Partnership *for* Sustainable Communities

THREE YEARS OF HELPING COMMUNITIES ACHIEVE THEIR VISIONS FOR GROWTH AND PROSPERITY

ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

About the Partnership

On June 16, 2009, U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Shaun Donovan, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa P. Jackson announced that they were forming the interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities. Guided by six Livability Principles (below), HUD, DOT, and EPA are coordinating investments and aligning policies to support communities that want to give Americans more housing choices, make transportation systems more efficient and reliable, reinforce existing investments, protect the environment, and support vibrant and healthy neighborhoods that attract businesses.

Livability Principles

- Provide more transportation choices
- Promote equitable, affordable housing
- Increase economic competitiveness
- Support existing communities
- Leverage federal investment
- Value communities and neighborhoods

"The Partnership for Sustainable Communities is about asking communities what they need from the federal government, and helping them bring all the stakeholders to the table so they can realize their local visions for success. The $240 million in grants HUD has provided over the past two years has leveraged $253 million in private investment and commitments from local partners, ensuring that communities can plan and target their resources with precision, create jobs, and speed economic growth. These kinds of tools show that the debate isn't about government that's big or small, but about government that's smart. As our local economies become increasingly interdependent, it's clear these kinds of smart government tools are essential to creating an economy built to last."

Secretary Shaun Donovan
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

"Through this Partnership with HUD and EPA, we are breaking down barriers to local innovation and coordination in communities across America. We are working hard to ensure local leaders have the resources and tools they need to strengthen neighborhoods by connecting housing with affordable and sustainable transportation choices. These projects mean jobs right now and an economy that will continue to grow—that's what I call a win-win."

Secretary Ray LaHood
U.S. Department of Transportation

"Bringing our agencies together around these shared goals opens up numerous opportunities to protect health and the environment at the same time we're strengthening communities and using resources more efficiently. By coordinating targeted federal investments in transportation infrastructure, clean water, and housing, we can give our communities the economic and environmental advantages they need to compete in the 21st century. This type of smart growth and smart investment can help American cities, suburbs, small towns, and rural areas become healthier and more prosperous."

Administrator Lisa P. Jackson
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Introduction

Interagency collaboration through the Partnership for Sustainable Communities uses taxpayer money more efficiently and gets better results for communities. By coordinating federal investments in infrastructure, facilities, and services, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) can meet multiple economic, environmental, and community objectives with each dollar spent.

Since 2009, HUD, DOT, and EPA have been coordinating their work to help communities around the country better meet their housing, transportation, and environmental goals—laying the groundwork for an economy that provides good jobs now and creates a strong foundation for long-term prosperity. This report describes accomplishments of the Partnership and the communities it serves on its third anniversary.

American communities face complex challenges as they try to strengthen their economies, meet changing demand for housing and transportation, and protect the environment and public health. The Partnership agencies recognized they could better help communities by partnering to develop, implement, and share successful approaches. Small towns, suburbs, cities, and entire regions are planning for sustainable communities, and many have asked the Partnership to help them turn these plans into reality. Every region has different needs and resources, so communities are taking different paths to becoming more economically and environmentally sustainable and ensuring that all members of the community benefit from those improvements. One of the Partnership's goals is to help communities engage all residents in developing visions and plans for future growth. This inclusive planning catalyzes public and private investment and can speed implementation of plans.

Since 2009, the Partnership has provided over $3.5 billion in assistance to more than 700 communities. Partnership grant and technical assistance recipients are located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Demand for Partnership assistance far outstrips available resources. As of April 2012, Partnership agencies received more than 7,700 applications for assistance, requesting almost $102 billion. The Partnership has been able to fund 744 projects with approximately $3.51 billion. (See the inside back cover for a map of Partnership grant and technical assistance recipients.)

One of the Partnership's primary goals is to better align and coordinate HUD, DOT, and EPA assistance to communities across the country. The Partnership jointly develops programs and reviews grant applications, ensuring that grants and technical assistance build on earlier funding and meet multiple community goals with each investment. Staff in the three agencies' regional offices around the country are replicating the national Partnership to make it easier for communities to make connections across agencies.

WHAT ARE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES?

In sustainable communities, people can live closer to jobs or have easier access to more jobs in a wider region thanks to public transit. Sustainable communities include a variety of housing types near workplaces, schools, parks, stores, and amenities, making it convenient to walk, bike, take transit, or drive short distances to daily destinations.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE HUD SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

Over the last three years, HUD has awarded 152 grants in 48 states as part of its Sustainable Communities Initiative. The $240 million in federal investments has leveraged almost $253 million in private investment and commitments from local partners. From rural and tribal communities in West Virginia, South Dakota, and Washington to cities like Chicago, Seattle, and Kansas City, regions are working together to develop local solutions to strengthen their economies and create jobs.

In 2010, HUD established a Preferred Sustainability Status to support implementation of plans being funded through its Regional Planning and Community Challenge grants. Applicants with Preferred Sustainability Status receive preference for funding in other HUD grant programs.

In addition, the Partnership helps tribal, state, regional, and local governments by providing technical assistance and giving communities better access to information, training, and peer-to-peer learning.

In 2011, for example, HUD and EPA created a capacity-building network to help grant and assistance recipients exchange ideas on successful strategies, emerging tools, and public engagement plans. The National Sustainable Communities Learning Network was launched in March 2012 to facilitate peer-to-peer learning among the recipients of HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning and Community Challenge Grants, EPA Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Grants, and technical assistance from EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities. In February 2012, HUD also launched a public, online Sustainable Communities Resource Center to provide information on local and regional strategies for sustainable housing and planning. The Resource Center, which provides ready access to innovative practices, cutting-edge research, new reports, and other resources, is available at *www.huduser.org/portal/sustainability/home.html*.

The Partnership's work includes helping urban, suburban, and rural communities share their success stories. The case studies that follow are models for communities that aim to be greener, healthier, more economically competitive, and more affordable. For more case studies, please visit the Partnership's website, *www.sustainablecommunities.gov*.

Examples of Competitive Grant and Technical Assistance Programs Developed and Reviewed Jointly by the Partnership Agencies

Program	Lead Agency	Year
TIGER[1] I Capital Grants	DOT	2009
TIGER II Capital Grants	DOT	2010
TIGER III Capital Grants	DOT	2011
TIGER IV Capital Grants	DOT	2012
FHWA[2] Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program	DOT	2011-2012
FTA[3] Bus Livability Program	DOT	2010-2012
FTA Alternatives Analysis Planning Grants	DOT	2010-2012
Smart Growth Implementation Assistance	EPA	2005-2012[4]
Partnership Brownfields Pilots	EPA	2010
Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Pilots	EPA	2010
Greening America's Capitals	EPA	2010-2011
Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities	EPA	2011-2012
Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grants	HUD	2010-2011
Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants	HUD	2010-2011
Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants	HUD	2010-2011
Community Challenge Grants	HUD	2011
Community Challenge / TIGER II Planning Grants	HUD, DOT	2010

[1] TIGER stands for Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery.

[2] FHWA stands for Federal Highway Administration.

[3] FTA stands for Federal Transit Administration.

[4] The Smart Growth Implementation Assistance program became a Partnership program in 2009.

BRIDGEPORT, CT

Aiming to Be "New England's Greenest City"

Located on the coast between New York City and Providence, Bridgeport was once a bustling industrial and shipping center. Over the past 50 years, the city has been in decline; today, residents suffer from higher-than-average rates of asthma due to air pollution, and many lack easy access to fresh food, jobs, and public transportation.

Each Partnership agency had provided Bridgeport with assistance before 2009. DOT funded major transit upgrades, including Bridgeport's Intermodal Transportation Center. EPA awarded grants and technical assistance, including brownfields[5] assessment and cleanup grants, job training grants, and career training assistance. HUD provided funding to promote affordable housing and community development. However, this support was not well-coordinated and did not always consider the city's needs as a whole. That approach changed in 2009 with the participation of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities.

The Power of Partnership

"In 2009, our regional teams began meeting monthly to talk about how we could better coordinate our assistance across New England," says EPA Regional Administrator Curt Spalding. "Could a clean brownfield site in one location serve as a catalyst for a new transit center, for example? Could nearby affordable housing make it easier for lower- income people to get to work, a health clinic, or a full-service grocery store? Could a section of a city designed to promote walkability reduce pollution and improve public health in an area suffering from high rates of asthma? The Partnership makes it possible for us to look not just at one project at a time, but at the cumulative impact of our federal support."

Steel Point will have pedestrian- and bike-friendly streets that connect neighborhoods to public transit, open the waterfront to the public, and support commercial and residential development. Image courtesy of Bridgeport Landing Development LLC.

"The Partnership for Sustainable Communities in Bridgeport is an example of collaborative problem-solving and unified government at its best. This collaboration has encouraged HUD, DOT, and EPA to work together to focus resources not just on transportation, housing, *or* the environment, but on how to coordinate all three."

—Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch

By combining funding and technical expertise, the three agencies are working together to help Bridgeport achieve its goals for sustainability. In 2009, Bridgeport received an EPA Environmental Justice Showcase Community Grant, which led to many improvements in the distressed East End and East Side neighborhoods, including a new fishing pier and renewed access for residents who had been unable to get to the waterfront. In 2010, Bridgeport received $11 million in TIGER multimodal transportation funding from DOT to build and upgrade roads around the East Side's Steel Point Peninsula to prepare for redevelopment.

Bridgeport is also a partner in the New York-Connecticut Sustainable Communities Consortium, a large stakeholder group comprised of city, county, and regional representatives that received a 2010 HUD Regional Planning Grant through the Regional Plan Association (RPA). RPA is an independent urban research and advocacy group that provides leadership and guidance on sustainability, infrastructure, and economic competitiveness issues in the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut metropolitan region.

[5] A brownfield is a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which might be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

As part of this grant, the consortium is studying the feasibility of opening Barnum Station, a proposed rail station in Bridgeport's East End, on a cleaned-up brownfield. The city hopes the station will anchor its East Side redevelopment plan, leading to new business investment; mixed-use, transit-oriented development; and affordable homes. As part of its extensive public outreach strategy for implementing the HUD planning grant, the consortium has held seven forums and "town halls," where an estimated 420 residents and stakeholders heard about the progress of the planning work and provided input. In January 2012, residents and stakeholders attended a town hall meeting in Bridgeport to learn about the Barnum Station feasibility study and share ideas to enhance the project.

"The Partnership's efforts have helped further a vision of the future of Bridgeport to become New England's greenest city," said Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch. "By the federal government coordinating resources and technical expertise, we have a chance of realizing a vision such as the Barnum Station project."

SPOTLIGHT ON ATLANTA, GA: COORDINATING FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

Since 2009, the Partnership for Sustainable Communities has been working with other federal and local agencies to coordinate grants and technical expertise in southwest Atlanta to bring jobs, help the housing market recover, and protect the environment. For example, an EPA Environmental Workforce Development Training Grant was awarded in 2012 to teach community residents construction and environmental cleanup skills. The trainees will help rehabilitate foreclosed homes that the city of Atlanta and the Annie E. Casey Foundation have purchased with a HUD Neighborhood Stabilization Program Grant. The East-West Streetcar, to be built with funds from DOT's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the city of Atlanta, will give southwest Atlanta residents easier access to jobs and amenities downtown.

At public meetings, residents expressed their concerns about exposure to contaminants from brownfields, excessive pollution from nearby highways, and the lack of jobs. Here, they comment on a proposed plan. Photo courtesy of the city of Atlanta.

"Such coordination is unusual for government; it's a great advance to see federal, state, and local agencies working to achieve a better outcome for families and children than they could have on their own," says Gail Hayes, director of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Atlanta Civic Site. She adds, "Federal agencies joined with city departments to discuss how we could use our resources effectively to improve economic, social, and environmental conditions in the southwest neighborhoods. Because of this enhanced coordination in all three areas, EPA, HUD, and DOT were able to achieve significant progress for communities in need."

RANSON AND CHARLES TOWN, WV

Two Cities Envision a Sustainable Future Together

Ranson and Charles Town are fighting the effects of manufacturing closures, as well as increasing growth pressures from the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area. In the past several years, Ranson has lost more than 1,500 jobs as manufacturers shut down, leaving the community with contaminated, vacant sites and a downtown in economic decline. At the same time, Jefferson County's population has been growing steadily, but with few strategies to guide the growth. Joining forces with federal and state agencies, Ranson and Charles Town have developed a plan for revitalization. The Partnership for Sustainable Communities has been a key player in moving that plan forward.

The Power of Partnership

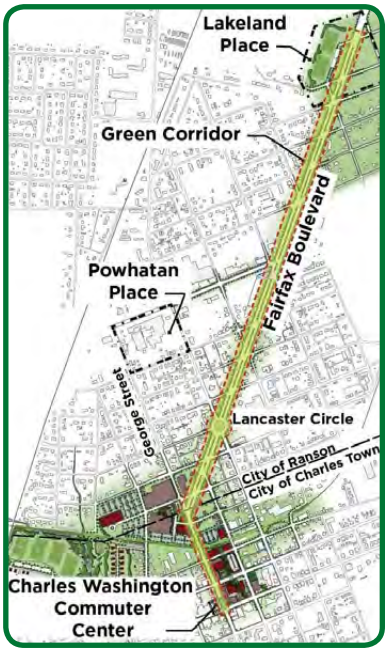
The Partnership initially helped the two cities implement recommendations from EPA brownfields assessment grants awarded in 2001, 2004, and 2006. These grants paved the way for American Public University's construction of an academic center—the first LEED-certified[6] commercial building in West Virginia—on a former brownfield. The university is also transforming a shuttered manufacturing facility into a LEED- certified office building. According to Ranson's city manager, Andy Blake, the university's investment will attract hundreds of jobs.

"If not for the work done through the brownfields grants, we would have been forced to look outside the city limits for land parcels large enough to expand our campus," says Wallace Boston, president and CEO of the American Public University System. "Instead, we have been able to compound our commitment to sustainability by reclaiming sites and reducing the impact to the surrounding countryside."

To build on this momentum, Ranson and Charles Town applied for and received an EPA Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Grant, a HUD Community Challenge Planning Grant, and a DOT TIGER II Planning Grant in 2010. With these funds, the two cities began envisioning a sustainable future. Coordination of the three grants allowed the communities to develop a cohesive plan that uses vacant, previously contaminated land for economic development, links transportation to land use, protects the environment, and provides more affordable housing.

"All the stars aligned – transportation, zoning, the environment, workforce housing. The Partnership allowed us to refine our plans into implementable steps to create a sustainable community for generations to come."

—Ranson City Manager Andy Blake



The Green Corridor will surround Fairfax Boulevard, making it easier for people to walk or bike to jobs and community facilities in both towns. Learn more at www.ransonrenewed.com. Image courtesy of the city of Ranson.

The city of Ranson received technical assistance through EPA's Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program to strengthen and articulate the plan. EPA worked with elected officials, stakeholders, and the public to identify areas for growth and analyze existing community tools. This assistance, provided in May 2011, resulted in a clear and specific action plan that helped Ranson implement the three grants ahead of schedule.

The plan centers on transforming Fairfax Boulevard, the main thoroughfare between the two cities. A "green corridor" will surround the boulevard, providing a walkable, bikeable connection between the two cities that provides access to regional job

[6] LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification provides third-party verification that a building, home, or community was designed and built using strategies to achieve high performance in sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality. From the U.S. Green Building Council, *www.usgbc.org*.

centers and community facilities. Ranson and Charles Town are using the TIGER II grant, with a local match, to redesign the road to become a "complete street" designed to be safe for drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians. These funds will also help transform a rundown historic building into a regional commuter center in downtown Charles Town, providing residents and workers with access to regional trains and buses.

In April 2012, Ranson's city council unanimously approved proposals to enact a new zoning code and comprehensive plan, moving the community one step closer to realizing its vision for growth. With the Community Challenge Grant and Building Blocks technical assistance, the city drafted new zoning requirements to develop streets that are safe and comfortable for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorized vehicles; bring buildings closer to the street; allow a mix of uses; and accommodate affordable homes. With the Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Grant, the city created a downtown plan that will develop six cleaned-up brownfields and spur the local economy. Ranson also plans to use a HUD Brownfields Economic Development Initiative Grant and Section 108 loan to clean up a former foundry. The site will be redeveloped as Powhatan Place, a mixed-use, LEED-certified development that will include a variety of housing types, stores, and recreation areas, as well as green infrastructure[7] to manage stormwater runoff.

[7] Green infrastructure strategies use vegetation, soils, and permeable pavement in settings like rain gardens, parking lots, and along streets to mimic natural processes by capturing, slowing, and filtering rainfall and stormwater runoff.

EPA BUILDING BLOCKS FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

Launched in 2011, the Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities Program provides quick, targeted technical assistance to communities. Selected communities receive assistance from private-sector and non-profit experts through workshops and engagement with decision-makers. These projects stimulate local discussions about growth and development and provide ideas on how communities can become more economically and environmentally sustainable. The workshops use tools with a proven track record and widespread application, addressing topics such as:

- Complete streets
- Green building
- Linking land use to water quality
- Matching parking supply and demand
- Using smart growth to improve fiscal and economic health
- Making neighborhoods more walkable

EPA has developed new tools and delivered assistance to 138 communities in 42 states. In some cases, the workshops are part of a coordinated effort to support the early stages of HUD regional planning or community challenge grants. Other examples of outcomes include:

- In Lincoln, Nebraska, developed and adopted policies for infill and redevelopment based on energy conservation specifications that were discussed at a Building Blocks workshop in May 2011.
- In Dover, New Hampshire, five options emerging from the Building Blocks workshop were incorporated into an update of zoning, site review, and subdivision approval policies. These changes include allowing solar, wind, and geothermal energy in all zoning categories in the city, as well as street and sidewalks upgrades to make neighborhoods more walkable.
- In Bluffton, South Carolina, identified areas for preservation and areas for development. Based on these priorities, the city created a mechanism by which development in the downtown helps finance conservation in areas the community would like to preserve.

MONTGOMERY, AL

Preserving History, Strengthening Communities on the Civil Rights Trail

The 54-mile Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail, designated in 1996 by Congress, commemorates the 1965 Voting Rights March along U.S. Highway 80. In the same year, DOT named the route an All-American Road as part of the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) National Scenic Byways Program. To receive an All-American Road designation, a road must have one-of-a-kind features that do not exist elsewhere and be considered a "destination unto itself."

The trail begins in the small town of Selma, runs through forests and farms, and ends in the historic Peacock neighborhood in Montgomery, the state capital. FHWA provides funds through its National Scenic Byways Program and is a key player in interpreting and protecting the historic route. Communities near the trail share a deep connection to the march and want to preserve its history for future generations while reviving the struggling neighborhoods surrounding the trail. That effort is a story of collaboration among federal, state, and local agencies and these communities.

The Power of Partnership

Revitalization began with 18 brownfield site assessments by EPA and the state of Alabama to determine the best sites for revitalization in the rural and underserved communities along the trail. Nine community visioning sessions supported by EPA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the National Park Service helped draft plans to connect historic points of interest in preparation for the 50th anniversary of the march. Community outreach sessions conducted by the city of Montgomery with HUD Community Development Block Grant funds led to a collection of plans with strong local support in the city of Montgomery and more rural communities.

Jeff Downes, deputy mayor of Montgomery, and Stan Meiburg, EPA Region 4 deputy regional administrator, display West Montgomery community plans for Mt. Zion Church, a historic landmark along the trail. Photo courtesy of EPA.

"When faced with the challenges of redevelopment, the keys to success are a plan that has been composed together with many stakeholders, and developing a collaborative partnership including the public and private sectors. I have no doubt in the successful culmination of the efforts to preserve the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail thanks to the support of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities and our other federal, state, and local partners."

—Mayor Todd Strange, Montgomery

EPA, FHWA, the National Park Service, and the city of Montgomery worked with the state on a green infrastructure design to absorb stormwater, which will help prevent sewage overflows into Genetta Stream in West Montgomery. Instead of maintaining underground pipes, the city will "daylight" the buried stream, bringing it back to the surface to improve drainage. The city also built a greenway around the stream to create an attractive community park with an entrance to the trail.

HUD Community Development Block Grant funds have been used for streetscape improvements, affordable homes for police and teachers, and repairs to the historic Mount Zion Church, where the march ended. The U.S. Department of Labor's Job Corps Program and the city of Montgomery trained 90 young people in green building techniques to build community gardens and renovate homes in the Peacock neighborhood. Department of Energy Weatherization Assistance Program funds also supported this community revitalization effort. EPA's Greening America's Capitals program provided technical assistance to help the city explore options to rehabilitate a section of the trail under Interstates 65 and 85.

Montgomery Mayor Todd Strange says of the trail, "It's fitting that this stretch of land—that demonstrated to the world the great things that can be accomplished when people unite to strive for a common purpose—is illustrating the dramatic results that can happen when federal agencies combine their talents and resources with state and local governments to transform areas of blight and neglect to places of natural beauty and sustainable viability. We are proud of what has been accomplished here by working together."

Genetta Park, once an industrial area, will serve as a gateway to the Selma-Montgomery Trail. Bringing Genetta Stream, now buried, to the surface will create a natural wetland to clean stormwater runoff before it is released downstream. Image courtesy of Judd Langham, 2D Studio, Birmingham, AL.

IMPROVING FUNDING PROCESSES

The Partnership is constantly looking for opportunities to help communities get the funding they need and make sure federal programs take community priorities into account. FTA worked with HUD, EPA, and other stakeholders to improve the New Starts Program, which provides funding for new rail, streetcar, bus rapid transit, and ferry systems. Proposed changes could reduce the time needed to move projects through FTA's approval process by as much as six months.

In January 2012, FTA proposed a regulatory change to:

- Evaluate projects using measures that assess a project's environmental benefits and impact on economic development as well as its impact on transportation. This change will allow FTA to consider smaller projects that might better meet a community's needs.
- Simplify how cost-effectiveness is calculated, reducing or eliminating time-consuming technical requirements that are unnecessary.
- Allow projects to be evaluated based more on local priorities, such as meeting the needs of historically underserved populations.

FTA is reviewing comments on the proposal and aims to publish the final rule later in 2012.

SUPPORTING HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE, AND EQUITABLE COMMUNITIES FOR ALL AMERICANS

HUD, DOT, and EPA are committed to building healthy, sustainable, and equitable communities for all Americans, including minority, low-income, tribal, and other vulnerable populations that experience higher levels of environmental pollution and other social and economic burdens. The agencies work together to expand community access to funding opportunities, increase transparency and meaningful participation, and promote investment in historically underrepresented communities.

For example, when reviewing grant and technical assistance applications, the Partnership agencies screen for engagement of populations not traditionally involved in planning, such as low-income people, minorities, people with limited English proficiency, youth, seniors, and persons with disabilities. HUD is working with its regional planning grantees to conduct "fair housing and equity analyses" that will provide information on regional demographics; residents' ability to find jobs, educational opportunities, and affordable places to live; and the fairness of planned investments.

CINCINNATI, OH

Restoring a Stream and a Community

The city of Cincinnati and Hamilton County are working with the Partnership for Sustainable Communities and state and local agencies on a revitalization plan focused on what at first might seem like an unlikely target—the city's combined sewer system. Built in 1906, the system is often overwhelmed in wet weather, when untreated stormwater mixes with wastewater in the combined system and overflows into water bodies or backs up into homes. The city is investing in green infrastructure such as rain gardens, reforestation, and street and building upgrades to manage stormwater. In doing so, it hopes not only to solve the sewage overflow problem, but also to revitalize the low-income community of South Fairmount.

As part of an innovative settlement with EPA, the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati is investigating integrated green and "gray" stormwater solutions instead of installing large drainage pipes (a typical "gray" solution).[8] Although both designs can reduce stormwater runoff, the green alternative is less expensive and more attractive, and can produce more jobs. An important goal of the parties is the restoration of Lick Run, a stream in South Fairmount that was buried as the area developed. The sewer district hopes to achieve required runoff reductions by daylighting the stream and restoring the stream channel. The sewer district will submit this alternative approach for the combined sewer system to EPA for approval. If the pilot shows that combined sewer overflow control goals can be met, Cincinnati will be able to proceed with these innovative projects.

Rain gardens at the HUD-owned St. Francis Senior Apartments replaced excess pavement to reduce stormwater runoff. A monitoring station, pictured at right, measures runoff levels. Photo courtesy of EPA.

"Cincinnati is demonstrating that there are sustainable solutions to challenges that traditionally would have been managed only through gray infrastructure. The initiative has resulted in rich engagement and participation from public and private agencies all across the spectrum to ensure these projects leave a successful legacy of sustainability and partnerships for communities of the future. Together, we're not only addressing combined sewer overflow issues but also helping revitalize our communities."

—Cincinnati Vice Mayor Roxanne Qualls

The Power of Partnership

The Partnership helped focus investment and agency collaboration. EPA helped the sewer district explore green infrastructure options and, because there is little data on the performance of large green infrastructure projects, is working with the city to monitor pilot projects. The city used HUD Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds to purchase properties and remove rundown buildings. The Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority received a HUD Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant to develop a comprehensive neighborhood transformation plan for the English Woods/Fairmount community. A HUD Community Challenge Grant is funding an overhaul of Cincinnati's zoning code that will encourage a mix of land uses, affordable homes, and more compact development. In May 2012, 700 city residents gathered to help develop a form-based code[9] to restore the character of city neighborhoods. The code changes also will remove zoning-related obstacles to watershed-friendly strategies, such as reducing impervious surfaces by changing parking requirements.

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8 Gray infrastructure includes conventional piped drainage and water treatment systems.

9 Form-based codes are development regulations that control the physical form of buildings and public spaces, unlike traditional zoning regulations, which regulate uses.

The Partnership is also supporting revitalization by promoting development that uses transit investments to connect housing and job opportunities. "Transit-oriented development is really about creating walkable, vibrant communities with a diversity of people and opportunities, all in close proximity to each other," says Charles Graves, director of city planning and buildings.

The Cincinnati Streetcar project, for example, partially funded by a TIGER II grant from DOT and currently under construction, will add a new streetcar line to improve access to major employers, the riverfront, and area attractions. Meanwhile, a HUD-funded demonstration project will lead to new policies that encourage affordable housing and small-business entrepreneurship along the streetcar line.

Greater Cincinnati Works does infrastructure work to prepare for the Cincinnati Streetcar. Image courtesy of the city of Cincinnati.

SPOTLIGHT ON WYANDANCH, NY: WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

The Partnership has been working with Wyandanch, New York, in central Long Island, to implement a major community revitalization initiative. The town aims to transform its economically distressed downtown into a transit-oriented, pedestrian-friendly, and environmentally sustainable destination. As part of this revitalization effort, the town received EPA Clean Water State Revolving Funds to install a sanitary sewer system. The new sewer system is key to the revitalization effort because Wyandanch lacked this essential infrastructure for the proposed redevelopment. In addition to ongoing technical assistance from EPA, HUD, and DOT, Wyandanch received funding from DOT to study the feasibility of building a train station and, later, for the actual construction. The revitalization effort will make the neighborhood more walkable, create connections between bus and rail, and make it easier for visitors to reach downtown parks and restaurants. The Partnership continues to work with Wyandanch to support its vision for economic and environmental sustainability.

The vision for the Wyandanch downtown includes a mix of uses and housing types; a connected network of streets, civic spaces, and parks; and streets designed for pedestrians and vehicles. Image courtesy of Torti Gallas and Partners.

MOLINE, IL

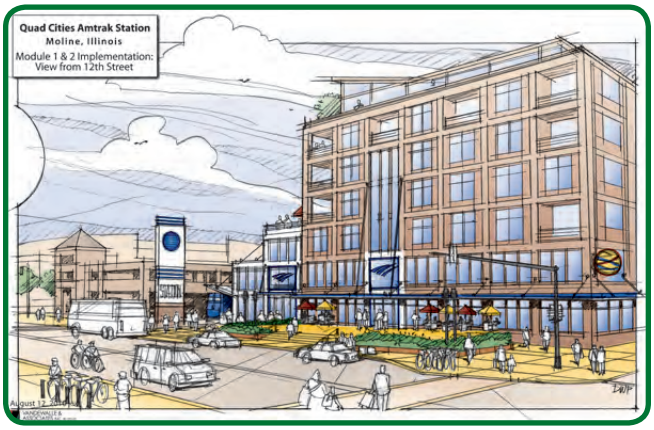
Historic Preservation and Green Building Meet in New Transit Center

To prepare for new intercity train service slated to begin in 2014, the city of Moline and MetroLINK, the regional transit provider, are working to transform an old warehouse into the Moline Multimodal Station. The station will house Amtrak service that will reconnect the Quad Cities to Chicago—and, eventually, to Iowa City, Des Moines, and Omaha—and should spark development opportunities in downtown Moline. The Moline station will include new construction as well as green renovation of the historic O'Rourke Building on a brownfield site. The project is receiving funding and expertise from the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, the Illinois Department of Transportation, and the city of Moline.

The multimodal station, which will include the train station and the adjacent existing bus station, will help residents and visitors travel more easily between the Quad Cities and Chicago and other destinations. It will contain Amtrak facilities on the ground level and private development on the upper floors. Complete build-out of the station area will include $100 million in housing, commercial office space, parking garages, and hotel space.

The Power of Partnership

"Providing federal funds for facilities like this one in Moline can reduce our dependence on oil, relieve congestion, and improve air quality," says Therese McMillan, deputy administrator of the FTA, which administers a DOT TIGER II grant that funds the project. "This facility will let people keep more of their hard-earned money in their pocket instead of spending it at the gas pump." Locating homes near the transit center also gives residents more options for commuting to work and running errands. To provide more downtown housing options, a HUD Neighborhood Stabilization Grant is being used to rehabilitate the nearby historic Washington Square Apartments.



The proposed Quad Cities Amtrak Station will ease travel between the Quad Cities (Davenport and Bettendorf, Iowa; and Rock Island, Moline, and East Moline, Illinois), Chicago, and other destinations. Image courtesy of Renew Moline.

"Seventeen years working in government and this was the first time I had DOT, the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, HUD, and EPA in the same room at the same time talking about the same projects in a coordinated and efficient way."

—Heather Roberts, Business Development Coordinator, MetroLINK

Because the building is in the Moline Downtown Commercial Historic District, redevelopment must follow historic preservation guidelines to receive a tax credit. At the same time, the city's green building requirements call for LEED Silver certification. These potentially conflicting requirements could deter developers unfamiliar with navigating such a complex project. EPA worked closely with FTA, the city, and MetroLINK to clear this hurdle. EPA provided assistance by developing case studies of successful green preservation projects, offering templates for Moline to follow. The Delta Institute, an EPA grantee, provided a green building readiness evaluation, which included a LEED certification strategy. MetroLINK and the city provided these materials to developers in a workshop that illustrated how to use historic preservation guidelines and tax credits while achieving LEED certification. This support was instrumental in helping FTA move the project forward without delays. Construction on the project is expected to begin in August 2012.

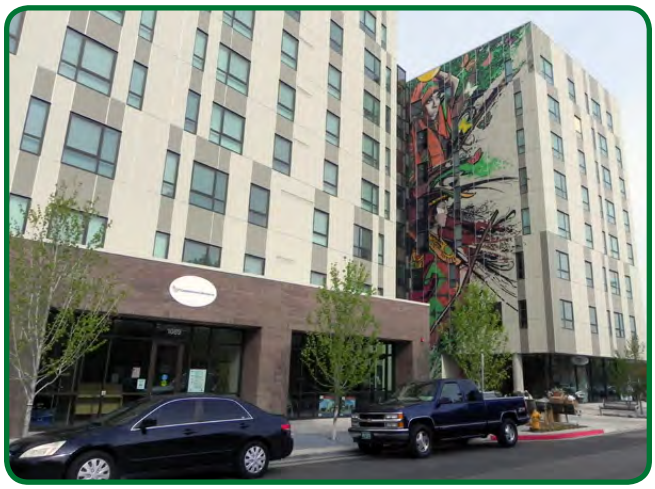
"If it weren't for the Partnership, EPA would not have been in a position to help us with our TIGER II project," says Heather Roberts, business development coordinator for MetroLINK. "We are committed to attaining a LEED Silver certification or better on our project. This goal was made so much easier because of the coordinated discussion between DOT and EPA."

DENVER, CO

Creating a Sustainable and Inclusive Neighborhood

Based on the Denver region's plan for growth, which included transportation as a core element, the Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD) developed FasTracks, an ambitious transit expansion plan. The FasTracks plan proposed nine new or extended rail lines, more than 55 new stations, bus rapid transit, and enhancements to existing bus and rail service across the eight-county region. The business community, local governments, environmental groups, and others supported FasTracks as a way to make the Denver region more livable, affordable, and economically competitive. Investing in this new infrastructure would attract jobs and support new business growth, while the expanded transit would reduce traffic congestion and pollution. In 2004, voters approved a ballot measure to fund FasTracks through a regional sales tax.

FasTracks' new transit corridors and stations present the Denver region with many opportunities for transit-oriented development—walkable neighborhoods near transit stations that make it easy for people to visit, live, or work nearby without having to drive. After FasTracks passed, local jurisdictions began planning transit-oriented development on land near both existing and planned stations and formed partnerships with property owners, developers, and neighborhood leaders. The La Alma/Lincoln Park neighborhood hosts one of many redevelopment efforts now underway.



The Tapiz Apartments are a HUD-owned senior housing complex in La Alma/Lincoln Park. The building features a mural by a local artist. Photo courtesy of EPA.

"The Partnership provided excitement around the issue of collaborative planning across disciplines. Without it, we wouldn't have been able to attract decision-makers to the table in the areas where we had gaps to fill (energy, stormwater, and transportation). With the decision-makers participating in the visioning and implementation exercises, we were able to actually take the plans and make them a reality. This is, I believe, due to the Partnership's oversight."

—Kimball Crangle, Senior Developer, Denver Housing Authority

The Power of Partnership

La Alma/Lincoln Park, just south of downtown, is one of Denver's oldest neighborhoods. Located next to the 10th & Osage transit station, it has a distinctive identity as a culturally diverse community with a long tradition of valuing the arts. The neighborhood is attractive for reinvestment because of its proximity to transit, many nearby amenities, and active involvement by residents. The Denver Housing Authority (DHA) owns an aging residential development near the station. Next to both the DHA parcel and the transit station were two undeveloped parcels with minor contamination. Seizing the opportunity to transform the vacant parcels and the DHA site, the city and county of Denver, DHA, and RTD formed a partnership to create a new vision for what would become the Mariposa District.

To ensure that the character and quality of the Mariposa development would fit the community's needs and values, more than 120 community meetings and group interviews were held with residents, community leaders, city agencies, businesses, and local government representatives. Community members outlined their vision for the redevelopment, which included buildings and services that met the community's needs, economic self-sufficiency, more jobs and job training, homes affordable to people at various income levels, safety and security, more education opportunities, enhancing residents' health, and fostering a strong sense of community. The result of this intensive

community engagement was a master plan that would guide the redevelopment by looking at the neighborhood as a whole, rather than parcel by parcel. Based on this vision, the parcels were purchased by the city and county of Denver from the Regional Transportation District in 2007 and then assessed and cleaned up with funding from EPA brownfield grants to the city.

State and local officials asked the Partnership for Sustainable Communities to support their plans. In 2009, DOT Secretary Ray LaHood, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, and EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson visited to kick off the work.

The Mariposa redevelopment shows how the three agencies are working together and with the community. Funding from the EPA Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization and HUD funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act helped make construction of the 100-unit Tapiz Apartments possible, providing affordable homes for seniors and disabled people. The redevelopment project was a Sustainable Communities Brownfields Pilot, under which the Partnership organized three workshops that brought together community representatives, residents of DHA housing, city agencies, EPA,

SPOTLIGHT ON CALIFORNIA: PLANNING FOR DEVELOPMENT AROUND HIGH-SPEED RAIL

The California High-Speed Rail project offers an opportunity to create cleaner, cost-effective transportation options and development patterns. In 2011, EPA, HUD, FTA, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), and the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) signed an agreement to work together to use environmentally sustainable practices in planning, siting, designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining the high-speed rail system. Many tasks are underway. For example, CHSRA and FRA are investing grant money in station-area planning in several cities, and Partnership agencies are helping coordinate new and existing federal, state, and local investments. Partnership agencies also regularly collaborate with the high-speed rail project team to provide technical assistance on planning, energy, water resources, materials, and policy and use their networks to bring in other experts as needed. For example, the Partnership engaged the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, which helped the team create a strategic energy plan for powering the rail system with 100 percent renewable energy.

The High-Speed Rail project would benefit Fresno's downtown redevelopment and provide fast transit options to other California cities. The 255-mile trip from Fresno to Los Angeles, for example, would take 1 hour and 24 minutes. Image courtesy of the California High-Speed Rail Authority.

The proposed 800-mile system would connect major cities with up to 26 stations. Fresno is slated to have the first station. Good planning will be essential to making the station an asset for the city. Well-planned rail stations can attract vibrant, walkable development with diverse housing, transportation, and economic opportunities. The Partnership is working with the Fresno Strong Cities, Strong Communities team to provide technical assistance on the station-area planning. Strong Cities, Strong Communities is a White House initiative to strengthen local capacity and spark economic growth in communities while ensuring taxpayer dollars are used wisely and effectively. EPA, DOT, and HUD regional staff participated in a Strong Cities, Strong Communities-led workshop to begin planning the station area. They also provided input on the city's proposal for station-area planning and are working with the Strong Cities, Strong Communities team and the city of Fresno to coordinate federal investments in the station area.

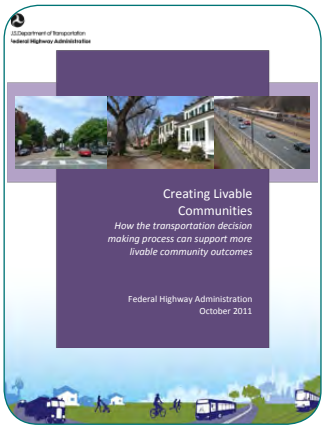
HUD, and DOT to develop more detailed implementation plans around specific issues like transportation, energy efficiency, and green infrastructure. A 2011 HUD HOPE VI grant helped fund further implementation activities, including an environmentally friendly and health-conscious design for Mariposa. New construction will use 50 percent less energy than comparable conventional buildings, and Mariposa will incorporate green infrastructure to handle stormwater. "Mixed-income housing, a healthy living environment, and transportation choices are essential ingredients of sustainability. The Mariposa community has all of these elements and is a great example of how housing policies can improve communities," says HUD Regional Administrator Rick Garcia.

DOT funds helped make the 10th & Osage station more accessible for people with disabilities and increased the frequency of train service, better connecting La Alma/Lincoln Park to other parts of Denver. The Mariposa redevelopment can be a model for transit-oriented development around the new stations built under FasTracks. When complete, Mariposa will feature better access to a range of transportation choices and will replace old, dilapidated public housing with more than 800 units of mixed-income housing, maintaining the same number of affordable units on the site and creating new homes at a variety of price points. The extensive community involvement has helped ensure that the neighborhood will preserve its character and sense of place while creating opportunities to bring in new residents and businesses.

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF TRANSPORTATION IN LIVABILITY

In 2011, FHWA conducted several regional livability workshops around the country to explore transportation's role in improving quality of life. The meetings brought together leaders from metropolitan planning organizations, transportation agencies, city and county governments, public and private developers, nonprofit organizations, housing agencies, environmental and resource preservation agencies, and others. FHWA developed resources to explain transportation's role in enhancing quality of life, including videos with local leaders and a booklet called "Creating Livable Communities" that provides strategies for considering livability objectives in transportation investment decisions. These and other resources are available at *www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability*.

Creating Livable Communities *(available at www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/creating_livable_communities/livabilitybooklet.pdf) provides strategies on how to effectively consider and incorporate livability objectives in transportation investment decisions.*



WELLPINIT, WA

Transportation Options and Community Planning Lead to New Economic Opportunities

Since the creation of its reservation in 1881, the Spokane Tribe of Indians has been seeking to achieve its vision of sovereignty through self-sufficiency. With a growing population but declining revenues, the tribe struggles with high poverty levels, limited employment opportunities, few transportation choices, and a lack of both infrastructure and housing. These interrelated challenges require innovative solutions and comprehensive, integrated planning.

To address these challenges, the tribe partnered with Native American nonprofit Antithesis Research and the Partnership for Sustainable Communities to improve environmental and economic conditions. Through a 2010 HUD Community Challenge Grant, the Spokane Tribe is bringing together community, government, and business leaders to prepare a community master plan to assess the tribe's needs and create integrated solutions for housing, transportation, infrastructure, and economic development.

The Power of Partnership

With a 47 percent unemployment rate on the reservation, the tribe is focused on supporting economic development and helping residents get better access to jobs. One strategy is to improve transportation choices; in 2008, the tribe completed a feasibility study that determined that lack of transportation options was the major reason for long-term unemployment. The study crystallized the problem and put in motion other requests for assistance. In 2009, the tribe received an FTA Tribal Transit Planning Grant to complete a transit development plan.

The Moccasin Express provides residents reliable transportation to jobs and amenities. Photo courtesy of the Spokane Tribe of Indians.

"The sustainability project has brought a wide variety of folks from different walks of life to the same table to discuss and lay the foundation for sustainability actions for the future."

—Rudy Peone, Secretary-Elect, Spokane Tribal Business Council

"The reservation is 45 miles from Spokane, and there are no transit systems that connect," says Chamisa Radford, the tribe's planning and economic development director. "If you don't have a car or your car breaks down, you lose your job." With funds from the FTA Tribal Transit Program, the state, and the tribe's fuel taxes, the tribe now operates two bus routes and a vanpool service dubbed the Moccasin Express. The tribe is working to locate transit centers near homes and conduct a marketing campaign to increase ridership. Today, the Moccasin Express and two bus routes provide reliable transportation for more than 1,000 riders a month.

Working with the Partnership, the tribe has identified additional community needs, such as addressing the reservation's aging water infrastructure. The tribe is receiving technical assistance in 2012 through EPA's Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Program to plan for and address water shortages, pipe failures, and sewer system maintenance. Improving the water infrastructure will give the reservation safer, more reliable water and sewer service, which will enhance the quality of life for residents and support the development of new tribal business enterprises.

"Previously, the tribe had to work with individual departments completely separate from each other," says Scott Radford, vice chair of Antithesis Research. "There was duplication of work, or the work was not as comprehensive as it could have been. Now, water, transportation, and housing issues are being addressed together at one time."

The Partnership has also helped inspire collaboration within the tribe, says Chamisa Radford. "We actually have grant writers from different departments meeting together for the first time, so we can be more strategic about which resources to apply for and how to have a single project meet multiple needs. We are learning a new system, and I see great benefits."

THE ROAD AHEAD

The Road Ahead

As the Partnership enters its fourth year, HUD, DOT, and EPA continue to collaborate with each other and with other federal, tribal, state, regional, and local partners to consider housing, transportation, and environmental policy as they exist in the real world—inextricably connected. When agencies talk regularly, they can help communities solve problems more easily—and avoid the problems that come from lack of coordination. Community members, political leaders, and government staff across the country have made it clear that interagency collaboration has greatly improved communication, making government more efficient and providing better results for communities. The Partnership will continue to share models of local successes, coordinate to make government work better, and help communities find innovative solutions to the challenges they face now and in the future.

Learn More

Find the latest information on the activities of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities at *www.sustainablecommunities.gov.* The site features:

- Announcements about grants and technical assistance from each agency.
- Tools, publications, and other resources.
- A map of grant and technical assistance recipients.
- Community case studies, fact sheets, and videos.
- Contact information for staff in regional offices.

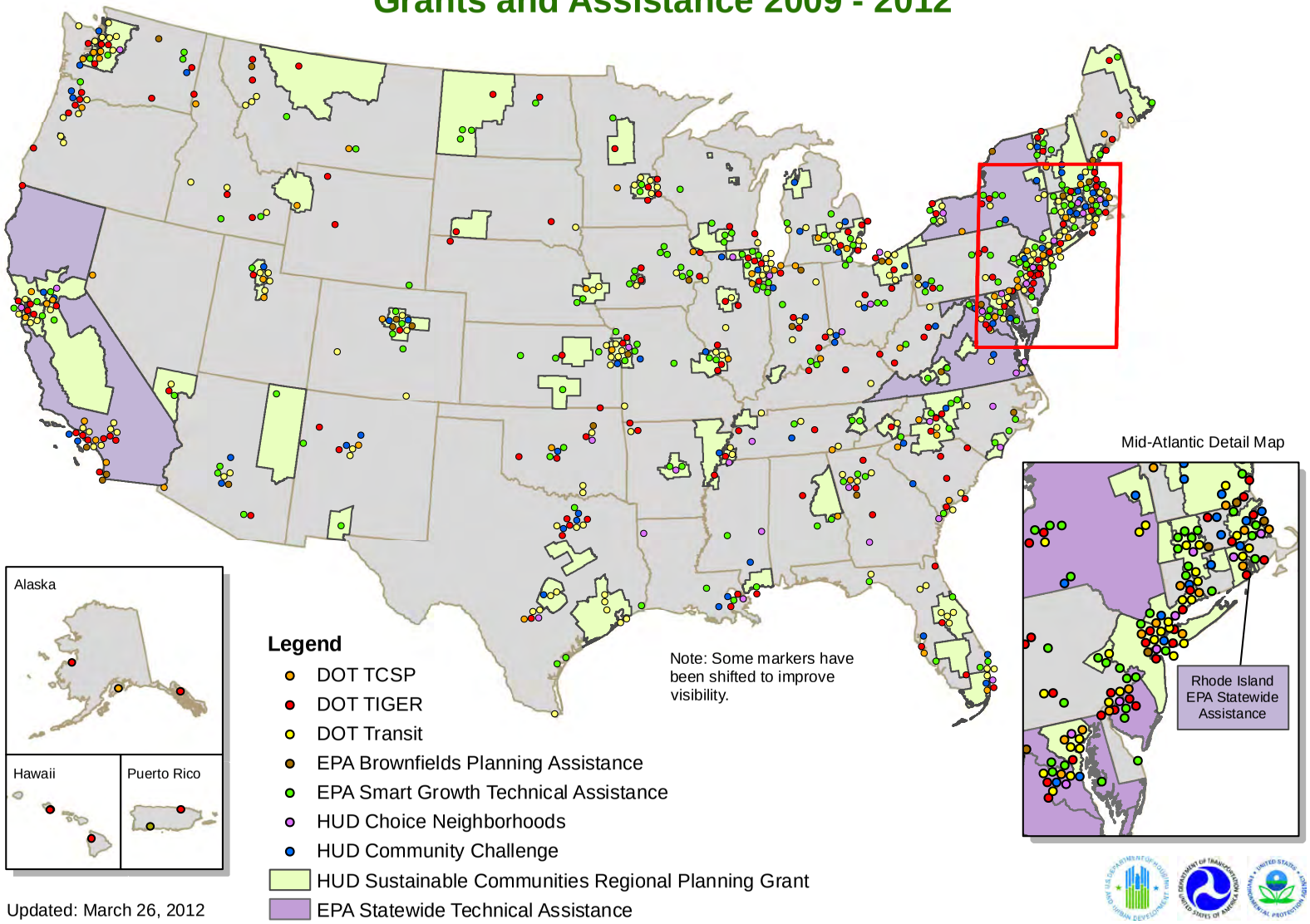
SUPPORTING SMALL TOWNS AND RURAL AREAS

The Partnership has joined with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to explore opportunities to help small towns and rural areas plan for long-term growth. The agencies are investing funds more effectively by sharing information and coordinating actions.
For example:

- In western North Dakota, a 2010 USDA Rural Business Opportunity Grant helped the region identify the impacts of a population increase resulting from the oil and gas industry that is overwhelming existing housing and infrastructure. The community was able to use that work to develop a long-term strategy to guide future infrastructure investments through a HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant.
- In southwest Iowa, a 2010 USDA grant that develops markets for locally grown food prompted an eight-county region to work with leaders in Omaha and Council Bluffs to include local food strategies as part of a 2011 HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant.
- USDA alerted organizations in eastern Arkansas about HUD grant opportunities. The East Arkansas Planning and Development District joined forces with a coalition of state and local agencies, nonprofits, and colleges to apply for a HUD Regional Planning Grant to help address problems of persistent poverty. The grant, which was awarded in 2011, will help shape the area's economy for years to come.

In 2011, the Partnership and USDA jointly published *Supporting Sustainable Rural Communities* (available at *www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/publications.htm*). This report explains how Partnership work can help rural communities achieve their goals, describes programs at the four agencies that are working in rural places, and provides case studies of small towns and rural regions that have implemented sustainable approaches with assistance from federal agencies.

HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities Grants and Assistance 2009 - 2012



Updated: March 26, 2012

As of April 2012, the Partnership agencies have received more than 7,700 applications for assistance, requesting almost $102 billion. The Partnership has been able to fund 744 projects in communities in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico with approximately $3.51 billion, representing fewer than 10 percent of applications.

United States Environmental Protection Agency

Office of Sustainable Communities (1807T)
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www.epa.gov/smartgrowth
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www.sustainablecommunities.gov

Photos on front cover (from left to right): Atlanta, GA; Ranson, WV; Cincinnati, OH; Spokane, WA

Photos on back cover (from left to right): Bridgeport, CT; Moline, IL; Denver, CO; Montgomery, AL