



Principles of Regional Stewardship

(Working Draft 11/6/03)

Introduction

The mission of the Alliance for Regional Stewardship (ARS) is to foster collaborative multi-sector regional stewardship as a means for advancing economic, social and environmental progress, while maintaining a sense of place, in America's metropolitan regions. To achieve its mission ARS is developing key principles for "Regional Stewardship," which are predicated on the statement of the late John W. Gardner, where he noted that there can be *"no more regionalism for its own sake. We now need pragmatic regionalism with a purpose."* Regional Stewardship takes Gardner's statement and uses it as the foundation for critical principles to guide public policy and civic engagement that leads to new, open, inclusive, and shared decision-making and governance. These principles are not necessarily new, in and of themselves; but they embody practices that, when used in a regional context, lead to successful communities.

The Case for Regionalism

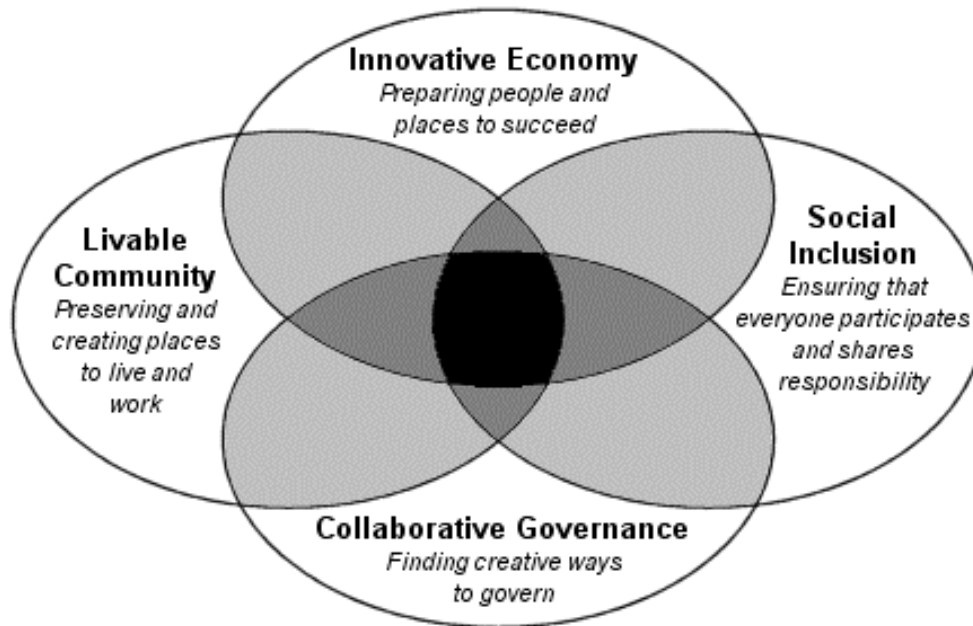
Regional Stewardship recognizes the role of regions as the arena in which many challenges are best addressed. They are of special importance principally because they constitute the de facto places where most human activity occurs. Some of the most innovative and constructive collaborations take place at the regional level.

Regional leaders seek ways to solve problems that spill over city and county boundaries. They know that communities working alone can not effectively address critical issues such as job training, housing, traffic, youth development, gang violence and crime. These problems do not respect local political boundaries. Moreover, they are not limited to government, but also involve business and nonprofit organizations. They require a "regional community" collaborating on a cross-sector regional basis.

Regions are "real places" where people live and work. The institutional boundaries in regions are often dramatically at odds with the reality of the problems people need to address. Regional Stewardship is economic, organic, social, strategic. It reflects directly the pressures for increased efficiency, for cohesion and competitive excellence.

Mission: *To foster collaborative multi-sector regional stewardship as a means for advancing economic, social and environmental progress, while maintaining a sense of place, in America's metropolitan regions.*

Framework for Regional Stewardship



Innovative Economy: *Preparing people and places to succeed.*

- ❑ The Innovative Economy is one where people work more with their brains instead of their hands. It is an economy in which rapid change is constant; an economy at least as different from what came before as the industrial age was from the agricultural age.
- ❑ The Innovative Economy is a new way of competing based on speed, quality, flexibility, knowledge, and networks. Diverse industries are being fundamentally transformed by the Innovative Economy. It is clear that all institutions – including education, government, and community organizations – will need to adapt to the new rules – rules still being formed – for success in the Innovative Economy.
- ❑ The Innovative Economy emphasizes skills and knowledge as the keys to economic progress. Skilled and knowledgeable people tend to locate in communities that provide a good quality of life and excellent social, cultural, and natural assets. Prosperous communities provide a mix of characteristics that enable firms to compete and thrive in the global economy.
- ❑ A key challenge of the Innovative Economy is to provide jobs that enable all citizens to enjoy a good quality of life; to produce meaningful jobs that sustain families all along the economic spectrum and provide opportunities for advancement.

- ❑ The challenges of the Innovative Economy relate to workforce readiness and issues of development, transportation, housing, open space, and social inclusion that cannot be adequately addressed by traditional political boundaries and leadership models. They must be examined on a regional level, where economic, environmental, and social concerns all merge.
- ❑ Economic development extends beyond cities to regional economic clusters, environmental issues exist within bioregions, and social issues cut across neighborhoods within regions. In short, the region is where the action is.

Livable Community: *Preserving and creating places to live and work.*

- ❑ Place matters in Regional Stewardship because people matter. Thus, Livable Communities must ensure the public safety and the well-being of their citizens. Livable Communities must provide adequate housing and ensure that public education affords opportunities for all members of the community. Livable Communities must ensure that living wage jobs are available so that people can live in the communities in which they work.
- ❑ New visions of urban design—including compact development, transit-oriented housing, walkable neighborhoods, safe and secure communities, and protected open space—are critical aspects of livable communities.
- ❑ Traditional land use decisions that promote sprawl, congestion, and separation of uses undermine the livability and sustainability of communities and regions.
- ❑ Livable Communities create and sustain unique urban amenities, vibrant street life, top-notch entertainment, museums, galleries and cultural institutions.

Social Inclusion: *Ensuring that everyone participates and shares responsibility.*

- ❑ Social Inclusion recognizes that the interests of neighborhoods are connected to the future health of the region and vice versa. Moreover, long-term regional prosperity is linked to reducing poverty and inequality in metropolitan areas. Thus, equity must become a part of regional strategy, not just an afterthought. The more community residents participate in skilled, career-oriented work, the higher value-added the regional economy can produce and the greater the increase in living standards.
- ❑ People matter in the collective decision-making of community-based regionalism, where everyone is included in the development of regional strategies; and decision-making structures and systems support broad inclusion.

- ❑ Regions are a growing mix of increasingly diverse populations and perspectives. Residents must be engaged and participate as contributing members of a “regional society.”
- ❑ The growing complexity of problem-solving means community problems cannot be effectively addressed without regional support and regional problems cannot be solved without community engagement.
- ❑ Bridging differences and building trust and relationships necessitates the need for safe civic spaces for public dialogue and conversations and the appropriate tools to support public decision-making and civic engagement.

Collaborative Governance: *Finding creative ways to govern.*

- ❑ Governance—how people come together to address common problems—is more than government. At the regional level, it involves citizens, business, labor, nonprofits, educators, and government working in various ways to set directions, solve problems and take action.
- ❑ Today’s regions are a complex system of overlapping, interrelating jurisdictions—much like a network. Collaborative Governance requires facilitation of resources, information, ideas, and power.
- ❑ Collaborative Governance requires more facilitation and less control. It is bringing together disparate parts and repairing broken connections. It means crossing boundaries and including diversity. Collaborative Governance is constant openness to experimentation and the search for better outcomes. Collaborative Governance is distributed governance.
- ❑ Collaborative Governance relies on participants’ social capital. Social capital is the networks and norms of trust and reciprocity required to advance civic cooperation. Social capital addresses the need for strong relationships among participants engaged in Collaborative Governance; these relationships are a critical foundation for the success of Collaborative Governance.
- ❑ Informed participation is critical to Collaborative Governance. Transparent information empowers citizens to participate in the decision-making process that determines the future of their regions.
- ❑ Collaborative Governance encompasses process and structural changes that emphasize coalitions and actions across jurisdictions *and* across sectors.