



# Taking Sustainable Cities Seriously: Economic Development, the Environment, and Quality of Life in American Cities (American and Comparative Environmental Policy)

By Kent E. Portney

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**Taking Sustainable Cities Seriously: Economic Development, the Environment, and Quality of Life in American Cities (American and Comparative Environmental Policy)** By Kent E. Portney

Today most major cities have undertaken some form of sustainability initiative. Yet there have been few systematic comparisons across cities, or theoretically grounded considerations of what works and what does not, and why. In *Taking Sustainable Cities Seriously*, Kent Portney addresses this gap, offering a comprehensive overview and analysis of sustainability programs and policies in American cities. After discussing the conceptual underpinnings of sustainability, he examines the local aspects of sustainability; considers the measurement of sustainability and offers an index of "serious" sustainability for the fifty-five largest cities in the country; examines the relationship between sustainability and economic growth; and discusses issues of governance, equity, and implementation. He also offers extensive case studies, with separate chapters on large, medium-size, and small cities, and provides an empirically grounded analysis of why some large cities are more ambitious than others in their sustainability efforts. This second edition has been updated throughout, with new material that draws on the latest research. It also offers numerous additional case studies, a new chapter on management and implementation issues, and a greatly expanded comparative analysis of big-city sustainability initiatives. Portney shows how cities use the broad rubric of sustainability to achieve particular political ends, and he dispels the notion that only cities that are politically liberal are interested in sustainability. *Taking Sustainable Cities Seriously* draws a roadmap for effective sustainability initiatives.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

A welcome corrective to the conventional wisdom about the relationship between sustainability and economic development. The first edition has become essential reading for students and practitioners of urban politics and environmental policy. In this thoroughly revised second edition Portney hones his arguments and updates his evidence to provide a road map for the next generation of sustainable cities. An essential read!

(**Richard C. Feiock**, Augustus B. Turnbull Professor of Public Administration and the Jerry Collins Eminent Scholar Chair, Askew School of Public Administration and Policy, Florida State University)

In this extensively revised edition of his pioneering 2003 book on sustainable cities, Kent Portney has written a penetrating study of what a difference a decade has made in the building sustainable cities and what progress has been achieved in the scholarly literature on the theory and practice of urban sustainability in America. Portney not only combines his original approach to indexing the extent to which select American cities have taken sustainable city development seriously with new modeling techniques to explain why some cities are leaders in this continuing urban movement; he further updates earlier qualitative case studies of this expanding phenomenon. The result is a book that takes sustainable city studies to a new level, establishing him (again) as one of the premier students of this critical research and policy topic.

(**Ernest J. Yanarella**, Chair and Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Kentucky, and coauthor of *The City as Fulcrum of Global Sustainability*)

In *Taking Sustainable Cities Seriously*, Kent Portney reaffirms his reputation as the nation's foremost empiricist in explaining the urban sustainability movement in the U.S. Whether you're a policy maker, professional, student or activist, you need to read this book if you want to understand how cities like Portland, Seattle and San Francisco have translated sometimes abstract concepts into practical and effective policy solutions in sustainable land use, energy, and transportation.

(**Matt Slavin**, President, Sustainability Consulting Group and editor, *Sustainability in America's Cities*)

Portney's book is essential reading for anyone interested the sustainable cities movement in the United States. For scholars it provides a valuable conceptual framework and impressive empirical analysis. For practitioners and activists it provides a wealth of insights and illuminating examples from cities in the forefront of the movement, as well as critical benchmarks by which their own efforts can be gauged.

(Daniel A. Mazmanian, Bedrosian Chair in Governance, University of Southern California)

### **About the Author**

Kent E. Portney is Professor and Senior Fellow in the Institute for Science, Technology, and Public Policy at Texas A&M University. He is the author of *Taking Sustainable Cities Seriously* (MIT Press).

## **Users Review**

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#### **Shirley Wales:**

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**Francisco London:**

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