

City Planners Call for Nationwide Urban and Regional Development Plan for Quality Communities by NLC

The nation's city planning directors are asking public and private sector leaders to commit to a Better Quality Communities program and to the preparation, adoption and implementation of a Nationwide Urban and Regional Development Plan.

The plan would be a comprehensive and coordinated public and private sector commitment for better quality city planning, re-development and development of the nation's cities and surrounding regions to accommodate the U.S. Census projected population growth of 34.5 million by the year 2020 and 100 million within 20 to 30 years.

The plan would guide the billions of dollars of investments required while insuring taxpayers receive a real financial return on their investment just like a private sector investment and immediately create millions of jobs.

"We need higher quality, smarter, greener and sustainable land use patterns and densities, housing, buildings, public transportation, infrastructure, public open spaces, agriculture, industry, renewable energy, environmental protection, and urban design and beautification that reduces municipal operating costs and property taxes and improves the health and well-being of all citizens," according to Gerald R. Mylroie, AICP, American City Planning Directors' Council chairman.

No such nationwide plan exists now. Business as usual policies that continue urban sprawl and higher municipal operating expenses and property taxes are unacceptable. Physical development planning policies and development must be viewed differently. Issues like land use, energy source and conservation, school locations, building codes, transportation and housing must be linked for more effective and efficient planning and management. A better coordinated intergovernmental and private sector approach and commitment is required now.

City planners are asking citizens to "Get involved and support planning and action for better quality communities" during the 21st annual April 2009 National American City Quality Month program sponsored by NLC, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, American City Planning Directors' Council/American City Quality Foundation, Urban Land Institute, National Building Museum, Partners for Livable Places, City Planning and Management Division of the American Planning Association, American Public Transportation Association, Mayors' Institute on City Design, American Society of Landscape Architects, Association of Pedestrian & Bicycle Professionals and Eco-Home Network.

In announcing the program, NLC President Kathleen Novak, mayor of Northglenn, Colo., said, "Given our economic crisis, now more than ever we need better planning and action to coordinate our investments and projects so they not only immediately create new jobs, but actually do improve the quality and sustainability of our communities and surrounding regions."

In 2008, former NLC President Cynthia McCullum, said we need "a better partnership between municipalities and the federal government to better plan and achieve quality communities."

"Hundreds of millions of taxpayers dollars can be saved annually with better quality city planning and development," said Mylroie. "To achieve this, it is critical to constantly raise public awareness about the status and future of America's cities and demonstrate the need and value of better city planning and action to achieve Quality Communities."

During the month-long observance and beyond, cities across America will be discussing how quality planning for communities and smart growth will improve cities as well as protect them. Urban sprawl, the opposite of smart growth continues to be identified as one of America's biggest concerns by citizens.

Cities will be conducting public meetings to adopt or update their comprehensive city plan including implementation programs as well as budgets to improve city quality. Also they will be raising public awareness by adopting proclamations; and holding media events, exhibits and "teach-ins" at local schools.

City planners, officials and citizens are talking about changing demographics, local economic and social issues, land use for development and conservation, smart growth concepts, transit oriented development, renewable energy sources, conservation, sustainability and lowering municipal operating costs and property taxes. All are aimed at achieving better quality communities.

Details: For further information, call the American City Planning Directors' Council/American City Quality Foundation office at (207) 712-6333 or send e-mail to

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