

BREAK-OUT SESSION

NGA Workshop: "Promoting Quality of Life through Parks"
April 22, 2002

During the Break-Out Session, participants brainstormed on the following questions.

1. What were the factors presented today that made incorporating smart growth and active living objectives into the LWCF possible?
 - In most cases, Governor's leadership was the primary factor of success for smart growth or public health initiatives.
 - Unfortunately, low funding levels has not made it possible for many states to focus on these initiatives.
 - The LWCF can be used as a catalyst to achieving each state's growth and physical activity goals.
 - By focusing on smart growth or physical activity, the LWCF can expand its partnerships with other state agencies and consequently expand its constituency.
 - The health data presented by Dr. Frumkin will be helpful for demonstrating need.

2. If you state were to pursue a smart growth or physical activity focus, what obstacles would you need to overcome?
 - Sources of matching funds are a problem, especially where the federal government can't use their own funds despite a state's willingness to match.
 - The federal side of LWCF is very restrictive. It would be helpful if the National Park Service would clarify the priorities for states participating in growth and physical activity initiatives.
 - Smart growth is not an issue in some states.
 - Payment in lieu of taxes and local government resistance is another obstacle.

3. How can these obstacles be overcome? What networks need to be established? What state agencies could you partner with?
 - Local governments need to be convinced that residential development does not support itself.
 - Public education is required. The ability to be proactive versus reactive is dependent upon this.
 - To increasing the willingness of rural areas to conduct comprehensive planning, federal and state governments should increase the dollars available for technical assistance. Another idea is to increase the overall dollars available for comprehensive planning or require plans as a condition of grant eligibility.
 - To increase funding for parks, stakeholders should support more voter initiatives. In general, voters support open space initiatives more than politicians.

- Stakeholders need to demonstrate the value-added parks contribute to the community. Parks are not a luxury but rather an integral component of a community's economy.
 - Stakeholders should explore ways to get TEA-3 funding to state agencies other than DOT.
4. Does the LWCF (SCORP) planning process need to be better integrated into statewide land and transportation planning?
- Many states do not have a “statewide” plan, rather comprehensive planning is done at the local level. It is hard to integrate the LWCF into a statewide plan if it doesn't exist.
 - The state LWCF programs could integrate health data and public health information into their decision-making process and give it a larger role.
5. What can the National park Service do to assist your state in achieving smart growth or health objectives?
- Create criteria for grant applications that encourage but do not mandate a smart growth focus. In other words, if a project achieves smart growth or public health goals, it should receive “bonus points.”
 - Increase public awareness about the values of the LWCF.
 - Share state best practices.