



LIVABLE COMMUNITIES FOR ALL

Livable Communities are safe, healthy and environmentally responsible. Livable communities rely on people working together to achieve life-enhancing goals and striving to protect the vulnerable. Livable communities are communities that address current problems in a manner to ensure a better future for all.

Decisions encouraging unbridled growth in Sussex County undermine livability by allowing dramatic loss of open spaces, forested land, and wetlands; by contributing to traffic congestion, stresses on emergency services, overburdened health facilities, crowded schools, and frequent flooding; and by failing to provide affordable housing.

Livable communities require public policies that protect the rights of the many, not policies that privilege the few.

The Sussex Preservation Coalition urges all those who hold or seek elected office to endorse this agenda for livable communities and, while in office, to enact regulations, ordinances and legislation necessary to secure and enforce the agenda.

THE AGENDA FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

1. **Conserve** Open Spaces and Forested Land

For clean air, flood mitigation, biodiversity, cooling, recreation.

Metrics will examine the rate of loss of open spaces and forested lands as well as gains in open space acreage and air quality.

2. **Protect** Wetlands, Bays, Ponds, Streams and Rivers

For biodiversity, flood mitigation, clean water.

The "State of the Bays" report by the Center for the Inland Bays will serve as the baseline for measuring progress in the health of Sussex County waterways.

3. **Provide** infrastructure adequate to handle residential growth for promoting the well-being of all.

Infrastructure elements are:

- transportation: safe roads and bike lanes, ample public transportation options;
- health care: adequate facilities, practitioners, and support staff;
- safety: prevent life-threatening delays to emergency services, fire, police, and regional evacuations;
- education: classrooms, teachers, informal settings; and



- housing: availability of units affordable for young families, local workers and low fixed income retirees.

Metrics in each category will measure progress against current conditions.

4. Balance economic prosperity with environmental sustainability and resilience.

- Balance personal property rights with community rights
- Balance growth with conservation
- Balance short-run gain with long-run preservation
- Balance supply of market rate housing with need for affordable housing.
- Balance the needs of profits, planet, and people

**Actions Necessary to Achieve, Implement, and Maintain
the Agenda for Livable Communities in Sussex County.**

Develop a strong working partnership between county and state officials and offices.

Governments at all levels are responsible for clean air, clean water, safe, essential transportation, biodiversity, sustainability, resilience, and personal freedoms. A strong working relationship across all levels is necessary to establish livable communities and for them to flourish.

Expand and Preserve avenues for public engagement.

Policies governing livable communities must be based on the fullest possible citizen participation. Pro forma opportunities for public participation make a mockery of open government. Notices of public meetings should be hard to miss - not hard to find, and opportunities for speaking at public hearings should be accessible - not limited to the well-connected.

Ensure infrastructure necessary to handle population growth is in place or concurrent with growth.

“Build it and the rest shall follow” MUST be replaced by “Plan - Prepare - Build.” Or “Don’t build it if the infrastructure can’t support it.”

Create, Implement and Enforce a Sussex County Conservation Plan

The Conservation Plan must be based on an appreciation of the benefits provided by the natural environment - clean air, flood abatement, life-sustaining biodiversity. Support the conservation plan with strong enforcement mechanisms.

