

DOT Secretary LaHood announces six "livability principles" to guide policy

In an announcement to Congress on June 16, 2009, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood listed six "Livability Principles" that will guide policy regarding Federal transportation, environmental protection, and housing investments. Secretary LaHood listed these principles to the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs as the cornerstone of a new effort with Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson.



Walkable residential area in Las Vegas, NV.
www.pedbikeimages.org / Dan Burden

The three Federal agencies are calling their collaboration the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. The DOT-HUD-EPA Partnership aims to improve access to affordable housing, provide more transportation options, and lower transportation costs while protecting the environment in communities nationwide. The six livability principles will guide the agencies' efforts, while the partnership will coordinate federal housing, transportation, and other infrastructure investments to protect the environment, promote equitable development, and help to address the challenges of climate change.

Speaking to the Senate committee, Secretary LaHood said, "These principles mean that we will all be working off the same playbook to formulate and implement policies and programs." Later that day, the Secretary posted additional comments to his [blog at fastlane.dot.gov](http://blog.at.fastlane.dot.gov)

The six livability principles are:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Support existing communities. Target federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit oriented, mixed-use development, and land recycling—to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.
- 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.
- Value communities and neighborhoods. Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.

As with this new interagency approach to planning communities, the issues within the pedestrian and bicycle community cannot be seen as separate from the larger discussion of transportation modes and safety, housing choices, and environmental quality.