

Beyond Shelter: Building Communities of Opportunity



The United States
Report for Habitat II



U.S. Department of Housing
and Urban Development

The National Preparatory Committee

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I. Introduction

In June 1996, the United Nations will convene the Second Global Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul, Turkey.¹ Also known as the City Summit, Habitat II is the last of a series of global conferences that began with the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. The fundamental objective of the conference series has been to promote sustainable development—a paradigm that combines economic development, social prosperity, and environmental protection to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Habitat II focuses on the importance of sustainable urban development.

Throughout history, cities across the globe have been the cornerstone of societies. Cities are a prism for the genius of civilizations, where entrepreneurs hatch their schemes and find the markets and financing to bring them to fruition; where the elites of technology, industry, and the arts meet to brainstorm; and where deep shifts in culture and politics might begin with an unexpected encounter. As Lewis Mumford put it, "cities are a symbol of the possible."

But today, cities around the world face daunting challenges in this era of rapid urbanization. From New York to New Delhi, from Milan to Nairobi, from Vancouver to Sao Paulo, cities across the globe face challenges of economic development, poverty alleviation, job creation, affordable housing, fiscal stability, and the environment. In recognition of the global nature of these issues, the international community is convening Habitat II to develop an international policy framework for promoting communities that are economically, socially, and environmentally viable for the 21st century.

The City Summit comes at a time when many Americans have lost sight of the importance of our urban communities. Poor, largely minority, people have become concentrated in inner-city neighborhoods where education and job opportunities are severely limited. While many suburban areas are home to a thriving middle class, our

¹ The first Habitat conference took place in Vancouver, Canada, in July 1976.

inner cities, and increasingly, older suburban areas as well, have become home to the poorest households in America. But as this report will indicate, this vicious cycle of poverty concentration, social despair, and fiscal distress that plagues much of urban America today affects us all, no matter where we live.

The Clinton/Gore administration is committed to restoring opportunity for all Americans. All people should have access to decent, affordable housing in neighborhoods of their choice. All people should have access to the educational opportunities necessary to compete in rapidly changing job markets. All people should have an opportunity to take part in decisions that affect their lives. And all people should live in communities where businesses, households, and government make efficient use of land, energy, and other resources, allowing the area to achieve a high quality of life with minimal waste and environmental damage.

In recent years, there has been a great increase of community-building activity at the local level, not just within government, but also among private businesses and particularly among grassroots organizations. Recognizing the significant contribution of these local organizations, Habitat II embraces the principle of community empowerment, whereby national governments work in partnership with local governments, private firms, and the growing network of community-based organizations to develop locally crafted solutions to help the homeless, build and renovate housing, create jobs, increase homeownership, and protect the environment.

In the United States, the President's Community Empowerment Agenda is working to help our Nation's communities not with more bureaucracy, but with more opportunities. After years of overly prescriptive, top-down solutions from Washington, the Federal Government now recognizes the importance of local initiative consistent with standards of justice and equal opportunity for all citizens. Building strong communities is a national endeavor, requiring partnerships among the Federal, State, and local governments; community-based groups; private organizations; and individual citizens. Because localities know their own needs best, specific strategies for urban revitalization must reflect community-based planning and decisionmaking if they are to achieve lasting results. Better solutions will come when those who live the problem plan with others who have a common stake in its solution not because it is an abstract mission, but because it is a personal concern.

As we work to empower communities and individuals, the administration's commitment to help those most in need will remain steadfast and strong. The Federal Government always will have an essential and appropriate role in upholding national ideals that may be difficult to sustain locally, especially with regard to fighting discrimination and providing a voice for

the most vulnerable among us. The Federal Government always will have a fundamental responsibility to create a framework of supports, incentives, and clear rules so people can help themselves and lift themselves beyond governmental assistance. By targeting its resources, the Federal Government injects public capital to produce infrastructure and services that attract private investment. While fiscal constraints in Washington make the effort more difficult, the Federal Government always will play a leadership role in the national community-building endeavor.

Participants at the Istanbul conference will develop the Habitat Agenda, which will establish an international framework for building strong cities in the 21st century by promoting policies that address critical issues, including discrimination in housing and credit markets; access to jobs and transportation; clean air and water; and protection of the urban environment. The plan also will focus on how governments can work in partnership with the private sector and the growing network of community-based organizations to develop locally crafted solutions that reflect local priorities and concerns.

In the United States, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), in cooperation with other Federal agencies and the National Preparatory Committee for Habitat II, has developed this report to address many of these same issues but in a domestic context.² *Beyond Shelter: Building Communities of Opportunity* is intended to provoke thought, stimulate discourse, and inspire action among those who are or should be concerned about the future of America's urban communities. The recommendations in this report apply not only to State and local governments, but also to citizens, community-based groups, colleges and universities, and the private sector, because government by itself cannot overcome apathy, spur innovation, or inspire renewed commitment to the values of family, work, responsibility, and civic engagement.

Make no mistake about it, the problems facing our cities will not be solved overnight. Ending the isolation and despair of distressed urban communities and restoring our cities to their historic role as engines of opportunity are ambitious, long-term goals. In no way does the Federal Government purport to have all of the answers to the challenges facing urban America. Nor will the Istanbul conference provide a magic elixir for the challenges facing cities across the globe. Habitat II is the beginning of a new era of sharing ideas about how the public, private, and community-based sectors can work together to strengthen our cities.

² Comprised of more than 50 leaders from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, the National Preparatory Committee has advised HUD on domestic preparations for Habitat II.

Community Building Principles

In the effort to restore hope and opportunity for all Americans, the Federal Government maintains the following core tenets of community building:

- Our objective is to build not just housing units, but neighborhoods; not just construct schools, but educate children; not just raise income, but create beauty and end the poisoning of our environment.
- To achieve our vision of developing strong, sustainable urban communities, some things must grow—jobs, productivity, wages, capital and savings, profits, information, knowledge, and education; others—pollution, waste, and poverty—must not.
- The vicious cycle of poverty concentration, social despair, and fiscal distress that plagues much of urban America today weakens the ability of metropolitan regions to compete in the global economy.
- Poor communities represent an untapped economic opportunity for the whole country, and while we work together to open foreign markets to American-made goods and services, we also need to work together to open the economic frontiers of poor communities here at home.
- The role of social safety net programs is not to maintain individuals, families, or communities in perpetual dependence, but to create a framework of supports, incentives, and clear rules so people can help themselves and lift themselves beyond governmental assistance.
- Better solutions will come when those who live the problem plan with others who have a common stake in its solution, not because it is an abstract mission but because it is a personal concern.
- The job of strengthening communities will not be advanced measurably by replacing Washington bureaucracies with 50 State bureaucracies that can be equally rigid and unresponsive. Decentralization and devolution that are meaningful to the American people will give them tools in their communities, in the places where they live and where they can do something about their jobs, children, schools, and safety.
- Using modern technology, it is now possible to bring national resources to communities in ways that are driven by goals, plans, and strategies of the communities themselves, and we can do this with greater efficiency, with less waste, and with a clear eye on taxpayer dollars.
- The Federal Government has an essential and appropriate role in upholding national ideals that may be difficult to sustain locally, especially with regard to fighting discrimination and providing a voice for the most vulnerable among us.
- America is not a developing country where the poor are many and the middle class are few. In America, the middle class are many and the poor are few. Our Nation has the capacity to end the isolation of the poor and to address the decline of our urban communities; now we must develop the will.

II. Cities in America

The Foundation of Our Nation

While the rest of the world is in the process of becoming more urbanized, the United States has already become an urban Nation. Between 1950 and 1990, the U.S. metropolitan population more than doubled to reach a total of 192.7 million. Today, 8 out of 10 Americans live in 1 of 330 metropolitan areas, and more than half live in the 39 metropolitan areas with populations of 1 million or more.³ At the core of these metropolitan regions are America's cities, which serve as the lifeline of our society.

America's cities are the center of the social and cultural life of our Nation. Cities are where people of different cultures and languages meet, mix, and work together. America's great cities harbor and nurture our innovative genius. Science and technology, art and fashion, entertainment, research, and higher education—all of these activities flourish in the creative ferment of urban America.

America's urban centers have also long been a primary source of the Nation's economic wealth and progress. Cities are headquarters for many of the factories, laboratories, and offices that form the foundation of our economy. Moreover, they are centers of banking and commerce that generate investment for the future. Central cities are still home to more than 40 percent of the people and almost half of the jobs in America's metropolitan regions.⁴

Driven by their central cities, metropolitan regions that transcend municipal boundaries, and even State lines, have become the building blocks of the national economy. It is said that America is becoming a common market of regional economies where cities and suburbs are partners in an interregional competition to sell goods and services in national and global markets. In today's global economy, competition is no longer among localities but among metropolitan

³ Henry R. Richmond, "Rationale and Program Design," National Land Policy Institute, June 1994, p. 3.

⁴ Peter Mieszkowski and Edwin S. Mills, "The Causes of Metropolitan Suburbanization," in *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (1993): 135-148.

regions around the world; Detroit's main competition is not suburban Macomb County but the regions of Baden-Wurtemberg in Germany and Kyushu in Japan.

The Challenges of Our Urban Areas

Despite the economic and social importance of cities, they face enormous challenges. All types of communities address issues related to crime, poverty alleviation, economic development, job training, public health, affordable housing, barriers to residential mobility, fiscal stress, and the environment. But many cities face these issues at an elevated level because of the intense concentration of poor households and an eroding tax base.

What follows is not meant to be an exhaustive list of the challenges facing our urban communities, but a discussion of several fundamental issues that our Nation must address.

Economic and Social Life in America's Cities

Fast moving, powerful forces worldwide have disrupted long-established patterns of economic activity and social organization in every country, including the United States. Global competition and technological innovation are restructuring the U.S. economy, and well paying jobs for those with less than a college education are vanishing, especially in cities. As manufacturing employment has left urban cores for suburban, rural, and even foreign locations, less-skilled workers in inner-city communities are without jobs and incomes.

Manufacturing traditionally provided relatively good jobs for people with modest skills. These jobs carried with them middle-class wages and benefits that increased steadily from the 1940's onward. But after World War II, more manufacturing jobs left the central cities, as Table 1 illustrates, and relocated in the suburbs because land was cheaper, transportation of goods was easier, skilled labor was available, and markets were growing. With the decline of manufacturing and the rise of the service sector, many middle-income workers found themselves in lower paying jobs in other industries and in other professions. Cities specializing in manufacturing—many in the Northeast and the Midwest—suffered serious employment loss as a result of this decline.

Widespread migration to the suburbs has compounded the urban crisis. During the 1980's, the growth rate of the suburban population was 16.1 percent—triple the rate in central cities.⁵ The image of suburbs as a homogeneous set of bedroom communities with commuters leaving each morning for jobs in the central cities has been replaced by the reality that suburbs have transformed themselves into more diversified places.

As upwardly mobile families left central cities for the suburbs, poor, largely minority, people have become concentrated in inner-city neighborhoods where education and job opportunities are severely limited. Today, stark contrasts in income now exist between the central cities and their surrounding suburbs. In 1990, the overall poverty rate in America's suburbs was slightly more than 8 percent, compared to 18 percent in central cities. Moreover, 26 percent of all urban children live in poverty, compared to 11 percent of suburban children⁶ and, as Table 2 illustrates, conditions in America's urban communities relating to job and income access have only gotten worse over time.

Poverty is further concentrated in certain distressed inner-city neighborhoods, and each decade, the problem seems to be getting worse. In 1990, 11 percent of the population of the 100 largest cities lived in extreme poverty census tracts—those with more than 40 percent poverty—compared with 8 percent in 1980 and 5 percent in 1970.⁷ Conditions for disadvantaged households living in these urban areas are bleak:

- More than half of all adults have less than a high school education, compared to 20 percent of adults in other urban neighborhoods.
- More than 40 percent of working age males, ages 16 to 64, were unemployed in 1993, compared with just over 19 percent in other urban neighborhoods.
- One in three households receive welfare benefits, compared to only 11 percent of all urban households.

Cities cannot prosper under these conditions. The problems associated with urban poverty tend to increase per capita expenditures not just for welfare-related services, but for all services including health care, police, fire, education, and others. Resulting public sector costs and budget squeezes are forcing cutbacks in expenditures for the poor and the non-poor alike. Reduced quality of life and increased tax burdens induce businesses and middle-income households to leave cities, generating a downward spiral in economic and social conditions.

This downward spiral eventually overwhelms the ability of a community to deal with these mutually reinforcing problems. As a result, many distressed

5 Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers University, "State of the Nation's Cities," draft, January 1996, p. 31.

6 William H. Frey and Elaine L. Fielding, "Changing Urban Populations: Regional Restructuring, Racial Polarization, and Poverty Concentration," *Cityscape*, 2, July 1995, p. 39-66.

7 John Kasarda, "Inner-City Concentrated Poverty and Neighborhood Distress: 1970 to 1990," *Housing Policy Debate*, 4 (1993), p. 253-302.

Table 1**Changing Employment Patterns for U.S. and Three Large Cities**

	Number of Jobs (Thousands)				Percent of Total			
	1953	1970	1980	1989	1953	1970	1980	1989
U.S. Total	50,202	70,880	90,406	107,895	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Services	13,786	19,708	28,196	39,200	27.5	27.8	31.2	36.3
Manufacturing	20,208	22,955	24,631	24,562	40.2	32.4	27.2	22.8
New York	2,977	3,350	2,866	2,048	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Services	990	1,596	1,616	1,422	33.3	47.6	56.4	69.4
Manufacturing	1,176	971	650	268	39.5	29.0	22.7	13.1
Philadelphia	788	772	628	614	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Services	183	301	323	365	23.2	39.0	51.4	59.4
Manufacturing	398	291	171	111	50.5	37.7	27.2	18.1
Boston	402	465	437	520	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Services	138	249	278	382	34.3	53.5	63.6	73.5
Manufacturing	130	105	77	53	32.3	22.6	17.6	10.2

Sources: Council of Economic Advisers, *Economic Report of the President*, February 1995; and Keith R. Ihlanfeldt, *The Importance of the Central City to the Regional and National Economy: A Review of the Arguments and Empirical Evidence*, Unpublished Manuscript, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, December 1994.

Table 2**Vital Statistics for 94 Large U.S. Cities, 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1990**

Item	1960	1970	1980	1990
Population as Percent of U.S.	26.1%	22.5%	20.9%	20.1%
Percent Minority Population	18.9	24.1	37.1	40.1
Unemployment Rate	5.5	4.7	7.3	8.1
Percent Employed in Manufacturing	25.3	22.1	17.4	14.0
Percent Did Not Graduate High School	58.7	48.8	42.2	27.9
Dependent Ratio ^a	37.8	37.1	32.9	32.9
Median Family Income as Percent of U.S. Median Family Income	106.7	100.4	92.6	87.5
Family Poverty Rate	17.2	11.0	13.6	15.1
Percent Population in Census Tracts With More than 40% Poverty	8.0	5.1	8.1	10.8
Female Headed Families With Own Children as Percent of All Families	7.9	10.4	13.8	14.5

^a Ratio of population less than 15 and greater than 64 years of age to total population. Source: U.S. Census data for 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1990, as compiled by John D. Kasarda, Urban Underclass Database Machine Readable Files, Social Science Research Council, New York, 1992 and 1993 (except as noted). Calculations by HUD.

communities suffer from a depletion of social capital—the networks, norms, trust, and other features of social life—that enable citizens to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives. According to the Committee for Economic Development, an independent research and policy organization of business leaders and educators, indications of the decline of social capital in distressed communities abound:

- Poor urban parents disproportionately report that groups supporting youth development, such as scout troops, organized sports, religious activities, and special classes, are not readily available for their children.
- People living in neighborhoods of concentrated poverty, including those who are not employed, single women heads of households, elderly persons, disabled individuals, immigrants, abandoned children, and homeless persons, are often socially isolated and generally have more limited social networks to rely on for practical advice.
- In one study of inner-city Boston, fewer than 30 percent of inner-city teenagers reported that they “know well” persons in professional occupations, and 50 percent reported knowing of no such persons in their neighborhood.⁸

Although civic engagement has declined among households of all income levels, people with lower incomes and those who feel financially strapped are somewhat less engaged in community life and somewhat less trusting than those who are better off.⁹ But resident participation in community institutions and services, robust informal and interpersonal relations, and strong personal and occupational role models are all important elements in building strong communities. Social capital in itself is not enough to build strong urban communities, but it is an essential prerequisite in the revitalization effort.

Decent and Affordable Housing

Most Americans are among the best housed persons in the world. This success results from an unparalleled orchestration of the private market, community-based efforts, and national economic and housing policies. There are federally insured mortgages, a federally supported home loan banking system, building codes, zoning and land use laws, water and sewer programs, housing codes, fair housing laws, mortgage interest deductions for homeowners, low-income housing assistance programs, eviction standards to guarantee security of tenure, and programs to rebuild and improve neighborhoods. However, the goal of a decent home

⁸ Committee for Economic Development, *Rebuilding Inner-City Communities: A New Approach to the Nation's Urban Crisis*, New York, 1995, p. 15.

⁹ Committee for Economic Development, p. 16.

in a suitable living environment for every American family, which was first articulated in the National Housing Act of 1949, has remained elusive for far too many Americans.

The primary housing problem in the U.S. today is not an inadequate supply of decent housing, but lagging affordability due to stagnant incomes and rising housing costs. Decent quality housing is widely available but remains unaffordable for many households. For example:

- Persistently high rents have made gross rent burden (gross rent as a percent of household income) the most pressing problem for renters. From 1970 to 1994, the median income of renter households fell by 16 percent to \$15,814, while gross rents increased more than 11 percent to \$403. This represents the third highest burden recorded in more than two decades.¹⁰
- The rent burdens of low-income households are even more severe. Between 1991 and 1993, the number of households with acute housing needs—very low-income households that pay more than 50 percent of income for rent or live in substandard housing—increased by almost 400,000 households to 5.3 million. For more than four out of five of these households, affordability was the only issue. As Figure 1 illustrates, affordability is an especially serious problem for very low-income rental households with children.¹¹
- Because of their extremely low income, many people with disabilities have special difficulty securing adequate and affordable housing. Many disabled persons live with aging parents or in nursing homes, while others are in institutions or even homeless. A fortunate minority receive rental subsidies that permit them to live in the housing and community of their choice. But, in the U.S. in 1990 and 1991, people with disabilities were the most likely to live in severely inadequate housing and, according to 1995 HUD data, they have the lowest incomes of any group receiving Federal housing assistance.¹²
- Homeownership has slipped increasingly out of reach for many Americans, especially for low-income and minority households. While 37 percent of very low-income families with children owned their home in 1979, only 29 percent of families in this income group were homeowners by 1989. Moreover, data from 1993 indicate that only 43 percent of all African-American households and 40 percent of all Hispanic households were homeowners, compared with 70 percent of all white non-Hispanic households.¹³

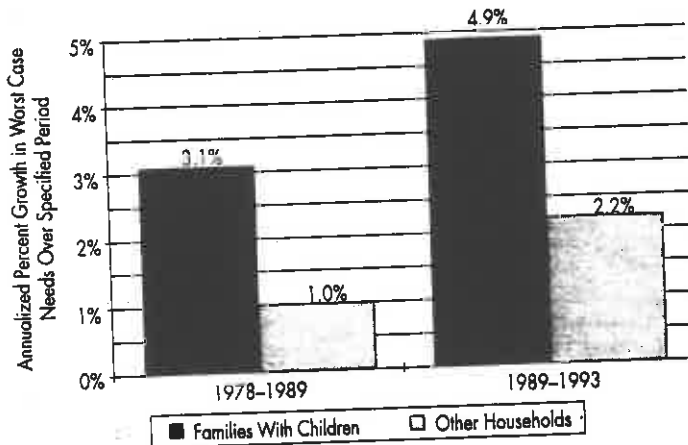
10 *State of the Nation's Housing: 1995*, Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University, p. 18.

11 *Rental Housing at a Crossroads: A Report to Congress on Worst Case Housing Needs*, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, March 1996, p. 9-11.

12 *Rental Assistance at a Crossroads: A Report to Congress on Worst Case Housing Needs*, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, March 1996.

Figure 1

Acute Needs Have Consistently Grown Much Faster for Very Low-Income Families With Children Than for Other Very Low-Income Renters



Source: HUD-PD&R tabulations from the Annual and American Housing Surveys

Discrimination in housing markets further aggravates the problem of families trying to obtain decent, affordable shelter in America. Discrimination denies minority families full and free choice about where to live while starving many minority neighborhoods of the services and resources that they need to thrive and grow. It limits access to affordable housing for families with children, and it prevents disabled people from living independently and productively in our communities.

More than a quarter century after the passage of the Fair Housing Act, minority homeseekers routinely face discrimination when they search for housing. They are told about fewer available units than comparable white homeseekers, provided with less information and assistance, and steered away from affluent white neighborhoods. In 1991, research found that African-American and Hispanic homebuyers were treated less favorably than non-Hispanic whites of comparable occupation and income one out of every two times they visited a real estate agent to inquire about houses advertised for sale in local newspapers.¹⁴

13 *The National Homeownership Strategy: Partners in the American Dream*, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, May 1995, p. 1-7.

14 Margery Austin Turner, Raymond J. Struyk, and John Yinger, *Housing Discrimination Study: Synthesis*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1991.

Finally, homelessness is one of the most serious housing-related problems in America. While estimates vary depending on the definition and method of measurement, some studies indicate that the number of homeless persons is greater now than at any time since the Great Depression. The demographics of the homeless are also changing: while there are fewer elderly homeless, women and children represent a higher proportion of the new homeless.

There are two broad, sometimes overlapping, clusters of problems that cause homelessness: 1) crisis poverty, including devastating changes in the job and housing markets, or family situations that push people into the streets; and 2) chronic and often untreated disabilities. A recent study by the Urban Institute found that more than half of the homeless population suffers from a drug or alcohol problem, and at least one-third suffers from mental illness. In addition, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, and crack cocaine addiction have complicated the effort to reduce homelessness.¹⁵

The Urban Environment

Thriving cities are those that not only enjoy economic prosperity and provide social opportunity, but also have clean air, safe drinking water, and green public spaces. Our Nation is blessed with an abundance of natural resources that provide both the foundation for its powerful and vibrant economy and serve as the source of aesthetic inspiration and spiritual sustenance for many. Continued prosperity depends on our ability to protect this natural heritage and learn to use it in ways that do not diminish it.

America has seen significant improvements in air and water quality in recent years, while understanding of the challenges posed by contaminated land and solid waste has increased. Exposure to lead and lack of access to environmental amenities are major issues. In addition, policymakers are moving beyond looking at environmental protection in isolation and towards a more holistic approach that considers issues in the context of the community's economic and social conditions.

While these changes represent real progress, challenges remain. In their roles as engines of economic growth, urban areas are both consumers and producers. Not surprisingly, our urban areas use the most fuel, generate the most waste and air pollutants, and consume too much agricultural land and wetlands due to poor land use management. In general, cities are the main causes of ecological contamination and decline.

¹⁵ Martha Burt and Barbara Cohen, *America's Homeless*, Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Report, 1993, 89-3.

Past and current development patterns are a primary factor in the current state of the urban environment. Metropolitan regions now extend across large areas of land; acreage in new development has been increasing 86 to 100 times faster than the population in Chicago, New York, the Washington, D.C.-Baltimore region, Dallas-Fort Worth, Atlanta, San Francisco, and other regions.¹⁶ Some of this uncontrolled growth resulted from well-intentioned Federal policies, including the development of the interstate highway system and historical underwriting guidelines set by the Federal Housing Administration. The expansion of metropolitan areas, conversion of farmland and natural areas to residential use, and heavy use of the automobile that accompanied traditional development patterns have imposed increased stress on the environment and natural resources. For example:

- Automobile traffic and high energy consumption continue to threaten air quality in urban areas. Across the Nation, more than 59 million people—almost 25 percent of the U.S. population—still live in areas where pollution levels exceed U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards (see Table 3). Although emissions per mile have decreased over the last 10 years, vehicle miles traveled continues to rise.
- Untreated combined sewer and stormwater runoff pollute local waters and pose health risks for 43 million people in 1,100 communities across the Nation. There are roughly 50 to 80 overflow events per year causing an estimated 1.2 trillion gallons of untreated sewage, industrial wastes, and urban runoff annually.
- Brownfields—contaminated, underused, or abandoned formerly industrial or commercial sites—pose serious problems for cities because they can further degrade the environment and represent precious lost opportunities to bring back jobs and a tax base to the inner city. While the exact scale of the brownfields problem is unknown, EPA estimates that the number of contaminated sites ranges from 100,000 to 500,000, of which 27 percent are located in urban areas.¹⁷

The problems of the urban environment have a disproportionately large impact on residents of distressed urban communities. As poor people are becoming increasingly concentrated in inner cities and other isolated communities, these places have literally become dumping grounds for the waste of wealthier communities. For example, all of the hazardous waste

¹⁶ Richmond, p. 7.

¹⁷ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

generated in eight southern States is disposed of in two landfills located in mostly African-American communities. All 3 of California's commercial hazardous waste sites are located in mostly Latino communities, and more than 100 proposals have been made for locating garbage dumps, landfills, and low-level nuclear waste storage facilities on the reservations of Native Americans.¹⁸

Table 3

1993 Air Quality Statistics for 10 Selected Cities

Metro Area	Carbon Monoxide	Lead	Nitrogen Dioxide	Ozone	Particulates (daily)	Sulphur Dioxide (daily)
NAAQS ^a	9	1.5	0.053	0.12	150	0.14
New York	7	0.16	0.043	0.12	86	0.052
Los Angeles	14	0.11	0.05	0.25	102	0.014
Chicago	6	0.65	0.031	0.11	147	0.065
Philadelphia	7	11.2	0.035	0.14	531	0.044
Detroit	6	0.05	0.022	0.12	113	0.045
Washington	8	0.03	0.029	0.13	66	0.029
Houston	7	0.02	0.024	0.2	89	0.036
Boston	5	0.03	0.034	0.13	86	0.044
Atlanta	5	0.02	0.025	0.16	77	0.044
Dallas	5	0.99	0.017	0.14	74	0.011

^a NAAQS is the National Ambient Air Quality Standard, used as a threshold for the hazardous level.

Figures for carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and sulphur dioxide reflect parts per million. Figures for lead, ozone, and particulates reflect micrograms per cubic meter. Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 1995.

¹⁸ Henry G. Cisneros, *Urban Poverty and Urban Environment*, Speech to the Second Annual World Bank Conference on Environmentally Sustainable Development, September 1994.

The Future of Our Nation

America cannot afford to ignore the challenges facing our cities. The vicious cycle of poverty concentration, social despair, and fiscal distress that challenges much of urban America today weakens our Nation's economic health and undermines the ability of metropolitan regions to compete in the global economy. Moreover, the isolation of poor, largely minority, households in distressed, high-poverty neighborhoods saps America's spirit, weakening the bonds of trust and common purpose. If these problems continue to go unaddressed, our Nation's future could be severely compromised, both economically and socially, in ways that we are only beginning to understand.

Metropolitan economies need strong central cities to prosper. Considerable research now documents strong statistical relationships between metropolitan economic performance and city-suburban disparities. For example, data on 56 large metropolitan regions show a strong correlation between metropolitanwide employment growth and the economic health of central cities relative to suburbs. More specifically, employment grew most where income disparities between central city and suburb were lowest. Although the evidence of a causal connection is not yet conclusive, there are strong reasons to believe that the social and fiscal distress of high-poverty central cities impedes the growth of the specialized producer service activities that drive metropolitan economies.¹⁹

The distress and decline in high poverty areas does not confine itself to the central city but gradually spreads out to affect suburban areas as well. For example, in Lakewood, Ohio—one of Cleveland's oldest suburbs—population declined dramatically from 70,000 in 1980 to 60,000 in 1990. Today, nearly 10 percent of its residents receive welfare assistance of some kind, and the community is experiencing an increase in teen pregnancies and juvenile crime.²⁰ Lakewood and other "inner-suburbs" illustrate how older suburbs and even some edge cities increasingly find themselves in competition with newer areas of development that attract more affluent families, retail centers, and jobs.

Inner-city blight also undermines the fiscal and operational health of our Nation's cities. Distressed neighborhoods contribute little to a city's tax base yet impose heavy demands on public services. All of the Nation's taxpayers pay for the problems of distressed inner cities through increased

19 For example, see Larry C. Ledebur and William R. Barnes: "Toward a New Political Economy of Metropolitan Regions," *Government and Policy*, Vol. 9, 1993, p. 127-141; *All In It Together: Cities, Suburbs, and Local Economic Regions*, Washington, D.C.: National League of Cities, 1993.

20 Karen DeWitt, "Aging Towns Gains Cities' Problems," in *New York Times*, February 26, 1995, p. A18.

government expenditures for welfare, law enforcement, social services, and remedial education. Additional costs accrue to all consumers in the form of higher costs for security, tuition for private schools, and higher prices for goods and services that reflect increased costs of doing business in these communities. One estimate of the damage to large urban economies from crime alone is \$50 billion annually, and special Federal expenditures for inner cities add another \$75 billion.²¹

Inner-city abandonment also saps the Nation's human resources. According to the 1992 National Assessment of Educational Progress, three-quarters of first graders in disadvantaged areas were reading below basic skill levels, and less than 6 percent were rated as proficient or advanced. Many of these future adults emerge from inner-city schools with inadequate educational preparation, as reflected in staggering rates of functional illiteracy and school dropout rates of 80 percent. Considering that the 50 largest inner-city school systems are now responsible for educating nearly 40 percent of the Nation's African-American children, 32 percent of its Latino children, and 36 percent of its students with limited English proficiency, the implications for a productive work force in the 21st century are alarming.²²

Finally, the isolation of distressed urban neighborhoods and de facto segregation conflict with our national ideals. Equal opportunity is a fundamental principle of American society and a right of all people. Extreme disparity in economic and social opportunity between persons in one segment of American society and another, or between one part of a metropolitan area and another, conflict harshly with this principle.

The challenges of urban America today are severe and their potential consequences are frightening, but these problems are by no means insurmountable. America is not a developing Nation where the poor are many and the middle class are few. In America the middle class are many and the poor are few. This country has the capacity to end the isolation of the poor and to address the decline of central cities. Now we must develop the will. The future of our Nation depends on the future of our cities.

21 Committee for Economic Development, p. 3.

22 Committee for Economic Development, p. 2.

III. Cities in the 21st Century

The Clinton administration is committed to the goal of achieving economically, socially, and environmentally thriving urban communities in the 21st century. All people should have access to decent, affordable housing in safe neighborhoods. All people should have access to the educational opportunities necessary to compete in rapidly changing job markets. All people should have an opportunity to take part in decisions that affect their lives. And all people should live in communities where businesses, households, and government make more efficient use of land, energy, and other resources, allowing the area to achieve a high quality of life with minimal waste and environmental damage.

Because the problems of our cities affect us all no matter where we live, building sustainable urban communities is a shared responsibility. The information that follows reflects strategies that government at all levels, the private sector, and the growing network of community-based organizations can adopt to strengthen America's cities.

Promoting Locally-Crafted Solutions

"For a long time, the government really thought that if we just had a solution designed here in Washington that was properly funded, we could solve the problems of every community in the country... We learned that wasn't true. There needs to be a new partnership between Washington and the communities and individuals of this country... There needs to be a way of doing business in which we try to create conditions in which people can seize opportunities for themselves."

*President Bill Clinton
July 1995*

For years, a proliferation of Federal programs, complex regulations, and cumbersome bureaucratic procedures has limited the ability of communities to solve their own problems. Federal efforts to renovate housing, control crime and drugs, and increase employment have treated residents as passive clients and failed to adequately involve

them in these problem-solving efforts. Failure to enlist local institutions and citizens, especially the women who play a unique leadership role in these communities, as partners in the decision-making process has left essential resources untapped, ignored local priorities, and missed opportunities to strengthen communities' own problem-solving capacities.

But the days of national solutions from top-heavy bureaucracies are over. Better solutions will come when those who live the problem plan with others who have a common stake in its solution—not because it is an abstract mission, but because it is a personal concern. Because the Federal Government cannot possibly know what is best for each of America's diverse regions and communities, it best serves as a catalyst and enabler of change, not as its planner and implementor. The role of the Federal Government is to support local actors in their efforts to design and implement locally-crafted solutions that reflect local circumstances and needs, but that are consistent with national ideals such as fairness and equity.

The Federal Commitment

Because local organizations have a first-hand understanding of the issues facing their communities, the President's Community Empowerment Agenda aims to provide local decision-makers with maximum flexibility to use scarce Federal resources in a manner consistent with national priorities. The Federal Government is promoting comprehensive planning and collaboration at the local level in a number of ways.

Local initiative is the cornerstone of President Clinton's Empowerment Zone and Enterprise Community (EZ/EC) program. The program, which is overseen by Vice President Gore and the Community Empowerment Board, is providing distressed communities with approximately \$2.5 billion in tax incentives and another \$1.3 billion in flexible grants to help bring capital back to the central city, create jobs within distressed neighborhoods, invest in education and training, and link residents to economic opportunity throughout the metropolitan region. Through this initiative, communities that plan comprehensively and strategically for real change will receive Federal waivers to reduce or eliminate burdensome regulations whenever possible and assistance to make Federal programs responsive to their strategic plans. By encouraging communities and individuals to participate in the democratic process and work together to solve problems, the EZ/EC initiative is breathing new life into struggling communities.

The Federal Government also is strengthening the capacity and impact of community development corporations (CDCs) at the local level. Through the National Community Development Initiative (NCDI), HUD is working in partnership with 10 major national corporations and foundations to provide financial support to CDCs engaged in locally-driven efforts to turn

Beyond Shelter: Helping Homeless Families Help Themselves

The Los Angeles based Beyond Shelter initiative is a dramatic new response to the problem of family homelessness that stresses immediate return of families to independent living. The project was founded in 1988 as a response to the growing number of homeless families in Los Angeles County, California, and as an alternative to traditional practices that emphasize shelters and transitional housing. Estimates suggest that 35 percent of the general homeless population consists of families with children. Declining wages, welfare cuts, and the loss of affordable housing threaten to push even more families out of housing and make them an increasingly larger proportion of the homeless.

Beyond Shelter deals with the interrelated problems that homeless families face: poverty and unemployment, access to credit and job training, and housing. The services are provided in an integrative manner to place families, especially female-headed families, not only back into housing, but back into communities. Beyond Shelter provides women with economic and social services, such as job training, credit and banking seminars, parenting classes, and nutrition classes, after they are stabilized in permanent housing and are no longer traumatized by the experience of homelessness.

Beyond Shelter packages existing systems in new ways, rather than creating and duplicating existing systems. The program works with more than 25 referring agencies across the county with funding from a variety of different government and non-government sources. Government support includes local and national entities including the Housing Authority of Los Angeles, the City's Community Development Department, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Emergency Food and Shelter Program. Foundation and corporate grants come from a variety of sources, including the California Community Foundation, The James Irvine Foundation, the Times Mirror Foundation, The Roth Family Foundation, and the Better Homes Fund.

Since 1989, Beyond Shelter has helped more than 750 high-risk homeless families secure permanent housing. One hundred percent of graduates demonstrate increased self-determination and more effective money management. Approximately 40 percent of program graduates enrolled in school and/or vocational training, 28 percent obtained training, and 32 percent of graduates increased their income. It is through this collaborative and comprehensive approach to shelter delivery and community building that Beyond Shelter has made such impressive achievements.

Transforming Neighborhoods Together

Transforming Neighborhoods Together (TNT) is a comprehensive, resident-led neighborhood planning program that helps low-income neighborhoods establish visions for the future and develop the skills, networks, and strategies that enable residents to work together to make that vision a reality.

Traditionally, urban planning has been the domain of professional planners working for government agencies, where the level of citizen participation varies with the political climate. But without active citizen input, top-down, professional plans are less likely to include strategic plans for implementation and rarely contain enough detail to reflect neighborhood concerns. Moreover, such plans generally fail to address factors such as business creation, neighborhood blight, or poverty and crime.

TNT shifts the traditional urban planning process from a largely technical endeavor led by city agencies to a vision- and values-driven process led by neighborhood residents. Through public participation, neighborhood committees, and non-professional neighborhood-resident planners, TNT has helped Knoxville, Tennessee, neighborhoods organize themselves, decide what changes they want, and negotiate for improvements and resources. While TNT guides the neighborhoods through a set program with a timeline and general parameters concerning subjects to explore, neighborhoods are free to reject or add issues to fit their individual circumstances. By working closely with a Knoxville city planner, the process maintains the technical integrity that is critical to the planning process.

To date, this relatively new program has benefited more than 15,000 individuals living in 6 low-income, inner-city neighborhoods. Through direct working relationships with key staff members of the Department of Community Development, police department, and Metropolitan Planning Commission, the program has given neighborhood leaders valuable experience as paraprofessional planners. The process has also enhanced civic engagement: communication among neighborhoods is more frequent, direct, and constructive, and more residents are willing to take part in crime reporting and prevention activities. The housing picture also is improved through the demolition of dilapidated and unsafe structures, rehabilitation, and new construction of affordable homes.

around physically and economically distressed inner-city neighborhoods. With core funding of nearly \$90 million, NCDI will generate more than \$750 million in total funding for community revitalization when it is coupled with financial resources committed by more than 200 local partners, including State and local governments, foundations, banks, and other organizations.

In 1995 the Clinton administration made it easier for communities to tap into Federal resources when HUD consolidated planning, application, and reporting requirements for 12 separate community development programs into a single application and plan. This gives local officials more flexibility to forge creative, comprehensive, community-wide action plans that involve community-based groups and individual residents, and to integrate economic and housing development strategies with efforts for making neighborhoods

safer, reducing homelessness, increasing mobility, expanding job opportunities, and strengthening families.

In 1996 the Clinton administration signed a memorandum of understanding with the State of Connecticut establishing a new partnership for community empowerment through the creation of Neighborhood Revitalization Zones (NRZs). Under the agreement, the Federal Government has established a single point of contact to help communities by fielding and expe-

ditioning requests for waivers through the Federal system. This partnership is designed to empower local communities to make decisions; provide local communities with relief from burdensome State and local regulations and systems barriers; and facilitate collaboration and coordination of governmental functions and personnel to support neighborhood revitalization. The Federal Government expects to forge similar agreements with other States across the Nation.

Partnership Recommendations

In recent years, local capacity to solve problems has grown as State and local governments, businesses, community-based groups, and individual citizens have formed creative partnerships to revitalize inner-city neighborhoods. This process must continue. Public, private, and non-profit organizations all have an important role in the community-building process—a process that empowers community residents and places them at the center of neighborhood revitalization efforts. There are a number of steps that these organizations can take to promote local community-building efforts:

- **Building Local Capacity.** Community empowerment is about helping individuals and communities help themselves. Because sustained community-building efforts rely on institutions such as community development corporations, schools, churches, and other local groups, both public and private organizations can invest in strengthening the capacity of community-based organizations. These local organizations need help in the areas of staff development, implementation of efficient management

The Chicago Alliance for Neighborhood Safety

As an independent coalition of community organizations and residents united to fight crime in Chicago, Illinois, the Chicago Alliance for Neighborhood Safety (CANS) works in conjunction with the city police department to strengthen the capacity of community organizations and to create safer neighborhoods. By promoting community-police partnerships, CANS has helped to curb crime in many Chicago neighborhoods.

In 1988, CANS released "Police Service in Chicago," a report designed to introduce the idea of community policing to the city, which eventually led the city to embrace the concept. Under the Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy, the emphasis is on crime prevention and problem-solving. Patrol officers and community residents work together in partnership to solve and prevent ongoing crime problems. Through this process, the police and the community get to know each other and the police develop a deeper understanding of community crime problems.

CANS also is working with the Youth Committee of the Community Policing Task Force to improve relations between Chicago youth and the police, and to encourage greater involvement by youth in improving the safety of their communities. CANS provides technical assistance, research, and education to community organizations, and monitors the progress of the police department in maintaining its support for community policing.

Since its inception in 1981, CANS has helped communities organize more than 1,500 block, apartment, and school watches. Because of CANS, residents in several high crime, low-income districts have reported a decline in major crimes, and drug and gang activity. They also have reported an increase in trust between the community and the police as well as an increase in optimism about their neighborhoods and policing.

systems, and enhancement of organizational stability through multi-year funding not tied to specific projects.

Building capacity within State and local government is also important. As the Federal Government provides States and localities with more autonomy in developing community revitalization strategies, employees in all government areas will need unprecedented motivation, perspective, and support to do business differently. Successful private sector businesses know all too well that employee training and retraining are among the key investments a company makes in its future. Government agencies should likewise examine ways to increase their employees' abilities, effectiveness, and pride in their work.

- **Collaboration and Consultation.** Given the importance of local input, State and local governments can make the partnership approach standard in addressing urban challenges. For example, they can consult community-based organizations on decisions affecting their neighborhoods; work with coalitions of community groups to implement and evaluate specific projects; participate in ongoing partnerships that bring together the public, business, and community sectors; and require collaborative planning and non-government matching funds for publicly-financed initiatives.

In addition, State and local governments can expand their use of community-based organizations to implement programs and deliver services to inner-city communities. Community-based organizations are particularly effective at delivering services because of their relationships and standing in the community; understanding of community needs; ability to coordinate multiple programs into a single, comprehensive package; and employment of local residents. The revenues and experience community organizations gain can strengthen them as resources for addressing other community problems.

- **Corporate Leadership.** As members of the boards of civic, educational, and human service organizations and as political opinion leaders, corporate executives can use their influence to enhance local community-building efforts. Historically, business leaders have played prominent roles in civic partnerships to boost downtown development, attract sports franchises, and support cultural institutions. Corporate executives can exercise the same leadership in inner-city programs and institutions, both locally and nationally. For example, businesses can join local and national networks to support urban revitalization, metropolitan-wide housing

partnerships, and community development banks. Moreover, business leaders can encourage public and non-profit institutions to allocate increased resources to distressed urban neighborhoods, to enhance the involvement of both local residents and community institutions in service delivery, to identify and train community leaders, and to encourage policy changes to remove impediments to community building.

Tapping Into a New Economic Frontier

"There are places in our country where the free enterprise system simply doesn't reach. It simply isn't working to provide jobs and opportunity...It has always amazed me that we have given incentives to our business people to help to develop poor economies in other parts of the world...but we ignore the biggest source of economic growth available to the American economy, the poor economies isolated within the United States of America."

President Bill Clinton
July 1995

The private sector is the key to the economic success of our cities. A sustainable economic base in inner cities will only come about through private, for-profit initiatives and investments based on economic value and true competitive advantage—not through artificial inducements, charity, or government mandates. No level of government subsidies can match the strength of a thriving private-sector driven local economy.

It is unrealistic to expect cities to regain the manufacturing presence that they enjoyed decades ago. The reality is that many of these jobs will never return to the central cities, and one challenge is to link inner-city residents with job opportunities in outlying areas. Nevertheless, as Harvard Professor Michael Porter demonstrates in his work research on economic opportunities in the city, inner cities enjoy many economic advantages that must not go to waste. For example:

- **Physical Location.** Inner-city areas are generally located near downtown centers and their attendant businesses, transportation, and communication nodes. Inner-city locations offer potential advantages for business that can benefit from proximity to downtown business districts, infrastructure, entertainment and tourist destinations, and concentrations of other companies. Moreover, proximity to highly competitive nearby industries can be a major competitive advantage in providing supplies, components, and supporting services to customers.

Empowerment in Detroit

In Detroit, Michigan, community residents, local governments, churches, universities, and a range of private business and other community partners have come together to help revitalize the 18 square miles of largely abandoned buildings and empty lots that the Federal Government has designated as 1 of 6 Empowerment Zones across the country. The results have been overwhelming. The city has announced more than 21 private developments in the Zone, including 10 industrial and 5 residential projects. The Zone has attracted commitments of \$2 billion in local private investment, and already has created hundreds of new jobs. Not surprisingly, the city now has one of the fastest-growing housing markets in the country and is one of the top cities for entrepreneurial activity.

Former Detroit Pistons basketball player Vinnie Johnson is one of the Detroit entrepreneurs taking advantage of the new opportunities afforded by Detroit's Empowerment Zone. After the Zone was announced, Mr. Johnson led a group of partners in opening Piston Packaging—a manufacturing business in the heart of the Zone. He cleaned and renovated part of an abandoned General Motors plant for his facility and now employs 44 workers, many of whom live in the Zone. Over the next 18 months, he will be expanding his business and expects to hire an additional 250 workers during that time.

Mr. Johnson wants to give something back to the community, and he has done exactly that. Many of his employees were out of work for months, even years, before getting a job. One employee, Joann Crowder, spent more than 8 years unemployed and raising three children on welfare. As a Zone resident who lives a few blocks from Piston Packaging, she now looks down the road to achieving her next dream of buying her own home for the first time. Joann Crowder and Vinnie Johnson are both powerful evidence of the tremendous potential—both personally and for the Nation—for empowering poor communities and their residents.

- **Human Resources.** Contrary to the persistent myth that inner-city residents are not employable, even the most distressed urban communities enjoy human resource potential. Supply is one advantage; in central Harlem, for example, 14 people apply for every minimum wage job opening. Loyalty is another advantage; when a company's work force comes from the surrounding community, work force stability and training investments are offset by employee loyalty and a lower turnover rate.
- **Demand Conditions.** Inner cities represent an immense, growing, yet-underserved market. Despite low incomes, inner cities may enjoy higher income per square mile than do suburbs because of higher population density. Furthermore, they present opportunities for developing specialized products and services for urban markets.

The challenge of sustainable urban economic development is not just to bring jobs to the city,

but to attract and promote businesses that complement and build upon the competitive advantage of metropolitan regions. For too long now, the term "economic development" has meant little more than fragmented efforts by communities to entice new industries to locate in their area. The objective has been to attract business—any kind of business—with little regard for the economic strengths inherent to the region. As a result, America's cities have been embroiled in a game of stealing seemingly attractive industries from each other with costly subsidies and other techniques—a zero-sum game that has yielded little net gain in regional or national economic well-being.

An emerging model of economic development emphasizes the need to harness the essential attributes that underpin the ability of firms to compete in a particular field. No Nation, State, or region is competitive in everything, nor can it succeed by emulating other areas. Competitiveness emerges out of unique local conditions, and occurs in businesses where a region can create areas of distinctive specialization. Economic development will ultimately fail unless it enjoys a competitive edge and occupies a niche that is hard to replicate elsewhere.

According to Michael Porter, the competitive success of a location does not normally arise in isolated companies, but in clusters of firms in the same industry or those that are linked together through customer, supplier, or

New Community Pathmark Supermarket

In Newark, New Jersey, a local community development corporation and large supermarket chain have teamed up to create a 55,000 square-foot neighborhood shopping center. This joint venture between the New Community Corporation and Pathmark Supermarkets is based on a simple, common sense idea: the best way to stimulate economic activity is to capture and capitalize the basic economic transactions of the day.

After the urban riots of 1967, middle-class families fled Newark's Central Ward. When the major supermarkets followed suit, local residents struggled to find fresh, affordable groceries. A 1987 study found that local residents spent 50 percent of their income on food and that prices at small, local stores were 38 percent higher than the prices at large supermarkets. The study also showed that the Central Ward offered enormous opportunity for a supermarket—90 percent of the 93,000 people living within a half-mile radius already shopped in the lower-priced supermarkets in other parts of Newark.

Against this backdrop, the New Community Corporation formed a partnership with Pathmark to open a supermarket-anchored shopping center in the Central Ward. Their objective was not just to capture those dollars leaving the community, but to create new jobs and new job training opportunities. In July 1990 the shopping center was completed at a total cost of \$12 million. New Community Corporation invested \$2.3 million of its own funds, and Supermarkets General invested \$400,000, mostly in inventory, with banks and block grants providing the remaining funding.

This project has been an unqualified success. Weekly sales volume has exceeded the original projections, and sales per square-foot are above the industry average. The shopping center generated 343 jobs and more than 50 percent of the store's employees come from the surrounding community. For Pathmark, it turned out to be more than a socially responsible thing to do, it was a solid business investment.

other relationships.²³ In the United States, examples of regional industrial clusters abound: in Massachusetts, there is a highly competitive cluster in information technology; the New York metropolitan area is regarded as the world's financial capital; and the strength of the entertainment industry in Los Angeles is unparalleled. The concentration of these industries within these geographic areas is more than mere coincidence.

The Federal Commitment

The Clinton administration regards central cities as rich reservoirs of human and economic potential. Far from being obsolete, they offer a concentration of expertise and economic activity that is critical to the knowledge-intensive industries of the future, and to our increasing competitiveness in the global economy. Many of these distressed communities represent an untapped economic opportunity for the whole country. The President believes that while we work together to open foreign markets to American-made goods and services, we also need to work together to open the economic frontiers of poor communities here at home.

The effort to create economically viable cities starts with creating national conditions for sustainable economic growth and expanding employment and entrepreneurial opportunity. At the national level, President Clinton's economic policies have had a dramatic impact on the economy. Since January 1993, the economy expanded by more than 8.5 million jobs. In 1994 alone, the U.S. economy saw an increase of 3.5 million jobs—the strongest job growth in a decade. This type of sustained national economic growth will help U.S. cities complete the restructuring needed to compete in the new global economy.

Because one of the most critical impediments to business creation and job growth in central city areas is the lack of private investment capital, the Federal Government has placed high priority on initiatives that attract private capital back to our central cities. The Community Development Banks and Financial Institutions Act of 1994 will create a network of community development banks whose primary mission is to lend, invest, and provide basic banking services in low- and moderate-income communities. By catalyzing matching investments from local community development agencies and the private financial sector, this new funding can leverage billions of dollars in capital per year to build a nationwide network of self-sustaining local community development banks. In turn, these intermediaries will further multiply this amount in loans to entrepreneurs, growing businesses, homebuyers, and community redevelopment projects.

²³ Michael E. Porter, "The Competitive Advantages of the Inner City," *Harvard Business Review* (May/June 1995).

In conjunction with its efforts to return private financial capital to distressed inner-city communities, the Clinton administration is targeting Federal resources to place-based initiatives that will catalyze private investment. The Economic Development Administration (EDA), which works in partnership with States, local governments, and private and non-profit organizations to promote long-term recovery in economically distressed communities, helps fund community initiatives and infrastructure investments that generate jobs and support commercial and industrial growth. EDA's Competitive Communities Initiative will support local strategies for bringing high-growth, globally competitive businesses to distressed inner-city communities.

Education and job-training also are important elements in any effort to make cities more competitive. Because public education in America traditionally has not been effective in assisting most young people with the critical transition from school to work, the School-to-Work Opportunities Act addresses this often precipitous leap. Jointly administered by the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor, this initiative brings together local partnerships of employers, educators, and others to develop new programs of work-based learning, apprenticeships, and internships. These linkages between learning and work experience are particularly beneficial for students isolated in inner-city schools, and will help prepare young people for decent wages and a lifetime of learning.

The Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association

In 1977, 30 South Bronx residents organized themselves to stop the demolition of their homes on Kelly Street, a curved block in the heart of the Longwood/Hunts Point neighborhood. Against great odds and without tools, money, or title to the properties, these residents renovated the buildings themselves and inspired the formation of the Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association. Guided by the motto, "Don't move, improve," Banana Kelly's accomplishments have spread well beyond this first renovation.

Continuing in their tradition of providing safe and affordable housing, Banana Kelly is leading an effort to help formerly homeless families, train youth for future employment and leadership, and encourage business expansion in their neighborhood. By providing family services, group training, and technical assistance to tenant associations, they develop support mechanism that keep formerly homeless families from ending up on the streets once again. Each year, Banana Kelly's nationally recognized youth programs train hundreds of youth in construction and maintenance fields that lead to well-paying jobs. Current efforts to encourage business to locate and expand within their neighborhood and build an economic base for the community are part of Banana Kelly's overall approach to community building.

By using a bottom-up planning approach that builds on the creativity and leadership of tenant organizations, local small businesses, community groups, and individuals to map out the future of the South Bronx, New York, Banana Kelly has remained at the cutting edge of innovation with regard to community development. The community itself has designed, operated, evaluated, and refined the various programs and projects so that: 1) programs would be designed by residents; 2) residents could earn a substantial salary while being trained; and 3) ideas and experiences could be shared with other poor communities worldwide.

The success of Banana Kelly is quite evident. Since 1978, Banana Kelly has raised more than \$100 million in finance capital, built or rehabilitated more than 2,500 homes, and brought numerous other social and economic resources to their community.

Pfizer in Brooklyn

In the 1980's, Pfizer confronted the question of whether to move its Brooklyn, New York, pharmaceutical manufacturing plant out of the city to a suburban location. In a move that it regards as good business sense, the company made the commitment to stay in the community that had been its home for 150 years.

In 1984, the company spearheaded the Broadway Triangle Project to create an industrial park and develop affordable housing adjacent to the Pfizer plant in Brooklyn. The centerpiece of the Broadway Triangle project is a recently refurbished, high-tech manufacturing plant that employs 800 people. Pfizer hires most of its work force from the community and provides training for entry-level positions and career advancement.

According to Thomas J. Kline, Pfizer Vice President for Manufacturing Strategies, "What some businesses don't know is that hiring from the surrounding community provides a very good work force. When a company provides good jobs, invests in employee training, and provides potential for growth, the people hired from the community will be overwhelmingly successful. And because the work force comes from the community, there is stability in the company's work force, so the investment in training is offset by employee loyalty and low turn-over rate."

Because Pfizer employees are members of the community, the plant is a valuable neighborhood resource. The facility provides a meeting place for local crime watchers, classes, and the parent-teachers association. Since placing video cameras in the local subway stop that feeds directly to its security office, Pfizer has also become a leader in local crime prevention.

William C. Steere, Jr., Pfizer's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, recognizes the importance of public-private partnerships in dealing with the urgent social issues facing our cities. "The crisis of America's cities is not only a problem for government. It is everybody's concern. We cannot simply wish it away."

Because cities cannot be places of economic opportunity without safe neighborhoods, the Federal Government is working to reclaim our city streets from crime, violence, and drugs. By the end of FY 1996, the administration's Community Oriented Policing Services program (COPS) will have funded almost 49,000 officers to help police and communities join together to solve and prevent ongoing problems. Moreover, the 1993 Brady Bill already has stopped 60,000 people with criminal records from buying guns. To ensure the safety and well-being of public housing residents, the administration's One Strike, You're Out policy requires tougher screening of applicants, including criminal background checks, and eviction of any resident who commits a violent crime or sells drugs.

Partnership Recommendations

Although private entrepreneurs, not government, are the primary agents in creating economic growth, local governments and other public institutions play a large role in creating the context in which development occurs and in shaping the conditions that either attract or discourage private investment. Given the importance of a well-prepared work force in economic

development, local governments can increase investments in education and job training. Another option is to review and revamp the local regulatory environment—complicated and uncertain approval processes are among the most certain turnoffs to potential investors. Local governments can also initiate proactive efforts to clean up and market underutilized land in the central city.

The private sector also can play an important role in linking inner-city areas to the economic mainstream of the metropolitan region. Private firms can employ more inner-city residents and take a leadership role in creating the necessary training programs. Moreover, outside firms can enter into joint ventures or customer-supplier relationships that will not only benefit the inner-city companies but, in the long run, the firms themselves.

Private firms can move beyond philanthropic support of social service organizations to strategic, business-to-business support of inner-city

Neighborhood Development Center

In St. Paul, Minnesota, the Neighborhood Development Center (NDC) combines the micro-enterprise and village banking methods that are common in developing countries with the strengths of community development corporations (CDCs) that are prevalent in the United States to help emerging inner-city entrepreneurs develop successful businesses that serve the community.

Many low-income urban areas see a tremendous drain of dollars in spite of a very high volume of activity that takes place in the area. While many local residents operate legal, tiny "beneath the surface" businesses from their homes, they rarely emerge into full-time operation because of inadequate capital and business training. The challenge for St. Paul and other communities is to retain more of these dollars in the community by strengthening community-based businesses. Very few groups with strong neighborhood ties and high levels of visibility and trust are involved in micro-enterprise, and many of those that do focus on business training and lending efforts, (even ones that focus on low-income, minority, or women-owned businesses) do not reach people at the neighborhood level.

By partnering with grassroots CDCs in lower-income neighborhoods throughout the Minneapolis-St. Paul region, NDC has designed a unique approach to micro-enterprise that combines the networks and the long-term commitment that CDCs enjoy in their neighborhoods with the peer identification and support that are common to the village banking of micro-enterprise development in Asia and Africa. NDC has contracts with 11 CDCs to inform residents of the training program via newsletters, door-to-door flyers, and word-of-mouth. With the assistance of a professional trainer, NDC provides instruction on developing a business plan in groups of 7 to 10 neighbors. After completing the 16-week training course, participants are eligible to apply to their CDC for a start-up loan. To ensure the long-term viability of these neighborhood-based businesses, participants receive ongoing technical assistance and form support groups after start-up.

The program is clearly a success. By September 1995, NDC had trained more than 330 persons in 11 neighborhoods throughout the Twin Cities; more than 90 participants are currently in business for themselves. Of the 50 loans that NDC has made, only 2 are in default. Most importantly, these entrepreneurs are emerging as new community leaders and are inspiring their neighbors to undertake similar activities that benefit themselves as well as the community.

The founders of every major U.S. city drew its initial boundaries to encompass what they thought would be enough land for expansion. But urban settlements last a long time, and many have grown well beyond their initial boundaries. In some metropolitan regions, such as San Antonio, Texas, and Charlotte, North Carolina, the original city responded by annexing surrounding areas because it had the legal power to do so. But in most U.S. metropolises, residents outside the original city boundaries have remained in separate, legally independent communities.

Metropolitan regions are highly interconnected in terms of labor, housing, capital, and consumer markets, but many are politically fragmented. After

decades of suburbanization, such political fragmentation has produced marked economic and social disparities among the jurisdictions within metropolitan areas. While many suburban areas are home to a thriving middle class, our inner cities have become home to a disproportionate share of the poorest households in America.

Cities cannot go it alone. Cities with high poverty rates face high per capita expenditures for welfare, hospitals, police, fire, and education services. Rising public sector costs have clashed with declining tax bases as middle-class families, stores and shops, factories, and offices have relocated

Regional Solutions to Affordable Housing

For many low-income families, Connecticut has not been an easy place to find decent, affordable housing. In the decades preceding the State's economic slump in the early 1990's, Connecticut had the highest average housing costs of any State east of California. By the late 1980's, the State ranked first in the Nation in terms of city/suburb income differential. The State also ranked ninth with regard to housing segregation.

In an effort to increase the supply of affordable housing, the Connecticut General Assembly took a series of actions in the late 1980's. Most notable is the Affordable Housing Appeals Act of 1989, which requires any of the 169 municipalities in the State with less than 10 percent assisted housing to change their zoning practices to permit a more diverse housing supply. Under the law, a developer whose plans to build affordable housing are rejected by a town council can appeal to a special State court in Hartford. The burden of proof is on the town council, which must prove that the town's reasons for rejecting the proposal should be deemed a higher priority than the State's affordable housing requirement.

But the effort to promote affordable housing in Connecticut went beyond State mandates. Previous legislative action in 1988 had spurred the creation of the Capitol Region Fair Housing Compact on Affordable Housing and the Greater Bridgeport Affordable Housing Compact. Through a framework of joint problem-solving and mediation, municipalities in Hartford and Bridgeport came together to pledge their commitment to expand the supply of affordable housing throughout these urban regions. According to the 1994 Connecticut Regional Council of Governments Report, more than 4,000 affordable housing units were constructed or approved over the life of these agreements.

The voluntary compact approach to meeting regional housing needs marks the beginning of a change in Connecticut's local housing policy. For many of these communities, entering into the compact was their first step in reconsidering regulatory barriers to affordable housing. Local needs and goals, not State mandates, served as the basis for their participation and implementation strategies. The State did not mandate results, regional coordination, nor the nature of the negotiations.

outside city limits. Trapped within existing boundaries by incorporated suburbs and bad annexation laws, cities like Detroit, Cleveland, Hartford, and Washington, D.C., no longer have the resources to support themselves.

Because the destinies of our cities and our suburbs are inextricably linked, solutions must draw upon not only the strengths of the inner city, but also those of the entire metropolitan area. Traditional forms of regional cooperation among local governments have focused on the delivery of public services, but have avoided the more difficult issue of sharing the social burdens of our urban areas. Although area-wide compacts on transportation planning, solid waste management, sewage treatment, and air quality management may be "good government," many have not addressed the racial and economic segregation that plagues our cities.

Sharing a Regional Tax Base

The Minnesota Fiscal Disparities Law of 1971 enables all cities in the seven-county Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area to receive a share of the growth in tax base in the area, irrespective of the physical location of the tax base. Under the law, all shared tax base bears a common tax rate, which is an average of all rates in the metropolitan area. The law provides that every city must make a contribution to the regional pool of valuations equal to 40 percent of its net growth in commercial-industrial valuations since 1971. In calendar year 1994, this regional pool amounted to \$277 million. Local jurisdictions receive a share of the pool through a population-based formula.

With the law in effect, any jurisdiction within the region can have a tax-free regional park within its borders or a large number of lower-priced, lower-taxed residences. When the law was originally proposed, some communities in the metropolitan area with only half the tax rate of their neighbors were spending twice as much on providing local services. Even though a jurisdiction will gain tax base whether or not it uses fiscal zoning, the law has not dampened separate efforts to expand tax bases.

By alleviating the effects of such disparities through a multi-jurisdictional cooperative effort to share a regional tax base, the law is functioning as intended. It is gradually reducing—albeit not eliminating—the differences in commercial-industrial tax base among cities in the metropolitan area. If the law were not in effect, the ratio between the highest and lowest in per capita commercial-industrial tax base among 48 cities with a population of more than 9,000 would be almost 1.5 to 1. With the law, the difference has narrowed to four to one.

The Federal Commitment

The Federal Government is committed to creating a level metropolitan playing field by breaking up deep concentrations of poverty and despair in our inner cities and reconnecting residents to the economic and social mainstream of our metropolitan regions. The well-being and service capabilities of metropolitan localities—central city or suburban—should not be hostage to their economic, social, or demographic profiles.

Because free and fair housing choice is the first step in providing greater opportunity for all metropolitan residents, HUD is leading Federal efforts to reverse the legacy of housing discrimination. For example, HUD is working in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice to enforce Federal fair housing laws and ensure that individuals and families who want to buy or rent a home are able to do so. Moreover, through the Fair Housing Initiatives Program and the Fair Housing Assistance Program, HUD supports State and local efforts to identify discriminatory practices.

fragmented array of employment and training programs into an integrated service delivery system for job-seekers and employers. The U.S. Department of Labor, in partnership with State and local organizations, is creating a network of One-Stop Career Centers to serve the entire labor market within each local region. By strengthening connections among schools, colleges, students, workers, and employers throughout the metropolitan area, these One-Stop Career Centers will offer the essential connection to link inner-city residents to available jobs and learning opportunities throughout the entire region.

Partnership Recommendations

Governments at all levels can pursue common policies to dismantle the barriers that separate poor and minority people from the rest of society. For example:

- **Fair-Share Affordable Housing.** Municipalities have a legitimate objective in promulgating regulations to protect the health and welfare of their residents, but many suburban communities go much further. When communities reserve most of their residential districts for large houses on 2-acre lots, ban multifamily housing or commercial activity, set impossible environmental standards, or prevent any new development, they go too far. State and local governments should support planning and zoning policies that encourage the development of more affordable housing in all jurisdictions.
- **Portability of Assistance.** Today, governments at all levels must do more to break the nexus between services to disadvantaged households and residence in a particular place. With regard to housing assistance, for example, local public housing authorities can provide counseling and supportive services, establish rent guidelines that allow for a full range of housing opportunity, and provide regulatory and administrative relief to make rental assistance programs more attractive to landlords. By promoting greater residential mobility, portability of assistance helps link families to social and economic opportunity while easing the onerous service and fiscal burdens facing many urban cores.
- **Intracommunity and Intra-regional Mobility.** In addition to the environmental damage brought about by urban sprawl, existing land use and transportation policies also impede intracommunity and intra-regional mobility. Current practices 1) separate a region's residents from metropolitan employment opportunities; 2) isolate those who, by reason of age, ability, or income, are unable to drive; and 3) impede the use of public transportation to ensure urban mobility. State and local governments should systematically re-examine current zoning and sub-division regulations, traffic codes,

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- **Revenue-Sharing Arrangements.** The specialization of business and household locations driven by metropolitan-wide economic and other factors creates enormous disparities in local tax bases. Although these disparities have been recognized, and partially compensated for, by programs of formula-based, functionally-specific State and Federal aid, more must be done. While moving money is much less important than moving people, area-wide revenue sharing arrangements can help build strong cities by promoting equity in local revenues. States should adopt incentives to encourage regional cooperation and fiscal integration.

Sustaining the Urban Environment

"For all our differences, I think there is an overwhelming determination to change our course... to achieve things that are larger than ourselves and more lasting than the present moment. We seek to set our course by the star of age-old values, not short-term expediencies; to waste less in the present and to provide more for the future; to leave a legacy which keeps the faith with those who left the Earth to us."

*President Bill Clinton
Earth Day 1993*

Thriving cities are those that not only enjoy economic prosperity and social opportunity, but also clean air, safe drinking water, and green public spaces. Today, many inner-city communities that were once the anchors of America's industrial and manufacturing base are now paying the price for years of environmental abuse. As this legacy of pollution perpetuates poverty in these communities, it works against their revitalization because they are no longer desirable places for economic, social, and cultural activities.

Many communities are finding that conventional approaches to economic development, transportation planning, and development of the built environment—efforts that are intended to increase opportunity and quality of life—are in fact creating a variety of negatives that we would prefer to do without: congestion, sprawl, air pollution, overflowing landfills, resource stress, and other environmental and social problems. If we continue with the same approaches that created these problems, we will further degrade our own quality of life and leave future generations with increasingly insurmountable environmental problems.

Because economic, social, and environmental issues are interconnected in daily life, approaching them one at a time does not work. Systemic thought is required so that these issues are recognized as integrated and actions to

address them are coordinated. America must preserve, and where possible, restore the integrity of natural systems—soils, water, air, and biological diversity—that sustain both economic prosperity and life itself.

The Federal Commitment

The Federal Government recognizes the importance of the urban environment to long-term economic development and social prosperity. As a result, the Clinton administration is working to combine activities that have long been considered incompatible in an effort to build strong cities. It is doing this in a way that creates sustainable urban communities that will stand the test of time and will remain inviting places to live for generations to come. The Clinton administration is taking a new approach to environmental regulation—one that helps communities tackle environmental challenges constructively.

With the assistance of HUD and other Federal agencies, the EPA has already begun to make common sense regulatory and policy changes that

Yard Waste Recycling in Lindsborg, Kansas

In this town of 3,300 that lies along the Smoky Hill River on the prairies of central Kansas, yard waste that a few years ago was burned or buried is now shredded and composted. The result is a large supply of finished compost and mulch that helps beautify public spaces and private homes while protecting the environment.

Because landfill space is expensive and increasingly scarce, solid waste disposal is a serious problem in many communities. In Lindsborg, yard waste was the single largest component of solid waste, accounting for nearly 25 percent of the total. Tough environmental regulations have forced Kansas to close two-thirds of its landfills and to ban yard wastes from those remaining sites. The challenge has been for Lindsborg and other cities to save dwindling landfill space while disposing of yard waste in a cost-effective, environmentally sound manner.

Under the plan, each household pays \$1 per month to defray the cost of a large \$180,000 commercial wood chipper/shredder that is shared by all communities in the county. But everyone benefits. The city uses finished compost and wood chip mulch for city flowerbeds and landscape plants, and citizens receive compost and mulch at no cost. The project is strictly voluntary; it is based on cooperation, teamwork, and goodwill.

The Lindsborg project has been extremely successful. The program now recycles more than 60 percent of the town's yard waste and prevents 1,200 tons per year of solid waste from reaching the landfill. Moreover, the project has spurred a communitywide volunteer effort and involvement, including elementary, secondary, and college-age youth. Most importantly, the Yard Waste Recycling Program has educated the public about the tangible, everyday benefits that result from environmentally conscious behavior. It has shifted old ways of thinking, made a good end use out of previous trash, and fostered a sense of environmental stewardship and shared responsibility among community residents.

Re-Using Building Materials for Affordable Housing

As the Nation's first self-sufficient, successful nonprofit recycler of reusable building material, The Loading Dock (TLD) in Baltimore, Maryland, is expanding the supply of decent, affordable housing while protecting the environment.

Like many older cities in the United States, Baltimore faces an aging supply of housing units. Much of the city's housing stock is more than 100 years old and in need of repair, and about 10 percent of Baltimore's housing is considered substandard. Housing quality is of particular concern to lower-income households who are more likely to live in older housing but are unable to finance repairs and maintenance.

In 1984, a group of housing professionals with an interest in environmental issues recognized the potential of matching the need for low-cost building materials with the large amount of excess building materials that go to waste. With a \$25,000 grant from the Morris Goldseker Foundation, TLD opened for business. Since then, the program has helped low-income households acquire affordable building supplies while educating public and private businesses on how to donate and reuse building material rather than dumping it into rapidly filling landfills.

Today, TLD serves more than 6,000 low-income households in the greater Baltimore area. For a \$5 annual membership fee, members can purchase building supplies at prices up to 75 percent below retail price. The supplies that TLD redistributes are often unused materials, ranging from unpainted doors and windows, ceramic tiles from discontinued lines, or slightly damaged goods. Because these items cannot be sold for a profit, in the past they would be sent to landfills. "It's the old story of one person's trash is another's treasure," says Leslie Kirkland, Director.

After 11 years of operation, TLD has saved nonprofit organizations and low-income individuals more than \$5 million in repair and rehabilitation supplies. The project has rescued some 33,000 tons of building materials from landfills, while providing materials for the rehabilitation of more than 27,000 homes. As word of its success has spread, TLD is now working to adapt this promising strategy in 40 communities across the United States and abroad.

speed the clean-up of brownfields and provide grants to cities to redevelop formerly-contaminated sites. Through its Brownfield Redevelopment Pilot Project, EPA is providing up to \$200,000 for each of 50 cities across the country to facilitate the extensive planning and analysis necessary to forge local redevelopment strategies. This year, the President's FY 1997 budget proposes to go further with a \$2 billion brownfields cleanup initiative. Under the plan, new purchasers and other businesses that redevelop brownfields would receive a targeted tax incentive to recover the cost of cleanup in a shorter time period.

The Clinton administration is committed to environmental justice for all. Too frequently, those who have been powerless, those who have been disenfranchised, and those who are economically disadvantaged are victims of those who dump waste materials in their neighborhood. In 1994, President Clinton moved to protect the environmental rights of all Americans by

signing an Executive order barring Federal agencies and other federally-funded institutions from engaging in practices that impose unfair environmental burdens on disadvantaged people and communities.

Similarly, the Federal Government believes that communities with military installations should enjoy the same quality of life that the rest of America enjoys. Over the past year, the U.S. Department of Defense has pledged closer cooperation with local communities on environmental matters. The Department has established Restoration Advisory Boards to work with local communities to find commonsense solutions in cleanup efforts at base sites.

The administration is also working to improve the environment through advances in the construction industry. The National Institute of Standards and Technology is helping the construction industry utilize the newest materials and latest technologies to realize energy and environmental improvement. This help includes the development of test methods for advanced insulation materials that offer superior performance, alternatives to chloro-fluoro-carbon (a cause of ozone loss), techniques for measuring indoor air quality, and methods to quantify the environmental impact of buildings.

Looking beyond the immediate problems, the President established a Council on Sustainable Development, which brought together representatives of government, industry, environment, labor, and civil rights organizations to develop new ways to integrate and balance environmental concerns with issues of economic opportunity and social equity. The Council examined the complex interplay of these issues in the context of communities, and explored how these concerns can be balanced to ensure that communities remain decent, healthy places to live as they evolve and grow.

Revitalizing Brownfield Sites

To make Cleveland, Ohio, the comeback city envisioned by civic boosters, urban revitalization has to overcome the barriers set up by brownfields—the contaminated and/or abandoned industrial sites found in many central cities. The percentage of land made up of vacant parcels in Cleveland increased from 9 percent in 1977 to 12.5 percent in 1987. Filling some of these parcels and redeveloping others in the face of such problems as increased liability, clean-up standards, and regulatory burdens has presented Cleveland with a strategic challenge.

In Cleveland, a coalition comprised of businesses, community development corporations, Cuyahoga County officials, neighborhood groups, and other citizens is attacking the brownfield problem. In 1992, the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission convened a symposium to discuss brownfield redevelopment strategies as part of an effort to counteract sprawl in the metropolitan region. The following year, a multi-stakeholder Brownfields Working Group analyzed the problem of brownfields and made recommendations to the planning commission. Since then, the city of Cleveland has received funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for two demonstration projects. The planning commission is using a \$198,000 EPA grant to streamline the remediation and redevelopment of at least three brownfield sites. As part of the project, the commission is to identify financial and regulatory barriers and recommend ways to remedy them.

The pilot project in Cleveland already has borne fruit. So far, the project has produced \$3.2 million in new private investment, including a new distribution center that has generated more than 170 new jobs.

Partnership Recommendations

Government at all levels, private firms, and nonprofit organizations can undertake a number of activities to help maintain and regenerate the urban environment:

- **Land Use Planning and Design.** State and local governments, in cooperation with private firms and community-based organizations, can promote community design that uses land efficiently, encourages mixed-use and mixed-income development, retains public open space, and provides diverse transportation options. For example, local jurisdictions can structure or revise local zoning regulations and permit approval processes to encourage development along transit corridors and near a range of transit alternatives. In addition, the public sector can work with community groups and the private sector by conducting periodic assessments to ensure that transportation and infrastructure investments do not inadvertently deliver greater benefits to wealthier communities at the expense of poorer ones.
- **Community Growth Management.** By managing the geographical growth of existing communities and planning new ones, local organizations can help decrease sprawl, conserve open space, preserve watersheds, respect nature's carrying capacity, and protect against natural hazards. For example, States and communities can evaluate the costs of infrastructure in greenfields to make sure that hidden government subsidies do not inadvertently make new development at the fringe less costly than economic development in the core. In addition, local governments 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.
- **Building and Landscape Design and Rehabilitation.** To enhance public health and the environment, local organizations can promote building design and rehabilitation that use energy and natural resources efficiently. Improved design tools can help conserve energy and minimize the emission of pollutants. These include models for building codes, zoning ordinances, and permit approval processes for residential and commercial buildings, public infrastructure, and landscapes. Model building codes can consider energy efficiency; durability; non-toxic materials; indoor air quality; recycled and recyclable materials; use of native plants that reduce the need for fertilizers, pesticides, and water for landscaping; urban forestry; and use of designs that promote human interaction.

Appendix

The Voice of Urban America: Local Input From Habitat Town Meetings

Overview

Citizen participation is a critical element in promoting sustainable urban communities. The capacity of democratic institutions to solve problems and to create a better future depends on the knowledge and involvement of citizens in a decisionmaking process that encourages systemic thought and broad-based action. Lasting solutions are best identified when people from throughout a community—as individuals, elected officials, or members of the business community, environmental groups, or civic organizations—come together in a spirit of cooperation to identify solutions to community problems.

As part of the national preparatory process for Habitat II, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Agency for International Development jointly sponsored a series of 12 town meetings throughout the Nation. These sessions brought together neighbors, community groups, business leaders, advocacy organizations, and local government officials to examine the challenges facing America's urban communities. Each town meeting was planned and implemented by a local organizing committee with planning support provided by the U.S. Network for Habitat II, a network of nongovernmental organizations dedicated to providing citizens with a voice in the decisions that affect their lives and communities.

A primary function of the town meetings was to get local input on key documents being prepared for Habitat II—the *Beyond Shelter: Building Communities of Opportunity* and the *Habitat Global Plan of Action*. The focus of Habitat II is on community empowerment, whereby national governments work in partnership with State and local governments, private firms, and the growing network of community-based organizations to build strong cities. It is critical that these documents reflect partnership every step of the way.

But more importantly, the meetings brought together local leaders and stakeholders to begin developing their own vision for economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable communities. Although town meetings addressed affordable housing, economic

development, and other major issues that are frequently the focus of national policy debate, the discussion also emphasized the challenges that exist in these individual communities. For example, the town meeting in Los Angeles focused on disaster preparedness, residents of Brownsville were concerned about access to water as a limiting force in housing development, and Iowa residents were interested in rural development issues. This type of local discourse provides people with greater power over and responsibility for the decisions that shape their communities.

Decent and Affordable Housing is Critical

Because of its central role in the health and well-being of all families and neighborhoods, housing was an important focus at all town meetings. Participants identified a number of successful aspects of housing delivery systems. For example, the leadership of nongovernmental organizations, including community development corporations, faith-based groups, and civic organizations, has been instrumental in the effort to increase the supply of decent, affordable housing. Participants also cited various Federal initiatives, including the Community Reinvestment Act and Enterprise Zone/Empowerment Communities initiative, as important in supporting local housing strategies.

But many participants indicated that much more could be done to expand the supply of decent and affordable housing in their communities. Some of the discussions focused on the impact of Federal budget cuts and the inability of the private market to supply housing at rents affordable to families most in need without some form of government assistance. Other areas of concern included the availability and condition of different types of housing, and open and fair access to the general housing market by different ethnic and racial groups.

Citizens offered a number of constructive actions, which ranged from forging stronger working relationships between community residents and local governments to improving methods of disseminating information about housing issues and programs. Specific recommended actions included:

- Expanding access to mortgage credit for lower income families and especially families headed by women.
- Increasing funding for property improvement activities.
- Improving enforcement of fair housing laws.
- Reforming building codes and zoning regulations to better accommodate innovation.
- Increasing homeownership counseling for residents.

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- Improving relations between the business community and local residents to improve neighborhoods and attract more private investment into both commercial and residential development.
 - Speeding up response from the local government to complaints about property-related code violations.
 - Encouraging local housing authorities, public-private housing partnerships, and local governments to support and listen to the local women leaders.
 - Improving the design of multifamily housing for families, especially in public housing.

Town meeting participants in some cities also offered recommendations on housing for special populations; the elderly and disabled. These recommendations included:

- Recognizing special needs housing as relevant to the needs of community and economic sustainability.
- Increasing public funding of rent subsidies and other forms of assistance, such as property rehabilitation and counseling, for residents with special needs.
- Expanding the effort to integrate housing for people with special needs into the community.
- Eliminating policies that promote the segregation of housing for people with special needs.

Promoting Economic Development

Like most Americans, town meeting participants were concerned about ways to safeguard existing jobs and to increase the number of new ones paying "livable" wages. Almost all of the town meetings mentioned economic development as a top priority for their community.

Town meetings identified successful examples of initiatives to spur economic development. Several participants cited public-private business partnerships and supports for small businesses as beneficial to increasing economic development in urban communities. Tax incentives and access to capital through community banking were also cited as proven strategies that support economic development at the community level; one session emphasized the value of small business incubators and merchant associations.

Many participants agreed that more could be done to promote decent wage jobs in urban communities. For example, participants cited the lack of support from banks for economic development in urban areas, and the

perception that investments in urban areas are too risky. All town meetings agreed on the need to forge more innovative working relationships among the public, private, and nonprofit sectors if sustained economic development is to take place in urban areas. Specific recommendations to attract private-sector investment in urban areas included:

- Maintaining and expanding tax incentive programs such as Empowerment Zones/Enterprise Communities.
- Creating new jobs in the burgeoning field of "green technologies," such as those that are directed toward forming environmentally sustainable communities.
- Reducing impediments to business expansion.
- Providing pension fund incentives for socially responsible investing.
- Improving job training programs by matching skills development to the current range of available job offerings.

In addition, a number of town meetings emphasized the need to establish and nurture small businesses as an important mechanism for increasing economic development in urban areas. Specific recommendations included:

- Facilitating employee ownership of companies that might leave their districts.
- Increasing economic diversity through greater minority ownership of businesses.
- Making credit available to women for small businesses and for home purchases.
- Developing more effective reinvestment strategies in the community by local financial institutions.
- Expanding access to financial and management counseling for inexperienced owners of small businesses.

Protecting Our Environment

A general theme of the town meetings was the need for society to assume greater responsibility for protecting the integrity of our fragile ecosystems, and in so doing, safeguarding the interests of future generations.

The town meetings all emphasized the importance of involving the entire community in addressing local environmental issues. One town meeting set a goal of citizen integration into decisionmaking at all levels. Another

highlighted the effectiveness of accessing and using all community resources, even its trash. While recognizing individual rights to clean air, water, and soil, participants sought to encourage individual responsibility and action in realizing this right.

In terms of further action, many town meeting participants emphasized the critical importance of education in reaching environmental goals, including encouraging holistic thinking or a comprehensive approach to the problems. Moreover, participants in one meeting called for the President and Congress to reaffirm and implement national commitments made at previous United Nations conferences. Specific recommendations included:

- Developing and promoting new ways to reduce dependency on the automobile.
- Promoting urban agriculture.
- Encouraging more widespread recycling.
- Re-designing urban areas in the direction of sustainability by increasing and protecting open space and urban wilderness within and around all cities.
- Identifying and publicizing the real costs of air pollution.
- Moving toward national energy self-sufficiency through the use of renewable and nonpolluting forms of energy.
- Increasing awareness of urban residents' connection to nature.
- Promoting citizen involvement in the preservation of endangered species.
- Factoring in the "true-costs" of environmental pollution in all cost-benefit analyses of new development.

Education for the Year 2000

The quality and accessibility of educational opportunities over a person's entire lifespan was an important issue for many town meeting participants.

- Reaction to the current state of education was mixed. Many participants clearly felt that programs such as Head Start, as well as local literacy and mentoring programs, were effective in providing disadvantaged students an extra boost to move onto greater challenges and opportunities. But meetings cited limited funding, violent crime, and racial tensions as serious obstacles in the effort to prepare students for employment in the global marketplace.

fully immunized by their second birthday before the year 2000. At another town meeting, participants called for health education centers that would educate consumers in schools, workplaces, and other community access points. Some specific health recommendations included:

- Establishing universal health insurance by the year 2000 as a goal for the United States.
- Financing health insurance through insurance payments combined with general revenue taxes.
- Addressing long delays at clinics for mothers with sick children.
- Providing greater substance abuse treatment and prevention services.
- Adopting strategies to stop violence against women.
- Taking inventory of existing health services to move resources where they are most needed.

Of Concern to Women

In many urban communities, women play a number of important roles—entrepreneur and service provider, community organizer and coalition builder, caretaker and nurturer—just to name a few. Given the importance of women in these neighborhoods, town meetings examined community-building issues from a gender perspective, not just with regard to the needs, but also the strengths of the women who live in these communities.

Given current demographic trends, the feminization of poverty was an important concern to many participants. Discussions emphasized the importance of eradicating discrimination in access to employment, essential services, credit and financing, shelter, and ownership or leasing of property. Recommendations that specifically address women's concerns include:

- Coordinating family services for women and children so these services support one another and are available at a time convenient for working mothers.
- Enhancing protective family services in response to the escalating incidence of child abuse.
- Encouraging local housing authorities, public-private housing partnerships, and local governments to support and listen to the local women leaders.
- Providing equal pay for equal work.

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- Addressing the "ghettoization" of women in back office centers that offer only clerical, low-paying jobs with little opportunity for advancement.
 - Changing State divorce laws that discriminate against women.
 - Increasing the supply of battered women's shelters and rape crisis centers.
 - Increasing affordable, quality health care for the disproportionately female and sick poor.

Town Meetings: A Starting Point

Although the town meetings were initiated to gather input into U.S. preparations for Habitat II, the community involvement and planning will not end with the Istanbul conference. Many communities immediately began planning followup activities. For example, Baltimore's town meeting produced work groups focused on implementing the local recommendations. In Los Angeles, organizers have planned a postconference town meeting to bring home the lessons from Istanbul and, in Seattle, the Habitat town meeting is part of a larger effort to sustain an ongoing community conversation.

This summary does not capture the wealth of information and recommendations generated from the town meetings, nor does it fully reflect the fervor and commitment of the individual citizens, elected officials, community groups, and business leaders who came together in a spirit of cooperation to identify solutions to community problems. It should, however, offer some insight into the concerns of the residents of America's urban communities.

Not all of the town meeting reports were available in time to be incorporated into this report. By July 1996, full reports from each of the town meetings will be available on the Habitat II Clearinghouse Web site:

<http://www.huduser.org/habitat.html>