**

## **Building Better Communities Through Better Housing and Transportation**

Make no small plans, for they have no power to stir men's minds. *Daniel Burnham*

Urban planners are forever tormented by the fact that everything connects to everything else. *Daniel Patrick Moynihan*

Transportation is a great servant and a lousy master. *David Burwell*

Housing is a sanctuary for the human spirit. *American Institute of Architects*

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/INTRODUCTION**

The Housing/Transportation Task force was created in July 2001 to assist the U.S. Millennial Housing Commission in addressing crosscutting issues involving both transportation and housing. These issues significantly affect the future of housing supply, adequacy, affordability, and suitability in the context of livable, well-functioning communities. The task force has met 18 times.

The vision, principles, discussion, and recommendations below gather a wide-range of views on important issues concerning the relationship of housing and transportation for the Commission's review and decision.

The task force was convened and directed by Albert C. Eisenberg, consultant to the Commission. Mr. Eisenberg has previously served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy at the U.S. Department of Transportation, Staff Director of the U.S. Subcommittee on Housing and Urban Affairs, member and chairman of the Arlington, VA, County Board, and commissioner of the Virginia Housing Development Authority.

The participants in the task force have long-time, demonstrated expertise in the fields of transportation and/or housing policy and practice. Their backgrounds and current assignments span the range from federal agencies and non-profit associations, to think-tanks, and other organizations which have played an important role in framing the ongoing national dialogue on housing and transportation issues.

Mr. Eisenberg prepared the document, based on the contributions of the task force participants. Their contributions, including substantial editing, submissions of studies, reports and other documents, personal knowledge, recommendations, and advice, made this paper possible. Each draft of the document was distributed to commission staff and task force participants for their review and comment. No votes were taken on any element of the document, thus it cannot be considered to have any formal approval of the task force. Any positions or recommendations provided herein reflect the personal opinions and views of the individual participants and not necessarily those of any organization or entity to which they may belong or which they represent.

### **CONVENOR'S CHARGE TO THE TASK FORCE**

- Establish a vision for a more effective and efficient relationship between housing and transportation policy to make our communities better places to live, work, and raise families.

- Explore and describe the relationship between transportation and housing (particularly affordable housing) policy, planning, and practice that enable livable communities.
- Recommend for the Commission's review for submission to the Congress principles, policies, and recommendations that are practically, technically, and politically feasible, and that enable housing and transportation policy working together at the community and regional level to achieve the vision of better, more affordable housing and more livable, prosperous communities.

## **SYNOPSIS OF ISSUES**

### **Introduction**

The issue that the Housing Transportation Task Force addresses isn't just about transportation or housing alone. Rather, it's about employing the power of transportation and housing together to make communities better tomorrow than they are today. Transportation and housing are fundamental building blocks of successful communities. Through the programs and services they offer and the ways they are planned and used, they shape and define communities, bringing about physical changes to the land, and determining communities evolution and economic progress, and how people pursue their daily lives. Together they have decisive influence over they way a community will look, feel, function, and serve. Changes in law and practice can make them better partners.

### **The role and relationship of housing and transportation**

Transportation is the great enabler of larger purposes. Used correctly, it is a servant. Provided wisely and efficiently, transportation protects national security, fosters economic prosperity, preserves and enhances the environment, builds and strengthens communities, and connects people across the distances both great and small.

Housing that is affordable, suitable for different types of households, and adequately supplied serves an essential individual need and creates many community benefits, too. It can increase the wealth of a community as a handmaiden of economic development. It can stabilize and anchor neighborhoods and whole communities. It can provide the basis for economic expansion. It can promote public health and social progress. And it can increase the overall quality of community life.

A strong relationship exists between housing and transportation, which has everything to do with the future of American communities and how well these two powerful forces make their contributions to American society. As communities have grown physically and socially, the nature of that relationship has taken increasingly complex forms. Along the way it has become clear how transportation and housing both conflict with and at the same time depend upon and serve one another. The action of one can affect the action of the other, so it makes sense to coordinate them wherever possible. This proposition is a dominant theme of this paper.

If both housing and transportation work together, in concert with closely related issues such as economic development, environmental quality, education, and workforce development,

transportation and housing can create places of delight, prosperity, justice, and opportunity. If they are misused, or work at cross-purposes, or fail to take advantage of their reinforcing linkages, they can create ugly, dysfunctional, unhealthful environments that diminish the quality of life, shut people out of opportunities for housing and work, and deny them a sense of community, while raising household and community costs.

### **A half-century of community change**

Because the work of transportation and housing have profound impact on the larger issues of land use and regional development and growth, it would be useful to explore the evolution of urban and suburban development.

During the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century massive shifts began to take place in the institutions and patterns of urban life. America's economic structure transformed from an industrial to a predominantly service economy. The work place changed, along with the diversity and availability of mortgage credit, urban demographic and social patterns, market forces and consumer demands, and technological advances. Together these changes fueled a steady migration to the suburbs that continues. In the 1970's, 36 major industrial cities lost population.

In the process, many urban areas found themselves eclipsed as the centers of economic, cultural, and social life, as wealth moved away, too, leaving them with the assets of traditional community designs, but without the economic wherewithal to support the quality of life that these designs once encouraged. Land was gobbled up in the suburbs, and left vacant in the cities, as middle and upper income families fled, leaving the poor behind. Struggling to regain their footing, and seeking to turn their economic fortunes around, many of these communities hoped for a renaissance through well intended, but ultimately disastrous urban renewal schemes that tore down block upon block of precious historic resources and unrecognized, unappreciated community assets. For many, that renaissance never occurred. New design paradigms that consigned traditional forms to the historical ash heap, wiped away the community values and the human connections that make the difference between a place and a home.

In their own turn, the suburbs eagerly took on their own new development forms of uses that were widely distributed and widely separated from one another. As a result, the automobile became the predominant and preferred means of access, because no other effective choices for getting around were adequately made available or even possible. Much of the transportation story today gathers around that fact. The new places spread across the land, neglected traditional forms of community design, and created consequences, from transportation gridlock and lost open space to wasted time in accessing the different destinations of daily life and spending time with family. Accommodation of auto traffic became a principal function of community policy.

### **The consequences of change**

The consequences are manifest for the changes that we have made in our communities' growth and development. We pay a heavy price for it in landscapes of repetitive ugliness, in the loss of open space and the historic reminders of our heritage, in wasteful public expenditure chasing long-distance infrastructure extensions, and in the impact on human health and safety. In one of

the great ironies of modern community development, the urban areas knocked down whole sections of old neighborhoods to create places whose plan and design didn't work, while the suburbs built up whole new communities whose plan and design didn't work either. There remains much to appreciate and embrace in both cities and suburbs. But for many the opportunities that could occur from a full range of transportation and housing choices and all that they should bring to a community's ability to serve its people simply do not exist.

The traditional forms of community design that integrated the places where people live and shop, learn and worship, and play and pursue commerce have faded away. Housing above the store is a discredited product in many places. New design forms have ascended, and thus today's land use plans and zoning codes deliberately and strictly separate these daily activities. While the original intent of such separations was laudable--to prevent people from having to suffer harmful next door neighbors like rendering facilities and power stations--the practice misused the theory to keep everything apart.

Across the country, development is now eating up 7000 acres a day. Florida has already lost half its wetlands. In Maryland, more land has been lost to development since 1976 than in the more than 350 years since Europeans first set foot there and began building. In Atlanta, during the 1990's, the population grew by 13 percent, but the amount of developed land increased by 50 percent. Development *per se* is not the culprit; it's the manner of that development that's committing great offenses.

We pay a price in dollars. In Houston and Georgia, for example, the average family spends about 22 percent of their annual income for transportation, more than \$8000 a year. Families in Detroit, Miami, Phoenix, Philadelphia and Minneapolis endure costs for transportation that are almost as high. The principal reason is that the places people live are so often disconnected from the places they work, play, and learn. The greater the amount of urban sprawl the more people pay for transportation. In a study of 28 metropolitan areas with sprawl problems, transportation costs for area residents grew by 8 percent a year from 1991 to 1998.

In addition, fast growing communities find that the explosion of development, particularly housing, has outstripped local budgets, causing substantial tax increases to pay for new infrastructure, public facilities, and schools. Ironically, even as people take on added costs for daily life, it also clear that the transportation resource made most available to them is heavily subsidized, encouraging its spread, and reducing choices.

We pay a price in time. The average commuter in Atlanta drives more than 34 miles a day to and from work. Commutes of two hours or more are commonplace in many metropolitan areas. Between 1980 and 1997, vehicle miles traveled increased by 68 percent. Fewer transportation choices mean more spent getting around, and less time for everything else. In 1996, according to the Texas Transportation Institute, traffic gridlock costs the average citizen 40 hours in traffic, while the nation lost \$74 billion in productivity and fuel efficiency. According to a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, suburban households drive 3300 more miles a year than urban dwellers.

We pay a price in human life. As the auto has become the predominant mode of getting to and from life's daily business, those who choose walking as their mode of travel have been placed at risk. Even as overall road fatalities have declined to the lowest point ever, for every hundred million miles traveled in this country, the fatality rate among vehicle drivers is 1.4, while for pedestrians it is 49.9.

### **Housing issues and the relationship to community growth**

For the provision of housing that can serve all economic and social strata, the pattern of urban and suburban development in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries has also had profound effect. Ideally, housing of various types, in sufficient supply, and at varying levels of affordability will be well woven into the fabric of a community's design. Ideally, it will also be spread proportionately across a region. But it is not. Fueled in part by both transportation practice and housing development decisions, communities are often strictly segregated by price and housing type, and largely by race and ethnicity. This pattern of separation is consistent with the theme of urban sprawl. In many cases, the cause is NIMBYism. In other cases, it is economic forces, driven by land costs and other interveners, such as certain regulations that laudably solve one problem and unhappily create another.

Neglect of affordable housing creates social dislocations such as overcrowding and labor supply problems. Older, urban areas have found that the great migration to the suburbs left many city dwellers behind in housing that could not be kept up and thus deteriorated, as manufacturing jobs dried up and the poor became the predominant urban residents. Housing became increasingly affordable but also increasingly bad. And now the inner rings of older cities are grappling with housing stocks that are over half a century old and whose preservation or replacement typically ends up in less affordable housing that previously existed.

Well-intentioned Federal programs applied the wrong solution, such as concentrating low-income people in frightfully dysfunctional environments, most apparent in the enormous, high-rise public housing projects of the 1960's. Cuts in funding to struggling cities as well as suburbs made things worse, as overcrowding, deterioration, crime, and social disintegration took hold of many sections of once thriving urban and inner suburban neighborhoods

As it has turned out, the outer suburbs have developed a substantial resource of housing for those of moderate and average incomes, but for the very poor, particularly in growing areas, the problems remained. For many new communities a sprawled pattern of development has increased their transportation costs and diminished the resources to provide housing that is affordable, decent, and suitable for particularly low-income people and those with special needs. Too much housing that doesn't pay for itself and inadequate public discretionary money to reduce the costs of public infrastructure and facilities has caused some communities to take drastic steps to curb housing production. This, in turn, has raised fears that a form of land rationing will depress the market for lower cost housing and increase housing costs overall. Since the jobs were located someplace else, as noted above, more costs have piled on families. The very public failure of some well-advertised public housing projects has resulted in great

reluctance among numerous suburban communities to accept housing that is publicly assisted--particularly those for families. Meanwhile, communities that have large amounts of affordable housing complain that they have taken in more than their "fair share."

Meanwhile, heavy subsidy costs substantially reduce the opportunities available to people at the lowest end of the income scale. Almost no low-income housing can be built without some form of financial or in-kind assistance or both. If such housing could be constructed unaided, it would have happened. And as housing that is affordable grows old, the cost of preserving it while keeping it as a resource for the people who live there can be financially very difficult. In many cases, the preservation of such housing actually displaces as many people as it assists. As many urban areas rejuvenate, land costs jump and affordable housing is even more difficult to develop. For those communities, both urban and suburban, that seek to address their affordable housing needs, a combination of direct and indirect subsidies is a necessity, with low-income housing tax credits producing the most number of renovated and newly constructed housing for people of modest incomes. However, despite funding increases in recent years, there are insufficient housing certificates/vouchers to go around and many landlords refuse to accept them because of real and perceived administrative burdens and low rent payments. Also, federal dollars are relatively scarce for programs like HOME and Community Development Block Grant Program, which suffered substantial cutbacks in the eighties and early nineties.

### **The complicated relationships between housing and transportation**

The public benefits when transportation and housing work cooperatively. Finding ways to accomplish a mutually supportive relationship between these two community drivers from a spatial, technical, practical, and politically feasible standpoint can have positive results. The results include less traffic congestion and air pollution, lower costs for both housing and transportation, lower labor costs for employers and reduced expenses for families, preservation of open space and heritage, mitigation of the jobs/housing mismatch, more efficient and environmentally-friendly land uses, and greater choices in development patterns, housing types, and transportation services.

At the same time, the value of linking successful affordable housing with efficient transportation choices should entail consideration of the relationship of housing and transportation to other important community concerns. These concerns include workforce development, education, social equity, careful land use, and environmental quality to name several of the most salient.

Yet numerous issues intervene, both positively and adversely, to affect the adequacy of affordable housing and the effectiveness of the transportation that should serve it. For one thing, transportation and housing planning proceeds along separate tracks. The procedure and the outlook of government structures abet this situation. As the eminent observer of the urban scene, Neal Pierce, has commented, people no longer live according to the traditional boundaries of cities or counties, states, and the federal government. Only government lives this way. Instead, people conduct their lives according to different boundaries--those of personal and business relationships that are found in one's neighborhood, across a region, and

within the international marketplace where the Internet has erased time and distance and knows no political boundary.

Because the programs, policies and laws that determine how both transportation and housing will function are the product of separate legislative committees and unconnected departments, the laws and regulations that govern them result in conflicts, competition, and confusion. The planning elements of each are often governed according to different standards and requirements. For example, different programs use different definitions of "low-income." In some cases, the standard is the poverty level. In other cases, it's the percentage of an area's median income.

Transportation is planned at both the regional and the local level, primarily by the public sector. Housing, on the other hand, is almost entirely a local and private affair. Housing development plays out block by block and neighborhood by neighborhood, aided in its planning only to the extent that a general land use plan points to where it may be developed, and the zoning sets the rules about the kind of housing that may be developed. There is virtually no such thing as a regional affordable housing plan.

Transportation development is mostly government funded and/or regulated, although the private sector contributes substantially as well. Because of its financial power, particularly in its ability to fund planning, transportation's decisions have material affect on a region's pattern of development. Housing is very dependent upon private sector funding, market forces, public attitudes, and consumer preferences that guide its location and its form. When developed and deployed wisely, transportation provides an intermodal, multimodal system. Housing development hardly reaches the status of a system. The processes that govern each take place according to different time schedules, and while both have rules for engaging their publics, the requirements are different. The way that their funding is designed and obtained is different as well--and the amount of money available from federal resources for transportation is many times that provided for housing.

Transportation is rigorously and properly bound by strict requirements aimed at cleaning the air, and no transportation plan can ultimately gain approval unless it can reasonably expect to be funded. Housing has no such "drivers," that guide and shape it, except the land use designations and zoning categories, which are very inconsistent from one jurisdiction to the next, and in some communities, obsolete. A zoning category originally designed in the 1960's to produce garden apartments for moderate income people, based largely on the number of units per acre that it permits, can forty years later be used to replace those apartments with million dollar town houses. This serves the zone's density interests, while neglecting the human quotient.

In short, the policy and practice of housing and transportation planning and development often don't connect and can deliver inconsistent, sometimes undesirable results. Land use patterns have tremendous impact on both affordable housing and transportation. Housing costs tend to rise closer to the central city because of the relative scarcity of reasonably priced land. In Arlington County, VA, a parcel of land can contain a \$250,000 house on a \$300,000, 5,000

square foot parcel. At the same time, transportation costs for individual families rise the farther they live from the central city. Studies in Portland, Oregon, a highly planned region with a  
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growth boundary limiting exurban development, showed that moving farther out reduced the monthly cost of residential lots and housing by about two dollars a mile, considerably cheaper than the additional transportation costs, in the short run. Yet some observers also note that auto travel is heavily subsidized, particularly through free parking options.

Conflicting goals also arise. To the extent that development is concentrated within areas already built up, surrounding open space can be preserved and more efficient transportation modes can be developed. Housing costs per acre can be lowered, too. But at the same time, the proposed greater development density planned for an already built-up area, particularly one that is already substantially residential, can rile existing homeowners who fear it will diminish their quality of life. They fear more traffic and higher crime rates, even though the consequences of the existing sprawled uses have already diminished the quality of life. Densely developed areas can also lead to higher costs for land as it anticipates greater profits per square foot of land, which can act as a barrier for low-income housing construction in such places in the absence of substantial subsidies.

Conflicts also arise between people who see affordable housing as an essential element of a caring, prosperous community, and others who see it as an intrusion that brings unwelcome change. The old notion of "fair share" housing is pretty much dead. Certainly, political issues play a large role in this deficiency, but so does practical policy. As noted above, housing, particularly affordable housing, is not planned regionally, because the processes are insufficient either require it or sufficiently encourage it.

And the principal bodies at the metropolitan levels, including the councils of government and the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), have often not engaged in comprehensive approaches to regional needs. There is little cross-walking between transportation and housing at the analytical and policy levels, even though consumers make such connections naturally as part of daily life, and even though the array of plans, such as HUD's Consolidated Planning Process and the Metropolitan Transportation Planning process, actually speak to these relationships. These plans and others specifically speak to the creation of linkages and coordination. The policy-makers intelligently saw the need. In practice, other forces intervene. For example, single-member election districts can result in funding allocations based more on political boundaries than need. They can also result in money spread so thinly among so many applicants that it cannot create the critical mass to make a substantial difference in any given place.

To the extent that housing arises as a regional concern (but, alas, not to the level of joint or cooperative land use planning), its focus is on the need to provide more of it in high cost areas and less of it in low cost areas.

Some of the large shifts in thinking about growth and development patterns in fast growth communities spring from the concern that cheap, lower-income townhouses do not generate sufficient revenue to cover the costs of public services such as public safety and schools.



Loudoun and Prince William Counties, in Virginia, two of the fastest growing communities in the nation, have experienced this phenomenon.

There is nothing in the general requirements for planning either transportation or affordable housing that truly and effectively directs the one to pay attention to the other as a matter of long-range policy and planning.

### **Public participation issues**

The public participation process that both transportation and housing planning require by law, falls short of its intent as a generator of new ideas and a brake on bad ones. Some metropolitan areas have earned only conditional approvals of their transportation plans due to issues involving the way that they engage their publics. At the same time, rules to implement federal law's requirement that state governments more closely involve rural constituencies in state transportation plans have not been implemented. Neither have regulations been implemented to bring about a more transparent portrayal of the way that money for transportation is actually spent. Environmental justice regulations enhancing the public participation process so that adversely impacting facilities could be mitigated or even averted have not been implemented as well.

It is also true that housing and transportation officials and staff often have little real knowledge of what the others' field has to offer. Many housing advocates, for example, have paid little attention to the tremendous amount of resources available in transportation programs. Such programs can have great, positive impact on revitalizing a lower-income community by funding essential activities that the lack of housing or community development block grant funding might otherwise cause to be neglected. For example, the Transportation Enhancement Program can help preserve historic structures and rehabilitate old abandoned train or bus facilities or mitigate water run off. The Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality program can build pedestrian sidewalks or biking facilities in connection with HOPE VI projects. Cross-training programs sponsored at the local and regional levels can aid immensely in the power of housing and transportation professionals to make more of each other's interests.

By the same token, technical assistance and training programs are needed to help local governments and regional bodies, particularly the decision-makers, to gain a much better grasp of the technical requirements of the planning processes that they charged with overseeing. While their decisions will take place on the higher plane of policy, to reach that plane requires a greater degree of technical knowledge than many currently possess. Easy to understand training manuals, seminars, and guidance from both HUD and DOT concerning the preparation of elected and appointed public officials to undertake their responsibilities would be important to the improvement of the process.

An important adjunct to training and technical assistance in the planning processes is better practical knowledge and involvement in the collection, sharing, and analysis of housing and transportation data both within and among jurisdictions. HUD, DOT, USDA, FEMA, and DOD recently collaborated in funding and guiding a project to address such needs. Carried out by the

American Planning Association, the “LBCS” project developed a comprehensive, yet flexible Land-based Classification System for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Included in current GIS software, this system enables jurisdictions to define the multiple characteristics of land, including activity, economic function, site development character, and ownership—all of which bear on the relationship between adequate, affordable, suitable housing and efficient, multi-modal, intermodal transportation. Widespread adoption of this tool has the potential for enhanced coordination for both housing and transportation among units of government.

Ultimately, culture changes are needed. Both transportation and housing serve larger interests than themselves. Housing and transportation officials and their many publics can raise their sense of transportation and housing beyond the bricks and mortar or concrete and steel that are often considered the heart of these programs--the projects that they build. Rather, these groups can more profitably dwell on the larger purposes of these programs and in the power they have to fulfill them. Their focus should be not building housing but creating homes, not just building roads but building communities, not just creating good projects but making people happy and secure.

### **Mitigating the consequences**

If changes are made in the way that we go about designing our communities, both housing and transportation will benefit, and so will our communities. For example, one study showed that if 25 million housing units were developed between 2000 and 2025 in a more efficient manner, more than 3 million acres of land could be preserved and more than 3000 miles of state roads would not have to be built. In addition, 4.7 million fewer water and sewer laterals would have to be provided, for a total savings of \$250 billion.

A 1998 survey for the real estate industry of 440 homebuyers in Arizona, California, Colorado, Texas and Florida indicated that 72 percent favored neighborhood development clustered around a town common or green, bordered by individual shops, civic buildings, churches, and other amenities, while only 29 percent favored strip malls.

Today, across the country, old lessons are being relearned and reapplied. Transportation planners and housing developers are exploring new ways to combine their interests. In many cases the actions aren't really new at all, just old lessons of community design and service that were discarded and now emerge as the best means of creating the places of the future. And their successes offer hope that we can undo some of the excesses of the last fifty years and restore some of the qualities of community life that have been lost, and that we can do so economically and sensibly.

In Hartford, Connecticut, the city is being reconnected with the Connecticut River through changes in transportation facilities and the reclamation of riverside. In Jefferson County, WV, urban growth boundaries have been established, which has drawn a new-mixed use, mixed-income, “new urbanism” design for a major residential/retail on the outskirts of the community of Charles Town. This project will prevent housing and strip mall sprawl. In Columbus, Ohio, the combination of the Linden Transportation Center in Columbus, OH, with a HOPE VI project

behind it, offers an excellent example of revitalization. Funded with Federal Transit Administration monies, the center helps anchor a redeveloping, revitalizing area that is building both public and private commercial and retail enterprises in a previously deteriorated, economically distressed area. The HOPE VI project brings new mixed-income housing, along with recreational and educational facilities to the area. The transit center also houses a day care facility and a bank, as it provides a centralized location for bus services. Other examples of best practices are noted at the end of the document.

In the end, both affordable housing and transportation have ample opportunities in the way they are planned and developed to leave communities worse than they found them. Yet both can bring people delight, comfort, prosperity, opportunity, neighborhood stability, and a return to more traditional community design values that make places desirable and fun to live in.

Taking advantage of what both transportation and housing have to offer the goal of more livable communities by reconciling critical points of conflict and differences is a challenge for the nation. Transportation and housing can become better partners in the way they are planned, programmed, and developed, and thus in how they affect the places in which each of us live.

### **KEY QUESTIONS CONSIDERED**

The following questions pertain to the issues of the acceptability of higher density, mixed-use development patterns, i.e. "smart growth," among residents whose areas would host such development; concerns about racial issues, fair housing, and environmental justice; and the extent to which the Congress should enact new requirements that bear on housing and transportation development. Each is addressed below:

#### **Acceptability of high density development**

Clearly, in a number of places such residents have objected to such development, fearing added traffic, less desirable newcomers, and other adverse conditions that they associate with urban centers. Yet more compact development has demonstrated in places all across the country that the feared adverse conditions need not materialize, and that in fact such development patterns can preserve open space, improve transportation, and create more livable communities. For higher density, mixed use development to succeed, planners and proponents should consider a number of steps that should be taken during a proposal's formative stages. These steps include:

- Inviting people into the process early, and use that process to create a collective vision for the future of their area. Ensure that the process is transparent.
- Reaching out to a wide circle of interests.
- Engaging in a broad planning exercise that takes into account a number of related factors.
- Developing zoning ordinances and land use plans that encourage development designs and features that people will find attractive and beneficial.
- Developing incentives for reducing the potential for traffic congestion. Working with developers and building owners to implement commuter choice options in return for reducing the number of parking spaces, which result in reduced auto use, while maintaining or enhancing access. Such incentives can be built into the zoning ordinances and into the site plan development process.

- Paying attention to good urban design and consider traditional development patterns that
- cluster and mix uses, and make people feel comfortable about their surroundings.
- Conducting marketing studies to ensure that the whatever is planned is feasible
- Communicating effectively and continually with constituents on the part of elected officials about proposed projects and new land use plans, and demonstrating leadership.
- Bearing in mind by citizens and private interests that at the end of the day elected officials have to cast a vote.

### **Race, fair housing, and environmental justice**

In a number of locales, divisions along racial and ethnic lines persist. Concerns also arise about the extent to which certain areas, often low-income and minority, do not receive their fair share of economic and social benefits (decent housing, parks, economic development, civil rights, and convenient transportation choices). Similarly, other concerns surround proposed projects that adjacent residents consider harmful to their communities, such as major transportation projects that disrupt neighborhoods or new housing developments that result in substantial displacement.

Discussions among task force members suggested that the Departments of Housing and Urban Development and Transportation can address these issues in part through better information about demographic patterns and the distribution of various economic and social initiatives and projects. For example, MPOs should take into account more effectively the relationship of transportation to the well being of low and moderate-income people. One means of doing this is to match the Transportation Improvement Program (the short-range plan developed for transportation projects by MPOs) to the demographic pattern in the region, in effect overlaying one on the other to see how projects and services relate to special populations. MPOs should use visual displays, either in hard copy or through computer tools, to show where their transportation projects are located and what the pattern of these projects as a whole look like in relation to built up areas. These displays can be directly related to HUD's 2020 program. This exercise can be enhanced with outcome measures that indicate how transportation projects and programs are serving minority and low-income neighborhoods. Such outcomes could entail travel times, proximity, and access.

### **Additional requirements**

Providing incentives instead of requirements is a repeating theme in promoting desirable and necessary change in the way we look at the functional relationships between transportation and housing development. Yet, it is clear that some things are not working effectively. The planning factors in TEA-21, for example, were designed to provide a framework for decision-making. In reality, they provide little guidance to decision-makers as to what actually gets planned. The Consolidated Planning Process was designed as a strategic planning process, but often does not function that way.

This report prefers incentives to encourage favorable activities in the use of federal and other funds for transportation and housing. It also recognizes that sometimes new, more specific law is sometimes called for to produce the desired result, to protect the public purse, and to ensure the results that the law truly intended. And as many local officials will quietly admit, in many cases

they are happy to identify the federal government as the source of a new requirement that they would otherwise have to adopt themselves.

## **POLICY RECOMMENDATION INTRODUCTION**

The Commission should focus on recommendations directed towards actions that Congress can take or encourage. Such recommendations below are denoted with a "C." Yet, there are numerous actions that the Executive Branch, lower levels of government, and the private sector can take as well. To establish some order, the recommendations have been grouped under specific categories according to different types of federal action, followed by a section on non-federal action. While the recommendations listed carry the expectation of adoption, no specific time frame for doing so exists. Clearly, they will have varying degrees of technical and political difficulty.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

Housing and transportation policy should be integrated to create communities that are more accessible, affordable and livable.

## **PRINCIPLES**

The following principles guide the recommendations that are listed at the end of this document:

1. Housing and transportation planning and policy should be integrated to improve the quality of life for all Americans.
2. Federal policy should provide incentives for housing, particularly mixed-income housing, to be located close to public transportation facilities and corridors.
3. Housing and transportation planning and policy should be coordinated to produce mixed-income, mixed-use communities to provide more transportation and housing choices.
4. Federal policy should encourage a multi-modal transportation system that serves people of all income levels and abilities.
5. Housing and transportation planning must be coordinated from a regional perspective while being receptive to local concerns. Coordination should also be encouraged within and between public agencies.
6. Public participation in the planning process is essential to respond to community needs and to sustain community support. Public agencies should actively solicit participation from traditionally under-served communities.
7. Federal policy should provide incentives to communities to revise or eliminate regulatory barriers that inhibit the emerging market for mixed-use, walkable communities.

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. New Congressional Actions

1. C Provide incentive funding to regional planning bodies, and other public entities and stakeholders that develop regional strategies for reducing their areas' concentrations of poverty, increasing the dispersion of affordable housing through inclusionary zoning practices, and mitigating the jobs/housing mismatch, which pertains to the difficulty that low-income people experience in living inordinate distances from their jobs because of the high cost of housing in job centers. **(1,2,3,4,5,7)**
2. Provide that State and metropolitan transportation planning more specifically spell out measures to that assess the needs of low and moderate-income people and that indicate how the proposed policies and projects address those needs.
  - a. Projects and services in Transportation Improvement Programs should be overlaid on regional maps that display the demographics of the region, including the concentration of low-income and minority communities and neighborhoods.
  - b. This recommendation can be aided by using such tools as the "Census Transportation Planning Package," a readily available government database, which portrays the number of residents who travel to work from one part of a region to another, and the American Planning Association's Land-Based Classification System. This GIS tool, which was funded by several federal agencies, including HUD, DOT, and EPA, is discussed on page 9 of the report. **(1, 2, 3, 4, 6)** *Little or no funding exists for regional efforts at promoting affordable housing. In addition, transportation outcomes that specifically benefit people of low and moderate incomes are not a well-developed part of the transportation planning process. This condition reduces the opportunities for using transportation dollars and services to address modest income household needs in a more coordinated fashion.*
3. C Promote transit-oriented development, particularly projects that include affordable housing, by allowing transit agencies to acquire with transportation funds excess land that can be used for housing development. **(1, 2, 3, 4, 7)**. *This change in law would facilitate transit-oriented development's ability to include affordable housing.*
4. C Reclaim brownfields through increased regulatory and financial incentives such as revolving loan funds, and the easing of regulations that place heavy cost burdens on new property owners who are not responsible for the contaminated state of the property they wish to reclaim. **(2, 7)** *Brownfields offer opportunities for new economic development on a site previously discarded. To the extent that brownfields reclamation takes advantage of urban designs that mix uses and include a range of household incomes, communities can increase the potential for properties that better contribute to community revitalization.*
5. C Provide incentives for location efficient mortgages, such as tax credits to employers who assist their employees in homebuying through such mortgages. **(1, 2, 3, 7)** *Location efficient mortgages encourage people to live close to transit, save money by reducing auto travel, and use those savings to qualify for a larger mortgage. The mortgage instrument is not yet fully accepted in the marketplace.*
6. C Provide a formal program of technical assistance to local and regional governing bodies and stakeholders on how to access and engage more effectively the transportation and

7. housing planning processes. **(6)** *Such an initiative will raise knowledge and awareness of decision-makers and stakeholders about the opportunities within the respective planning processes for achieving community goals, thereby increasing project effectiveness.*
8. **C a.** Establish financial incentives to localities and metropolitan areas that adopt affordable housing dwelling unit ordinances, zoning that permits transfers of development rights and encourages mixed-use development, and that deploy other effective tools to encourage more integrated growth and development patterns.
  - b.** One such incentive would be the use of USDOT's Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality Program in assisting development projects that demonstrate the mitigation of air pollution. Such use of CMAQ funds should be more commonplace. **(1, 2, 3, 7)** *This two-part recommendation provides a direct means of encouraging expanded planning and development tools for creating more livable, diverse communities that more effectively relate housing and transportation. Affordable dwelling unit ordinances, and other such tools, as noted above, address the jobs/housing mis-match, particularly in places with good transportation choices.*
9. Congress should authorize a federal grant program to provide funding and technical assistance to states and tribal governments for the development and revision of land use planning tools and statutes. **(1,2,3)** *Currently, more than half the states have planning-related statutes and procedures dating from the 1920s. Outmoded statutes do not facilitate a comprehensive, 21st century approach to planning that links housing and transportation. Statutory reform can foster such linkage in two significant ways: a) by reforming a state's procedures for planning (from hazard mitigation to infrastructure investments, etc.) and b) by enabling cities and counties to use innovative techniques.*

*Enabling legislation is needed in many states to permit such tools as incentive zoning for affordable housing, the transfer of development rights, and transit-oriented development. To assist states in evaluating reform options, the American Planning Association has worked with numerous public- and private-sector associations to produce the Growing Smart Legislative Guidebook, which provides commentary and optional statutory language on these and many other techniques, such as state and regional processes for fair share housing and procedures for reviewing developments of regional impact.*

## **B. Other Federal Actions – HUD Lead**

1. Establish a multi-faceted memorandum of agreement among the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Transportation, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, the Association of Local Housing Finance Agencies, and the National Council of State Housing Finance Agencies, and other appropriate groups, for the promotion of location efficient mortgages. **(1, 2, 3, 7)** *A formal, coordinated initiative should increase the availability and use of such a mortgage instrument within the financial marketplace.*
2. Strengthen the HUD Consolidated Planning Process by establishing more effective links between stated plan outcomes and the housing assistance and community development programs that the planning process covers.. *It has been pointed out that the Consolidated Plan has weak accountability provisions tying plans to performance. The deficiency in*

3. *accountability of outcome provisions not only affects affordable housing progress, but also reduces the value of the Consolidated Plan's requirement for including transportation needs.*

#### **C. Other Federal Actions – DOT lead**

1. As part of the public participation process, guidance should be issued to MPOs to include growth and development scenario planning in the development of long range metropolitan transportation plans, displaying the different ways that transportation facilities would be employed if growth and development were planned differently. (The “Envision Utah” approach is an excellent example of this tool. It employed a community visioning process based on alternative scenarios for growth in the Salt Lake City area. The project was funded by USDOT.) *The extent to which departmental guidance directs planning exercises that actually show alternative growth, community/housing development, and transportation service patterns would substantially aid local decision-making on such issues.*
2. U.S. DOT should identify and publicize examples of best practices among MPO's in focusing development in areas that reinforce existing transit and mitigate growth in Vehicle Miles Traveled. **(6)**
3. USDOT should promulgate regulations strengthening the metropolitan transportation planning process, particularly the public participation element, to ensure consultation between rural communities and State DOTs, and to provide a transparent means of portraying the amount and use of transportation dollars. **(6)** *Both of these measures are required by law but have not been implemented through regulation.*
4. The Federal Transit Administration should develop a training course to assist transit agencies, State DOTs, and others in implementing transit-oriented development **(1, 2, 3, 4, 5)** *Not every transit authority or agency is fully proficient in employing transit-oriented development and could use some outside technical assistance.*

#### **D. Other Federal Actions – HUD/ DOT partnership**

1. HUD and DOT should cooperatively establish a technical assistance and training program on their respective planning and program requirements. This program should include a guide to both transportation and housing programs and the agencies' respective planning processes. It should be targeted to elected and appointed officials at regional and local levels. **(1, 3, 6)** *Better knowledge and understanding of both agencies' programs and planning among various public and private practitioners can ensure more effective transportation and housing development. One area in which such training is needed is in the collection, sharing, and analysis of housing transportation data both within and among jurisdictions.*
2. In the absence of recommendation A6 above, HUD and USDOT should together establish a joint program of technical assistance and training to assist localities and regional bodies in accessing and using GIS-based planning tools to aid them and their constituents in long-range community growth and decision-making. The LBCS model, described more fully above, offers a promising tool in this regard. **(1 and 6)**
3. Increase research into the job/housing mismatch and the relationships among transportation, housing, community development, and land use. **(1, 3, 5, 6, 7)** *Better knowledge of these dynamics will help make both disciplines more effective.*



4. Implement a process that analyzes the State and Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process and the Consolidated Planning Process to determine their similarities and differences. Then use the information gained to retool both planning processes to improve their compatibility and the opportunities to use them cooperatively as planning tools. **(1, 3, 5, 6, 7)** *Examining the substantial differences and similarities between the two planning processes will immeasurably strengthen and enhance their effectiveness, particularly at a regional level.*
5. Issue guidance from both the Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development that directs Metropolitan transportation planning to take affordable housing development into account, while directing the Consolidated Planning Process to consider the availability and use of transportation facilities and service to support and enhance affordable housing development opportunities. **(1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)** *Such guidance will lead to a more cooperative relationship between the two planning processes, strengthening their ability to consider transportation and housing together from a regional perspective.*
6. HUD and DOT should together enhance and better coordinate federal efforts to promote the dissemination of "best practices" tools, guides, and other aids to state, regional, and local bodies, as well as non-public stakeholders to increase knowledge, awareness, and use of various design, planning, and development techniques that can improve communities. **(1, 6)** *This recommendation speaks to the power of coordination among federal agencies in sharing "best practices" in related housing and transportation planning as a means of encouraging more livable, affordable communities.*

#### **E. Other Actions--Non-federal**

1. States should establish statewide building codes, or, at a minimum, work with one another to establish compatible codes across multi-regional, and multi-state metropolitan areas in order to facilitate construction across regional lines and thereby reduce costs and confusion, and increase compliance.
2. Housing rehabilitation codes need reform, as accomplished in Maryland and New Jersey, to reduce unnecessary requirements that actually discourage rehabilitation.
3. Permitting times and procedures should be reduced, with the aid of "one-stop-shopping" arrangements and use of web-site information and applications.
4. States should establish funding priority areas, as does Maryland.
5. States should facilitate the use of bonus densities to encourage affordable housing.

#### **F. Best Practices Examples in Transportation and Housing Relationships** (from the National Governors Association's "New Community Design to the Rescue.")

##### Mission Bay, San Francisco, CA

This 303-acre property was redeveloped from old rail yards. It focuses on 31,000 jobs in 5 million square feet of commercial space and, 2.65 million square feet of university buildings, along with 6000 housing units (at 30 to the acre), including affordable units. It also contains parks and open space, a 43-acre life sciences building of the University of California at San Francisco and a walkable street layout.

### Crawford Square, Downtown Pittsburgh, PA

This property, covering 17.5 acres, was a deteriorated old African-American neighborhood that has been recovered with the help of substantial public and private involvement. The traditional design forms of narrow streets, homes with front porches, front yards, tree-lined sidewalks, and garages behind the homes have been retained. The planned and design elements developed from a community-based process. At final build out, the project will contain 550 units at 30 units per acre. One-third of the residents is original to the neighborhood. African-American households  
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occupy 80 percent of the dwellings. Thus, the traditional community would be maintained. The project has also sparked nearby economic development of both commercial and retail establishments. The city's business district and cultural attractions are only a five-minute walk away.

### Winchester Green, Richmond, VA

This project benefited from the substantial involvement of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation. This community revitalization non-profit organization invested in this 80-acre parcel in an inner suburb of Richmond, which had contained a large, dilapidated 1970's apartment complex. Today, it is a mixed-use, mixed-income, transit-oriented development. Included are 240 affordable units of townhouses and garden apartments, senior housing, a child care center, parks and green spaces, and a community center. New Urbanist and traditional neighborhood designs, including front porches on the single-family units and different housing styles are featured. The community was heavily involved in its future, and displacement from the original development was addressed.

### Orenco Station, Hillsboro, OR

This property is a nationally recognized success, located just outside of Portland, OR, on 200 acres. It is a transit-oriented project at the Westside light rail station in Orenco. The developer acquired the development in the 1980's. It was zoned for commercial use. In the 1990's, the property became the site of the Westside light rail line, and its zoning was changed to accommodate the town center style of development. The new development contains numerous amenities, including five acres of scattered pocket parks, as well as a central park, along with 27,000 square feet of street-level retail space, and 30,000 square feet of commercial space above it. The town center lies at the heart of high-tech employment on a well-traveled thoroughfare, lined in traditional style with homes with front-porches and backyard garages. Some of the properties have "granny" flats above them.

### Pentagon Row, Arlington, VA

On 18.5 acres of land, a developer took advantage of surrounding community assets such as an existing regional mall (the Pentagon City Fashion Center), the adjacent subway station, other

area retail facilities, an abundance of various housing types, and a major hotel to create new retail/housing streetscape. Overcoming neighbors' concerns, the project created a mixed-use neighborhood on ground that would have been occupied by four 16-18-story apartments. The project consists of 300,000 square feet of retail, carefully crafted to prevent big box retail operations, a central plaza/skating rink, 300,000 square feet of retail shops, and 500 housing units located above the shops. The parking is located to the rear of the stores between the new development and the parking garage of the Pentagon City Fashion Mall.

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## **RECOGNITION**

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