

NEW ENGLAND

Memorandum of Understanding on Livable Communities

among

THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY,
New England Region

THE UNITED STATES GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
New England Area

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Federal Highway Administration, Massachusetts Division
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Federal Aviation Administration
Federal Railroad Administration
Federal Transit Administration

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
National Park Service, Boston Support Office

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
New England Area

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
New England Regional Office

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
Boston Regional Office

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Preamble

The Federal government recognizes that sprawl is an issue of growing national significance, one that poses a major threat to the quality of life that we associate with our New England environment. Over the last decade, a booming economy, high demand for new housing, and increased construction of suburban infrastructure such as roads, schools, sewers, and retail and commercial businesses have taken a negative toll on the environmental and aesthetic health and character of our region. There has been a loss of open space and wildlife habitat, increased air and water pollution, and the loss of our region's "sense of place".

Increasingly, communities around New England and the U.S. are in favor of a new approach to growth - a "Livable Communities" approach that builds on existing economic, environmental, and infrastructure investments while avoiding the economic inefficiency, reductions in quality of life, and environmental damage associated with uncontrolled sprawl. The term "Livable Communities" -- which will be used in this Memorandum of Understanding -- embraces the fundamental notion that growth can occur in a manner that is:

- *economically* smart by building upon past investments in existing communities; does not require tax increases in suburban areas to pay for new roads, new schools, and public services; and preserves prime farmland for agricultural use;
- *environmentally* smart by encouraging the redevelopment of brownfields sites; and reducing threats to air quality, water quality, cultural resources, open space; and
- *socially* smart by encouraging a "sense of community" and a "sense-of-place" across a region by bringing socially and economically diverse citizens and businesses together to solve common problems.
- *safety* smart by encouraging communities to identify and systematically address local injury problems including those caused by traffic crashes through comprehensive prevention program strategies.

Purpose

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to support concerted, cooperative, and collaborative livable communities initiatives at the Federal level. The parties further agree that the environmental, social, and economic challenges posed by unplanned growth can have deleterious effects on a community. It is the responsibility of Federal agencies to ensure that our programs, policies, and institutional frameworks meet these challenges rather than exacerbate them. With a view toward meeting these challenges head on, EPA, HUD, DOT, GSA, HHS, DOI, DOE and USDA hereby agree to the following set of guiding principles:

- We will endeavor to improve and strengthen the Federal government's role as a collaborative partner with the New England Tribes, states and local governments in an effort to build "livable communities" for the 21st century;
- We affirm that the citizens of New England are entitled to a healthy environment and high quality of life;
- We agree that livable communities strategies need to include sustainable development as a requirement for the balanced and interdependent attainment of economic, social, and environmental goals;
- We affirm that the citizens of New England are entitled to a transportation system which minimizes injury and provides safe access for all users.
- We agree that there is mutual interest among our respective agencies in establishing an infrastructure which will integrate livable communities principles into our policies, programs, and institutional frameworks, as well as among our New England communities;
- We acknowledge that the Federal government - using its public platform as a tool for advocacy - is in a position to empower the Tribes, states, regions, and communities to experiment with innovative ways to advance livable communities principles;
- We agree that the primary role of the Federal government in supporting these partnerships should be in aligning Federal investments of time, attention, knowledge, and resources;
- We will endeavor to expand this collaborative effort among other relevant Federal agencies; and finally,
- We recognize that, at the Federal level, the complexity of environmental issues surrounding livable communities simultaneously poses challenges and offers opportunities among our respective agencies.

Toward this end, we pledge to work together.

Responsibilities

Therefore, in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration, and with the mutual understanding that this is a voluntary working agreement among our respective agencies, we hereby commit to the following set of actions:

1. The undersigned agree that they will commit resources (staff, technical expertise and/or funding) towards joint implementation of the three Federal agency Livable Community projects: Southeastern Massachusetts Vision 20/20, Woonasquatucket River Watershed, and Hartford Picture It Better Together (See attached abstracts and project workplans) and;
2. The undersigned agree to examine and strengthen our programs, policies, and institutional frameworks in support of livable community objectives and;
3. As part of a joint outreach effort between our respective agencies, we will provide our New England communities with new tools and resources to preserve open space and pursue regional livable and safe community strategies through increased technical assistance and training activities and;
4. As a member of the Federal Agency Livable Community Task Force, the undersigned agree to meet on a quarterly basis or, as otherwise needed, to facilitate the implementation of the three Federal agency Livable Community projects and;
5. The undersigned agree to allow their agency designee on the Federal Agency Livable Communities Work Group to continue to attend Work Group meetings, track Agency progress towards these goals, and communicate results to internal and external stakeholders and;
6. The details of the levels of support to be furnished one organization by the other with respect to funding will be developed in specific interagency agreements or other agreements, subject to the availability of funds. This MOU shall not be used to obligate or commit funds or as the basis for the transfer of funds.

MOU Review

The Regional Administrators/Directors will review this Memorandum of Understanding every two years and revise this document, as necessary.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Memorandum of Understanding as of
October 23, 2000.

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For the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, New England Region

Mindy Lubber
Regional Administrator

For the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration

Richard H. Doyle,
Regional Administrator

For the General Services Administration

Robert J. Dunfey, Jr.
Regional Administrator

For the US Department of Energy, Boston Regional Office

Hugh Saussy, Jr.,
Regional Director

For the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Railroad Administration

Mark H. McKeon
Regional Administrator

For the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration

Stanley Gee
Division Administrator, Massachusetts Division Office

For the U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

George A. Luciano
Regional Administrator

For the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration

Dr. Robert S. Bartanowicz
Regional Administrator

For the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Mary Lou Crane
Secretary's Representative
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, New England Area

For the US Department of Health and Human Services, New England Regional Office

Judith Kurland,
Regional Director

For the US Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph DeVecchio". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

Joseph DeVecchio,
State Conservationist, R.I.