

Section 10

Livability Principles

On June 16, 2009, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced an Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities and set forth six ‘livability principles’ to coordinate policy. The principles were adopted to help the agencies guide the allocation of funds to communities that manage their financial and physical resources in a manner that creates a dynamic environment that is efficient in its function, livable for its residents, enduring in its viability and results in a sense of well being of its citizens. The principles are:

1. *Provide more transportation choices.*

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

2. *Promote equitable, affordable housing.*

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

3. *Enhance economic competitiveness.*

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

4. *Support existing communities.*

Target federal funding toward existing communities – through such strategies as transit-oriented, mixed-use development and land recycling – to increase community revitalization, improve the efficiency of public works investments, and safeguard rural landscapes.

5. *Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment.*

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

6. *Value communities and neighborhoods.*

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

Livability in transportation is defined as connecting the quality, location, and modal composition of transportation facilities to broader opportunities such as access to good jobs, affordable housing, quality schools, and safe streets. This includes addressing road safety and capacity issues through better planning and design, maximizing and expanding new technologies such as intelligent transportation systems (ITS) and using travel demand management approaches to system planning and operations. It also includes developing high quality public transportation to foster an overall community design and public/private investments which offer residents and workers the full range of transportation choices. And, it involves fully integrating the modal pieces - bikeways, pedestrian facilities, transit services, and roadways - into a truly intermodal, interconnected system.

Incorporation of the Livability Principles into the Ashland Area Metropolitan Transportation Plan is not a mandate of current highway funding legislation or a planning regulations requirement, but the Ashland Area MPO acknowledges that the concepts of livability and sustainability are integrated within the goals and objectives which have guided the MPO's decision-making and overall transportation vision. Although the published principles are new, they are reflective of a continual desire of the community's leadership to plan for a sustainable future for the Ashland MPO area and are inherently incorporated into the planning for its growth and development.