

# PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

## EPA-HUD-DOT

*“Our strategy to build economically competitive, environmentally sustainable, opportunity-rich communities that serve as the backbone for our long-term growth and prosperity... We need strategies that encourage smart development linked to quality public transportation, that bring our communities together. That's why we'll improve our Partnership for Sustainable Communities by working with HUD, EPA, and the Department of Transportation in making sure that when it comes to development, housing, energy, and transportation policy go hand in hand.”*

--President Barack Obama, January 21, 2010

The Obama Administration's Partnership for Sustainable Communities is a federal interagency partnership between EPA, HUD and DOT with the goal of ensuring that the agencies' policies, programs, and funding consider affordable housing, transportation, and environmental protection together. Founded on the idea that how and where we build our communities affects our economy, our environment, and our everyday lives, the Partnership for Sustainable Communities are aligning investments and policies to support communities that want to give Americans more housing choices, make transportation systems more efficient and reliable, and support vibrant neighborhoods that attract businesses.

Coordinating federal investments in infrastructure, facilities, and services meets multiple economic, environmental, and community objectives with each dollar spent. For example, investing in public transit can lower household transportation costs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, decrease traffic congestion, encourage healthy walking and bicycling, and spur development of new homes and amenities around transit stations. At a time when every dollar the federal government invests in jumpstarting the economy is critical, the President's plan ensures that all agencies are targeting resources with precision.

Six livability principles guide the Partnership:

- ***Provide more transportation choices.*** Develop safe, reliable, and affordable transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce energy consumption and dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.
- ***Promote equitable, affordable housing.*** Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.
- ***Enhance economic competitiveness.*** Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.
- ***Support existing communities.*** Target federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit-oriented, mixed-use development, and land recycling—to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.
- ***Coordinate and leverage investment.*** Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.
- ***Value communities and neighborhoods.*** Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.

The goals of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities are to achieve better results for communities and use taxpayer money more efficiently. In its first year, the Partnership targeted federal resources through grants and other programs to help states and communities create jobs and stronger economies by developing more sustainably; removed regulatory and policy barriers at the federal level to make it easier for state and local governments to access federal services and resources; and aligned agency priorities and embedded the Livability Principles in each agency's actions so that transportation, housing, and environmental protection efforts are coordinated.

The work of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities continues in its second year. Over the next two weeks, the Obama Administration will announce \$409.5 million in federal investments in realizing more sustainable communities across America:

**EPA Brownfields Area Wide Planning Grants:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will provide grants to 23 pilot communities in predominantly under-served and economically disadvantaged areas to develop area-wide plans for the reuse of brownfields properties. Each grantee will receive up to \$175,000 to facilitate community involvement in creating a coordinated strategy for addressing community needs for housing, recreation, education and health facilities, and economic development.

**HUD Sustainable Community Regional Planning Grants:** The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development will award nearly \$100 million in new grants to consortia of State, local, and tribal governments, as well as metropolitan planning organizations, in the development and execution of regional plans that integrate affordable housing with neighboring retail and business development and realize more livable and sustainable communities across the country. The new [\*Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program\*](#) is intended to build economic competitiveness by connecting housing with good jobs, quality schools and transportation.

**DOT Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery II Grants:** The U.S. Department of Transportation will award \$600 million in grants for TIGER II capital investment in surface transportation projects, of which \$267.5 is for projects that focus on livability and sustainability improvements. This is the second round of Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants. The first round was awarded in February 2009 and granted \$1.5 billion over 50 innovative transportation projects across the country. Twenty-two of the projects were selected largely because they would improve their communities' quality of life while advancing broader transportation goals. Of this second round of TIGER grants, up to \$35 million may be used in conjunction with HUD's Community Challenge Planning Grants to support local planning activities that integrate transportation, housing, and economic development.

**HUD Community Challenge Planning Grants:** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development will award \$40 million in Community Challenge Planning Grants to foster reform and reduce barriers to achieving affordable, economically vital, and sustainable communities. Such efforts may include amending or replacing local master plans, zoning codes, and building codes on a jurisdiction wide basis or in a specific neighborhood to promote mixed-use development, affordable housing, the reuse of older buildings and structures for new purposes. HUD's Community Challenge Planning Grant Program also supports the development of affordable housing through the development and adoption of inclusionary zoning ordinances and acquisition of land for affordable housing projects. These grants will be awarded in conjunction with DOT's TIGER II planning grants. To make it easier for communities to apply to both programs, DOT and HUD accepted a single application for both the TIGER II grants and the Community Challenge Planning grants and will be making joint awards as well as individual grants.

**EPA Smart Growth Technical Assistance Projects:** The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will choose seven communities and one state to receive targeted technical assistance on growth and development issues related to the Partnership's work: climate change adaptation; coordination of sustainability policies; cities in transition; infrastructure financing; development code modernization; water quality and green infrastructure; sustainable design and housing; and, historic preservation.