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SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Regional Planning
Grants Guide



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Working Towards Completing the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant

July 19th, 2010

The 2010 Sustainable Communities Planning Grant program provides Illinois communities and regional collaborations with an opportunity to create a long-term comprehensive plan that incorporates housing, transportation, economic development, job creation, water and other resource management. As a joint project of HUD, DOT, and the EPA, with HUD as the lead agency, the 2010 Sustainable Communities Program provides funding in two categories: (1) Sustainable Planning Grants and (2) grants to modify existing plans.

This summary was created by Illinois ResourceNet technical assistance providers to help potential applicants quickly find important information in the NOFA, such as eligibility, program goals, and requirements of the applicant collaborative. Additionally, by summarizing the evaluation criteria, this summary provides the basis for creating a work plan that will facilitate the completion of this complex NOFA.

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Purpose of the Program

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The Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program (SCRPG) will support metropolitan and multijurisdictional planning efforts that integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments in a manner that empowers jurisdictions to consider the interdependent challenges of:

- Economic competitiveness and revitalization;
- Social equity, inclusion, and access to opportunity;
- Energy use and climate change; and
- Public health and environmental impact.

Outcomes

Page 3 in the HUD NOFA

Funding from this Program will support the development and implementation of **Regional Plans for Sustainable Development (RPSD)** that:

- a. Identify affordable housing, transportation investment, water infrastructure, economic development, land use planning, environmental conservation, energy system, open space, and other infrastructure priorities for the region;
- b. Clearly define a single, integrated plan for regional development that addresses potential population growth or decline over a minimum 20-year time frame, sets appropriate 3 to 5 year benchmark performance targets, and delineates strategies to meet established performance goals;
- c. Establish performance goals and measures that are, at a minimum, consistent with the Sustainability Partnership's Livability Principles;
- d. Utilize geo-coded data sets and other metrics in developing, implementing, monitoring, and assessing the performance goals of various reinvestment scenarios;
- e. Provide detailed plans, policies, and implementation strategies to be implemented by all participating jurisdictions over time to meet planning goals;
- f. Prioritize projects that facilitate the implementation of the regional plan and identify responsible implementing entities (public, nonprofit, or private) and funding sources;
- g. Show how the proposed plan will establish consistency with HUD, DOT, and EPA programs, and policies, such as consolidated plans, "Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice," "Long Range Transportation Plans," and "Asset Management Plans," including strategies to modify existing plans, where appropriate; and
- h. Engage residents and stakeholders substantively and meaningfully in the development of the shared vision and its implementation early and throughout the process, including

communities traditionally marginalized from such processes, while accommodating limited English speakers, persons with disabilities, and the elderly.

Program Goals

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- a. Foster the development of sustainable communities throughout the United States that are consistent with the following Livability Principles (see *Greener Communities, Greater Opportunities: New Ideas for Sustainable Development and Economic Growth*):
 - i. 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.
 - ii. Expand location- and energy-efficient housing
 - iii. Improve the choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.
- e. Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.
- f. Support metropolitan areas and multijurisdictional partnerships that commit to adopt integrated plans, strategies, and management tools to become more sustainable.
- g. Facilitate strong alliances of residents and regional interest groups that are able to maintain a long-term vision for a region over time and simultaneously support progress through incremental sustainable development practices.
- h. Build greater transparency and accountability into planning and implementation efforts.

- i. Expedite implementation of the Livability Principles through changes in local zoning and land use laws and regulations that remove barriers to sustainable development for housing, economic development, transportation, and related water, sewer, and other environmental quality issues.
- j. Align local, state, and tribal capital improvement programs with the Livability Principles.
- k. Assist all regions to move toward sustainability and livability, and, for the regions that have shown a long-term commitment to sustainability and livability, prepare them for implementation and to demonstrate on-the-ground results.

Program Outcomes

Pages 9-10 in the HUD NOFA

The outcomes of the SCRP will be a generation of regional plans that are configured to produce the following:

- a. Creation of shared elements in regional transportation, housing, water, and air quality plans tied to local comprehensive land use and capital investment plans.
- b. Aligned federal planning and investment resources that mirror the local and regional strategies for achieving sustainable communities.
- c. Increased participation and decision-making in developing and implementing a long-range vision for the region by populations traditionally marginalized in public planning processes.
- d. Reduced social and economic disparities for the low-income and communities of color within the target region.
- e. Decrease in per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and transportation-related emissions for the region.
- f. Decrease in overall combined housing and transportation costs per household.
- g. Increase in the share of residential and commercial construction on underutilized infill development sites that encourage revitalization, while minimizing displacement in neighborhoods with significant disadvantaged populations.
- h. Increased proportion of low and very low-income households within a 30-minute transit commute of major employment centers in urban, suburban, and rural settings. HUD will work with grantees to establish the performance measures used to track progress toward

desired outcomes. Applicants may identify additional outcomes that are priorities for their regional plan.

Funding Range

Page 16-17 in the HUD NOFA

A grant range of \$200,000 to \$2,000,000 is available to:

- Medium-sized regions population between 200,000 and 499,999 within a defined area;
- Metropolitan statistical areas (MSA);
- Micropolitan statistical areas (μ SA);
- or a jurisdiction of one or more metropolitan planning organizations (MPO).

A grant range of \$100,000 to \$1,000,000 is available to:

- Regions, communities, or town areas with populations of less than 200,000 in a defined area;
- Micropolitan Statistical Area;
- A jurisdiction of one or more MPOs;
- Or, if outside the boundaries of a μ SA or MPO, the self-designated boundaries of the applicant consortium.

Period of Performance

Page 17 in the HUD NOFA

The period of performance shall not exceed 36 months. The period of availability of funds shall be in compliance with 24 CFR part 85.23. A grantee must liquidate all obligations incurred under the award not later than 90 days after the end of the funding period.

Eligible Applicants

Pages 17-18 in the HUD NOFA

In this program, an eligible applicant is a multijurisdictional and multisector partnership consisting of a consortium of government entities and non-profit partners.

- a. A consortium representing a region that includes the jurisdiction of a MPO or MPOs; a MSA, μ SA, or a metropolitan division, *must include* the following:
 - i. The traditional principal city (or cities if more than one) located within the boundaries of the region if the region, is within a Metropolitan Statistical Area;
 - ii. The city, county, or any other unit of general local government with the largest population located within the region, if different from (a.) or if in a Micropolitan Statistical Area;
 - iii. Additional cities, counties, or units of general local government and Indian Tribes that will ensure that the consortium represents no less than 50 percent of the population residing within the region;
 - iv. The MPO, or the regional planning agency that facilitates planning and associated
 - v. management activities for the geography represented by the applicant, or if the region has multiple MPOs, all MPOs that have jurisdiction within the designated region;
 - vi. A nonprofit organization, foundation, or educational institution within the region that has the capacity to engage a diverse representation of the general population, and the ability to work in partnership with the units of general local government and the MPO or MPOs comprising a consortium to advance the program objectives of the Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Program as described in Section G.1., Purpose of the Program.

- b. A consortium representing a non-defined area must, at a minimum, include the following:
 - i. Cities, counties, or units of general local government and Indian Tribes representing at least 50 percent of the population residing within the region;
 - ii. If such an organization exists within the boundaries of the region, a Rural Planning
 - iii. Organization or Council of Governments; and
 - iv. A non-profit organization, foundation, or educational institution within the region that has the ability to engage a diverse representation of the general population, and the ability to work in partnership with the units of general local government to advance the program objectives of the Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Program as described Section G.1., Purpose of the Program.

The Role of the Consortium

Pages 19-20 in the HUD NOFA

The consortium is intended collectively to have the capacity and experience to carry out the proposed activities in the target geography and to enter into an agreement to submit a single application for the Sustainable Communities Planning Grant Program funding. HUD considers the interdependence of the participating partners an asset in the grant application process. In its application, a consortium shall designate **a lead applicant**. A lead applicant may be any one of the required component entities forming the consortium, as described above. The lead applicant shall have responsibility for submitting the application to HUD, and a partnership agreement, memorandum of understanding, or other proof of commitment to work together must be submitted with the application, and must be executed by all consortium members.

Cost Sharing or Matching

Page 21 in the HUD NOFA

Matching funds are not required. However, applicants must provide 20 percent of the requested funding amount in leveraged resources in the form of cash and/or verified in-kind contributions or a combination of these sources. Successful applicants must have the required amount of leveraged resources (20 percent) at the time of signing the cooperative agreement. The type and amount of leverage plays significantly into the evaluation of proposals; please refer to the evaluation section for more details.

Eligible Activities

Pages 22-28 in the HUD NOFA

Eligible activities include tasks necessary to develop a comprehensive Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, to align investments with this plan, to improve the management capability to implement the plan, and to develop relevant policy, planning, and evaluation capacity. Applicants are not limited to the activities described below and are not required to address all of the activities but shall address those necessary to develop a comprehensive RPSD as is appropriate to their local context. All eligible activities are applicable to Category 1 and Category 2 applicants, unless otherwise stated. Applicants shall undertake activities necessary to:

- a. **Establish coordinated intergovernmental planning and secure agreements** among jurisdictions, regional planning units, state government, public authorities, special districts,

and related public and private entities to support the goals of the Sustainable Communities Program;

b. Develop a comprehensive Regional Plan for Sustainable Development

- i. Adopt a housing plan (more information in the document)
 - ii. Incorporate equity and fair housing analysis into regional planning
 - iii. Advance regional transportation planning and the development of transportation networks
 - iv. Advance water infrastructure planning
 - v. Perform environmental planning
 - vi. Plan for economic development activities
 - vii. Conduct scenario planning that allows the RPSD to project a variety of economic growth possibilities and anticipate responses to each of them.
 - viii. Conduct comprehensive climate change impacts assessments to guide regional planning and implementation strategies.
- c. Identify immediate and long-term policies** including local land use, zoning, building, and energy codes, land acquisition and assembly, infrastructure investment, tax policy, administrative procedures, and legislative proposals that influence where growth and development take place, including the type, intensity, and timing of economic and housing development, environmental protection, and investment in transportation and water facilities and services.
- d. Align infrastructure investment to ensure equitable land use planning** consistent with the RPSD.
- e. Ensure public decision-making and meaningful resident participation**
- f. Identify measures to track the progress toward creating sustainable communities** by employing statistical and qualitative analysis of specific indicators developed in partnership with the appropriate federal, state, regional, and local agencies.
- g. Strengthen management and decision-making capacities** of applicable government units, tribal entities, planning organizations, nonprofit institutions, and other partners to execute the aforementioned elements of sustainable regional planning.
- h. Engage in site-specific planning and design of capital projects or programs** to be included in the RPSD and of clear regional significance associated with implementing the RPSD. This activity is only eligible for Category 2 applicants.

- i. **Preparation of administrative and regulatory measures** for the region, metropolitan planning organization, or jurisdictions participating in the RPSD.
- j. **Studies and research on the legal authority** to explore revisions in state statutes or local government charters or regulations that govern or control local government operations so that the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development can be enabled, financed, and implemented.
- k. **Technical planning studies** concerning local development issues, priorities, or suggested new approaches to housing, economic development, capital improvement programming, or community relations to further the integration of local objectives with broader regional concerns consistent with the Livability Principles.

Applicant Information

Page 33 in the HUD NOFA

- **Application Format:**

The application narrative response to the Rating Factors is limited to a maximum of 25 pages (excluding appendices and worksheets) of size 8½ x 11” using a 12-point (minimum) font with not less than ¾” margins on all sides. HUD will not refer to websites for information pertinent to the narrative response. Any materials that the applicant intends to have included in the formal review should be incorporated in the 25-page limit of the proposal narrative. Photographs, maps, and charts that describe local conditions are encouraged as appendices and will not count toward the proposal narrative. A maximum of 15 pages will be allowed as appendices. Materials provided in the appendices should be referenced and discussed in the narrative response. Materials provided in the appendices should directly apply to the specific rating factor narrative. Information that is not referenced or does not directly apply to a specific narrative response may not be evaluated by reviewers. Applicants are strongly urged not to submit information that is not required and/or requested by the NOFA or does not directly apply to a specific narrative response.

- **Application Abstract:**

An abstract with a summary of the objectives and expected results (two-page maximum) must be included in the proposal. Information contained in the abstract will not be considered in the evaluation and scoring of your application. Any information you wish to be considered should be provided under the appropriate rating factor response.

HUD Evaluation Criteria for the Narrative



Answering all of the questions and evaluation point criteria established by a federal RFP is essential for a high scoring proposal. With this in mind, one of IRN's suggested best practices in federal grant proposal development includes using the evaluation criteria as an outline to construct your proposal. This section provides the skeleton framework for this approach and functions as a working document. This format breaks out each major section of the proposal evaluation criteria with space to develop your answers and align your narrative with the criteria. This format streamlines the proposal development process by providing a quick and easy reference to the criteria directly above your narrative.

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Rating Factor 1: Capacity of the Applicant and Organizational Experience (10 points)

This factor addresses the consortium's **capacity** to successfully implement the proposed activities in a timely manner. Rating under this factor evaluates the organizational structure of the consortium undertaking the program. The rating of the "applicant" or the "applicant's staff" for technical merit or threshold compliance, unless otherwise specified, includes subcontractors, consultants, sub-recipients, community-based organizations, and members of consortia that are firmly committed to your project. In rating this factor, HUD will consider:

- a. *Organizational Capacity and Qualification (7 points)*. All applicants shall provide a narrative explaining how the consortium is organized and how it will function. It *shall include*
 - i. a description of the leadership responsibilities, member responsibilities, and procedures for allocating resources, setting goals, and settling disputes among the member organizations.
 - ii. It shall include an explanation of the capacity and relevant, recent (within the last 3 years) experience of each partner organization.
 - iii. Applicants should explain how each member of the consortium will support the project. HUD is particularly interested in the consortium's experience in preparing and implementing regional housing, transportation, and related infrastructure plans.
 - iv. Applicants must provide an organizational chart, evidence of a memorandum of agreement, or other proof of commitment to work together (bold original).
 - v. The organizational chart must delineate responsibilities of all the consortium members (the lead applicant, as well as their partners).
 - vi. The applicant shall provide evidence of the experience and accomplishment of members in developing and implementing regional, multijurisdictional, or other large-scale efforts in the areas of housing, transportation, community development, economic and human development, environment, water infrastructure, and energy in a comprehensive and coordinated fashion. This should include experience in outreach efforts involving low-income persons, particularly those living in revitalization areas where funds are proposed to be

used; residents of public housing, minorities, limited English and non-English speaking persons, and persons with disabilities.

Sample Response Box:

b. *Capability and Qualification of Key Personnel (3 points)*

- Applicants shall demonstrate that they either have sufficient personnel or the ability to procure qualified experts or professionals with the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities in preparing and coordinating regional plans, including housing, transportation, land use, and infrastructure plans.
- Applicants should be prepared to initiate eligible activities within 120 days of the effective date of the grant award. In rating this factor, HUD will consider the extent to which the application demonstrates that the consortium has an adequate number of key staff or the ability to procure individuals with the knowledge and recent experience (within the last 3 years) of integrated multifaceted regional planning, including community outreach.
- The applicant must describe the knowledge and experience of the current or proposed overall project director and day-to-day program manager in managing large and complex planning activities, especially involving land use, transportation, economic development, water infrastructure planning, and environment. Include bios or resumes for key personnel or position descriptions for those key personnel to be hired in the appendix.

Sample Response Box:

Rating Factor 2: Needs/Extent of the Problem (10 points)

This factor addresses the extent to which there is a need for the proposed program to address documented challenges that relate to the core purpose of the grant program; in this case, deleterious impacts that result from the absence of fully effective regional planning for sustainability in the geography of the applying consortium. An applicant will be scored in this rating factor based on their documented need as evidenced by thorough, credible, and appropriate data and information.

To help HUD develop a deeper understanding of the conditions that will be targeted through implementation of the grant, the applicant must use Rating Factor 2 Office of [Sustainable Housing and Communities Form](#) to provide quantitative and qualitative data for the 10 specified, readily collectible data points to submit with this proposal. The form provides instructions and recommended locations of where to collect the data. To complement these consistently provided data, applicants shall also provide a brief narrative that describes the context in which the proposed effort will be placed. The narrative can introduce additional information that further delineates regional conditions in the target area. HUD has provided a list of optional data points that can be used to underscore the narrative.

a. Housing Costs. Applicants are required to provide the following:

- a. Document median regional housing costs relative to regional household income.
- b. The proportion of the regional population paying more than 45 percent of income to housing and transportation expenses.

Source

The data submitted to HUD regarding regional housing prices will be verified using data available from the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) and will be made available at the [OHSC](#). Data for combined housing-transportation expenses will be verified using the Housing + Transportation Affordability Index developed by [the Center for Neighborhood Technology](#).

b. Environmental Quality. Applicants are required to provide the following:

- a. Documented change in urbanized land per capita by decade (1990-2000).
- b. Total miles of distribution of water infrastructure per population served by decade (1990-2010).

Source

The data submitted to HUD on urbanized land area will be verified using data available from the U.S. Census-based land area data that has been

statistically adjusted for definitional changes and is available on the HUD Sustainability website; data on the water distribution infrastructure will be obtained through the local utility companies.

c. Transportation Access. Applicants are required to provide the following:

- a. Per capita vehicle miles traveled in the region.
- b. The share of regional trips performed by automobile, transit, walking, and bicycling.

Source

Both data may be obtained by visiting the [OSHC](#).

d. Socioeconomic Inequity. Applicants are required to provide the following:

- a. Measures of segregation and school poverty by participating community and by region (2009).

Source

Data and instructions may be obtained by visiting the [OSHC](#).

e. Economic Opportunity. Applicants are required to provide the following:

- a. Availability of subsidized housing within 2 miles of the region's five largest employment centers.

Source

The data submitted to HUD will be compiled from local economic development departments and offices of housing.

f. Fresh Food Access. Applicants should document the proportion of the regional population isolated from fresh, quality food options, as measured by the proximity of full-service grocery stores for low-income and auto-dependent households.

Source

Data may be obtained by visiting the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Environment Atlas](#).

g. Healthy Communities. Prevalence of preventable disease (e.g., childhood obesity, diabetes, asthma, heart disease, birth outcomes, lead poisoning by ethnicity and income groupings for each county participating in the consortium).

Source

Data may be obtained from local, county, and state public health agencies.

h. Area of Severe Economic Distress. HUD will reserve two rating points (2 points) for regions:

- experiencing a poverty rate exceeding 20 percent;
- median household income at 70 percent or less of the national average;
- featuring an unemployment rate at 1.2 times the national average.

i. Narrative Statement of Need. The applicant can describe the current conditions that characterize the target area of the grant application, with an emphasis on the issues that elements of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development can address. Additional quantitative measures that will clarify the regional context are encouraged, but not required. Those measures could include other data that will help explain unique characteristics of a historically marginalized population (i.e., Native American experience in a community) or a community (i.e., specific rural conditions, or impact of foreclosure epidemic on the local housing market). The development of the narrative statement should be illustrative of the kind of economic and social barriers that make a sustainable regional plan of the highest priority.

Additional measures to consider using in the narrative include, but are not limited to:

- a. supply of affordable housing (including both rental and homeownership units) within 1/2 mile of high capacity transit service;
- b. the cost burden of housing for the region's very low-income and extremely low-income populations;
- c. estimated homeless population and existing infrastructure that responds to the issue (e.g., shelters, service centers, faith community response, etc.)
- d. regional status in nonattainment/maintenance for 8-hour ozone and/or particulate
- e. matter PM-2.5 (2006 standards);
- f. number of brownfields in region per capita, with their current status (active, remediated, redeveloped)/impaired waters in the regional watershed;
- g. number of brownfields that have been: (a) cleaned up and (b) redeveloped per capita;

- h. share of new residential and commercial construction on previously developed
- i. parcels;
- j. disproportionate access of transit alternatives to different populations/
communities;
- k. percentage of new homes built within 1/2 mile of high-capacity transit service;
- l. age and condition of existing transportation infrastructure;
- m. concentration of poverty in communities, by race/ethnicity/community;
- n. persistent unemployment in regions/by population;
- o. disparities in educational attainment by geography/population;
- p. current distributions of employment opportunities by sector;
- q. existing regional economic assets and how they contribute to the current
community condition;
- r. displacement of low-income residents and small neighborhood serving businesses
from areas undergoing revitalization;
- s. impacts of economic contraction (particularly for older core communities);
- t. percent of employment within 1/4 mile of high-capacity transit;
- u. commute time for residents earning less than 200 percent of poverty according to
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services guidelines;
- v. Acres of public recreation and park land per capita; with data provided for a
regional total as well as by county;
- w. occurrence of childhood obesity by ZIP code; and threats to the environment,
human health, or property associated with expected climate changes (e.g., sea
level rise and storm surge, lack of water supply, more intense rainfall events
resulting in water pollution impacts).

Sample Response Box:

Rating Factor 3: Soundness of Approach (55 points)

This factor addresses the quality and cost effectiveness of the applicant's proposed work plan. Applicants should develop a work plan that includes specific, measurable, and time-phased objectives for each major activity. Points will be awarded based on how the applicant documents that their proposed program will address the purposes of the Program and Program Goals.

Category 1 Applications

The product of a Category 1 visioning and planning exercise should be a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development that addresses and harmonizes existing plans and creates a new regional plan and vision of where future housing development (including affordable housing and fair housing choice), employment and education centers, transportation infrastructure, water infrastructure, and other investments should be made or located with the goal of promoting a more sustainable future for the region where housing, jobs, educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities are easily accessible to most residents of the region without having to drive to them. **The planning horizon for a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development should be at least 20 years.**

a. General Description of Proposed Regional Plan for Sustainability (10 points)

- i. Please describe the general contents of the plan, including, but not limited to, housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and water infrastructure plans, that the consortium hopes to produce as a result of its regional visioning and planning process.
- ii. The plan will be evaluated based on the degree to which it answers the following questions:
 - (b) How will this plan advance sustainable development in the region?
 - How will the consortium use scenario planning to sharpen the regional visioning process? Please describe any prior experience of members of the consortium in using scenario planning that will contribute to the current effort.
 - How will the consortium incorporate the six Livability Principles into its regional planning exercise?
 - How does the plan respond to the needs demonstrated under Rating Factor 2?
 - How will the plan leverage critical regional economic assets to advance sustainability?

b. Process to Develop a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (17 points)

- i. Describe how the consortium plans to engage a broad cross-section of local communities in the regional visioning process, including low-income, minority, and economically disadvantaged communities, and what efforts will be made to ensure that such communities will have an effective role in developing the regional vision, and in participating in a sustained manner throughout implementation.
- ii. Describe how the consortium will assess existing conditions and projected trends in the region with respect to the location of transportation, water, and other infrastructure investments, regional employment centers, and housing choices, including affordable and accessible housing choices.
- iii. Describe the data the consortium will use in developing its regional vision and what role the data described under Rating Factor 2 will play in developing that vision.
- iv. Describe how the consortium will formulate a strategy to address the barriers to sustainability identified as a result of the regional visioning process. Include strategies for beginning to align any existing plans, both local and at the regional level, such as plans for land use (including zoning ordinances), transportation, air quality, water infrastructure, water quality, housing (including affordable and fair housing), economic development, open space, recreation (including the linkage of arts and cultural destinations to the regional transportation system). Describe how the region plans to deal with residential and small business displacement that could result from infrastructure investments that will increase land costs and property values. If the grantee identifies demolition or the conversion of any low- or moderate-income dwelling units as a viable strategy for redevelopment, the grantee must: (1) address why it has determined to demolish rather than to preserve those properties, (2) identify the number of those properties that are reasonably expected to be demolished or converted, and (3) address relocation assistance to residential and nonresidential displacements.
- v. Describe how the consortium will achieve regional consensus in support of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. Detail strategies for solidifying the participation of local independent jurisdictions in coordinated activities while acknowledging local autonomy, where appropriate. Explain how other public agencies and special districts will be engaged to advance elements of the Regional Plan. Describe plans to engage private sector and business interests that play significant roles in regional economic growth.

- vi. Describe how the consortium plans to implement the resulting regional vision.
- vii. Describe how the consortium will establish and track metrics that gauge and guide the progress of plan implementation.

c. Governance and Management (15 points)

- i. Detail the formal structure of the consortium, including its decision-making mechanisms and specific strategies to ensure that the perspectives of diverse and traditionally underrepresented populations directly influence the development and implementation of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. HUD will reserve five of the rating points for Governance and Management for this item. **(5 points)**
- ii. Describe the role each consortium member will play in the regional visioning and planning process.
- iii. Describe the commitment of each partner, the strategy for incorporating any additional potential partners who may not currently be part of the consortium, and, where appropriate, a list of additional partners the consortium intends to pursue.
- iv. Describe the data management plan, including how information will be collected and shared amongst participating agencies to ensure that decisions are well-informed and communicated across jurisdictions.
- v. Explain how you will ensure the implementation of the RPSD, including, if possible, the identification of future funding commitments.

d. Project Implementation Schedule (5 points)

- i. Describe the timeline for developing the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, including start and end dates for each activity, milestones for the critical actions you will take, and the expected metrics you will use to track progress towards achieving results.

Sample Response Box:

Category 2 Applications

The product of a Category 2 exercise should be a Detailed Execution Plan and Program for a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. An applicant for a Category 2 grant will have already conducted an exercise similar to the type of exercise that may be funded under Category 1 and produced a regional plan or commensurate plans. The plan 48 or plans may have gaps that need to be filled or plans to be updated and may not have incorporated all six Livability Principles. Even if an existing regional plan already addresses all six of the Livability Principles, there may be key portions of it that have not been implemented. An applicant seeking funding under Category 2 for these or other eligible activities will need to provide a summary of the existing regional plan and a copy of the plan itself. The summary shall not exceed three pages, describe any gaps or shortcomings in its existing plan or plans that need to be addressed, and describe what actions it intends to take to further its sustainable vision for its region.

a. General Description of Proposed Detailed Execution Plan and Program for a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (10 points)

- i. Describe the contents of the existing regional plan or vision and how the consortium plans to improve, advance, and/or execute this plan so that it becomes a complete Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. If a coherent regional plan does not exist, please explain why the consortium believes existing housing, transportation, environment, economic development, and other plans comprise the necessary components of a Regional Plan.
- ii. Identify any gaps in the existing Regional Plan for Sustainable Development that need to be addressed and describe how you plan to address them.
- iii. Describe how the existing regional plan or vision addresses the six Livability Principles, and, if it does not, describe how the consortium intends to incorporate them into the plan.
- iv. Describe how the plan will leverage critical regional economic assets to advance sustainability.

b. Process to Improve or Further Develop Your Existing Sustainable Regional Plan or Vision (17 points)

- i. Describe how the consortium plans to engage a broad cross section of your local communities, including low-income, minority, and economically disadvantaged communities, and what efforts will be made to ensure that such communities will have an effective role in the planning process, and participate in a sustained manner throughout implementation. Describe plans to engage private sector and business interests that play significant roles in regional economic growth. Discuss

previous challenges experienced in getting to the current level of cooperation in regional planning, how participating communities have implemented mechanisms and processes to overcome them, and existing and anticipated political challenges.

- ii. Identify any gaps in the existing regional plan or vision that need to be addressed and describe how the consortium plans to address them. These may include subject-matter gaps, such as affordable housing, fair housing, transportation, water infrastructure, climate change impact assessments, etc., or process gaps, such as use of scenario planning methods or broad based and extensive community involvement. What opportunities will support from the grant program make possible?
- iii. What have you learned from assessments of existing conditions, plans, and policies in your region? How will the consortium use that information to develop further the existing plan? If such assessments are not complete, please describe what work remains and how it will be accomplished.
- iv. Describe the specific steps that will be required to move from plan to action, including: changes to local zoning, building and energy codes, land use, financing, and development policies; work with MPOs and state agencies to realign transportation investments; solidifying regional agreements for water, waste, and natural resource management; launching employment initiatives that support regional workforce needs and programs targeting hard-to-reach populations that create a better jobs/housing balance; identifying capital improvement costs and financing strategies for specific area, transit corridor, water/wastewater service, or regional affordable housing plans; and/or conducting negotiations that formalize multijurisdictional agreements to implement elements of a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. Be certain to identify challenges that are distinctive or defining in your region.
- v. Identify the kinds of catalytic projects that the consortium hopes will directly result from the execution of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. If the consortium has identified a specific project that it would like to explore further as a part of this planning grant, please describe its regional significance and relation to the other elements of the envisioned plan, local support for the project, project feasibility and design of the project, and how it will further enable adoption of this aspect of the regional plan when it is eventually built. In addition, applicants must provide a cost-benefit analysis of the specified project for which the applicant would like to invest resources from the grant. The cost-benefit analysis shall cover, at the minimum, the following:
 - cash benefits (e.g., reduction of energy consumption, reduction of waste disposal costs, etc.);

- non cash benefits (e.g., reduction of green house gas emissions, improved accessibility to affordable housing, etc.);
- costs (capital costs and associated maintenance costs).

c. Governance and Management (15 points)

- Describe the rationale for the selection of the partners applying for the Program, the commitment of each partner, and the strategy for incorporating any additional potential partners who may not currently be part of the consortium.
- Describe the role each consortium member will play in executing your regional plan implementation process and the adjustments that need to be made to the existing structure and why these changes are necessary.
- Detail the formal structure of the consortium, including its decision-making mechanisms and specific strategies to ensure that the perspectives of diverse and traditionally underrepresented populations directly influence the development and implementation of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. HUD will reserve five of the rating points for Governance and Management for this item. **(5 points)**
- Describe the data management plan, including how information will be collected and shared amongst participating agencies to ensure that decisions are well-informed and communicated across jurisdictions.
- Explain how you will ensure the implementation of the RPSD, including, if applicable, the identification of existing and future funding commitments.

d. Project Completion Schedule (5 points)

- Describe your implementation schedule, including regular milestones necessary to achieve the critical actions you will take, start and end dates for each activity, and your expected metrics and results.
- Describe how the consortium will link elements of the existing Regional Plan for Sustainable Development to specific outcomes to be achieved in the next 18 to 36 months that resolve challenges identified in Factor 2 of this NOFA.

Sample Response Box:



Category 1 and Category 2 Applications Budget Proposal (3 points)

The applicant's budget proposal should thoroughly estimate all applicable costs (direct, indirect, and administrative), and be presented in a clear and coherent format in accordance with the requirements listed in the General Section. HUD is not required to approve or fund all proposed activities. The applicant must thoroughly document and justify all budget categories and costs (Form HUD-424-CBW) and all major tasks, for the applicant, sub-recipients, joint venture participants, or others contributing resources to the project. A separate budget must be provided for partners who are proposed to receive more than 10 percent of the federal budget request. The applicant's application will be evaluated on the extent to which resources are appropriate for the scope of the proposed project.

The applicant's budget narrative justification associated with these budgeted costs should be submitted as part of the Total Budget (Federal Share and Leveraging), but is not included in the page limit for this submission. Separate narrative justifications should be submitted for partners that are submitting separate budgets. The applicant's proposed budget should clearly identify the funding or cash equivalent amounts being provided as leveraged resources. These funds should reflect the numbers and contributions provided in response to Rating Factor 4, Leveraging Resources.

Sample Response Box:

HUD's Departmental Policy Priorities (5 Points)

Indicate if, and describe how, you will address the following HUD policy priorities applicable to the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program NOFA: (1) Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing; and (2) Expand Cross-Cutting Policy Knowledge. You will receive points for each of the applicable FY 2010 policy priorities that are adequately addressed in your application and incorporated into work plan activities showing outputs and outcomes.

a. Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing

HUD recognizes that successful program implementation can only occur in partnership with effectively prepared grantees. It is therefore critical to strengthen the capacity of each consortium by developing partnerships that will advance the objectives of proposed programs. HUD's Strategic Plan emphasizes the importance of strengthening the capacity of state and local partners to implement HUD programs, participate in decision-making and planning processes, and coordinate on cross-programmatic, place-based approaches through grant making and technical assistance. To receive policy priority points, applicants are expected to describe how they will achieve the following outcomes:

- i. **Increase the skills and technical expertise of partner organizations** to integrate regional transportation, housing, water, and other infrastructure plans, align federal planning and investment, increase participation and decision-making in developing and implementing a long-range planning vision, and reduce social and economic disparities for the low-income and communities of color within the target region. The applicant must describe the methods that will be used to achieve this outcome. Examples include in-service training, online information provision (e.g., webinars, podcasts, etc.), and structured observation of best practices. According to the proposed methods, the applicant should identify the anticipated outputs (e.g., number of people trained, number of training events, number of agencies equipped to engage in sustainable regional planning, volume of easily accessible training materials for targeted capacities, etc.) during the 3-year period of performance.
- ii. **Share knowledge amongst partners** so that key personnel responsible for grant implementation coordinate cross-programmatic, place-based approaches. The applicant must describe the outreach methods that will be used to achieve this outcome. Examples include establishing regular partner dialogues, conducting occasional cross-regional briefings, and structured peer exchange. According to the proposed methods, the applicant should establish and specify the anticipated outputs (e.g., number of meetings, web postings, number of participating partners, total staff exposed to new learning and promising practice, number of briefings, issuance of monthly fact sheets, etc.) during the 3-year period of

performance. HUD will work with grantees to support knowledge sharing and innovation by disseminating best practices, encouraging peer learning, publishing data analysis and research, and helping to incubate and test new ideas.

b. Expand Cross-Cutting Policy Knowledge

- i. Broadening the use of successful models to other communities requires definitive evidence of which policies work and how, and a plan for public dissemination of this information.
- ii. To achieve full points, the applicant must indicate what data they and/or partner organizations will collect on outcomes for the defined target area (e.g., changes in commuting time, improved health outcomes, VMT measures, etc. For a more comprehensive listing of outcomes that could be measured for cross-cutting policy knowledge, see Section I.E., Program Outcomes).
- iii. The grantee must document a plan to engage credible policy researchers to assist in the analysis of that data in order to measure policy impact, and clarify the extent of data that will be made available to those researchers through a data-sharing agreement.
 - For household-level data, this may be an agreement with a university or other policy research group that regularly produces peer-reviewed research publications.
 - For parcel-related data, this agreement may be with a regional planning, nonprofit, or government agency that provides consolidated local data on a regular basis to the public for free.

The applicant should specifically describe how they intend to disseminate policy lessons learned during the planning process to a diverse range of potential audience, including policymakers, other regional consortia, and interested community leadership. The collection method and specific data elements will not be prescribed by HUD, but may be determined by the applicant.

The applicant must establish and provide the anticipated outputs within the period of performance. Examples include number of policy publications, number of research studies, anticipated distribution of findings, etc.

Sample Response Box:

Rating Factor 4: Leveraging Resources (5 points)

This factor addresses your ability to obtain other community, private sector, and federal resources that can be combined with HUD's program resources to achieve program objectives.

Resources may include cash or in-kind contributions of services, equipment, or supplies allocated to the proposed program. ***In evaluating this factor, HUD will consider the extent to which you have established working partnerships with other entities to get additional resources or commitments to increase the effectiveness of the proposed program activities.*** Applicant must use Rating [Factor 4 OSHC Form](#). Resources may be provided by governmental entities, public or private organizations, and other entities. Other resources from the private sector or other sources committed to the program that exceed the required 20 percent leveraged resources will provide points for this rating factor. Applicants that obtain leveraged resources from other HUD programs, Sustainability Partnership agencies, and other federal agencies will receive a greater rating (***up to 2 points***). You must support each source of contributions, cash or in-kind, both for the required minimum and additional amounts, by a letter of commitment from the contributing entity, whether a public or private source. (JP comment: the specific details are on p.55-56 of the NOFA)

Applicants will not receive full points under this rating factor if they do not submit evidence of a firm commitment and the appropriate use of leveraged resources under the grant program.

Documented Leveraged Resources and Other

Contributions of the Requested HUD	Amount Points Awarded	Points Awarded (with federal leverage)
20%	0 points	0 points
>20 - < 35	1 point	3 points
>35 - < 50 percent	2 points	4 points
> 50 percent	3 points	5 points

Sample Response Box:

Rating Factor 5: Achieving Results and Program Evaluation (20 points)

This factor emphasizes the HUD commitment to ensuring that applicants achieve the goals outlined in their work plan and other benchmark standards and assess their performance to ensure performance goals are met. The applicant is required to clearly identify the benefits or outcomes of their proposed program. Because this application seeks support to develop and implement a long-range plan for the region, all of those outcomes will not be realized during the duration of the grant period. Rather, **applicants will be evaluated on their ability to identify the outcomes they seek to achieve, the clarity with which they articulate the elements of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development that will help achieve those outcomes, and the specificity of the benchmarks that they establish to measure progress toward a completed product that guides all of the necessary work.**

HUD recognizes that diverse regional experiences exist across the country. As such, the agency is allowing significant latitude to the applicant to set the parameters for the desired outcomes resulting from adoption of a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. **HUD has identified eight outcomes, listed below, that it expects all regions to incorporate as central to achieving sustainability.** Applicants should supplement those core expectations with whichever additional outcomes they hope to achieve and complete the Rating Factor 5 form. The table within the form describes the issues that are being targeted to be addressed, the long-term outcome desired for the region, and the element of the regional plan that will attempt to address that issue. It further allows the applicant to specify to benchmarks toward completion of each element of the plan at 6-, 12-, and 24-month intervals. Together, these data should develop a clear framework for evaluation of applications for grant resources, and will provide a consistent basis for measuring the progress of awardees. These benchmarks will be incorporated within HUD's Logic Model during negotiations.

- a. **Mandatory Outcomes** from the Creation of a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development

- i. Creation of regional transportation, housing, water, and air quality plans that are deeply aligned and tied to local comprehensive land use and capital investment plans.
- ii. Aligned federal planning and investment resources that mirror the local and regional strategies for achieving sustainable communities.
- iii. Increased participation and decision-making in developing and implementing a long range vision for the region by populations traditionally marginalized in public planning processes.
- iv. Reduced social and economic disparities for the low-income, minority communities, and other disadvantaged populations within the target region.
- v. Decrease in per capita VMT and transportation-related emissions for the region.
- vi. Decrease in overall combined housing and transportation costs per household.
- vii. Increase in the share of residential and commercial construction on underutilized infill development sites that encourage revitalization, while minimizing displacement in neighborhoods with significant disadvantaged populations.
- viii. Increased proportions of low and very low-income households within a 30-minute transit commute of major employment centers.

b. Additional potential outcomes from establishing a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development include, but are not limited to:

- i. Transformation of isolated, opportunity-poor, highly segregated areas into diverse neighborhoods that are open and accessible to good jobs, good schools and good environments;
- ii. Increased proportion of homes and rental units affordable to a full range of household incomes close to high-quality transit service in urban areas or within traditional town centers in small towns and rural areas;
- iii. Decreased number of neighborhoods with high concentrations of poverty and minority segregation;
- iv. Increased proportion of affordable housing units that have high access to a supermarket or grocery store that provides quality fresh foods;
- v. Increased proportion of affordable housing units located close to walking trails, parks, green space, and vital amenities such as hospitals and schools;
- vi. More equitable distribution of housing that is affordable to all income levels throughout the target region;
- vii. Improved public health outcomes that result from creating safer, more walkable neighborhoods;
- viii. Decrease in the rate of conversion of undeveloped land into utilization across the region;
- ix. Increase in the share of developed land in rural areas that is tied to existing infrastructure systems;
- x. Increased use of compact development as a tool for regional planning, either to accommodate population growth or to adjust to population decline within the target area; and
- xi. Increased proportion of the local population adequately prepared to

Sample Response Box:

Summary of Review Points:

a. Capacity of the Applicant and Relevant Organizational Experience: 10 points

- i. Organizational Capacity and Qualification (7 points)
- ii. Capability and Qualification of Key Personnel (3 points)

b. Need/Extent of the Problem: 10 points

c. Soundness of Approach: 55 points

- i. Category 1 and Category 2:
- ii. General Description of Proposed Regional Plan for Sustainable Development
- iii. (10 points)
- iv. Process to Develop a Regional plan for Sustainable Development (17 points)
- v. Governance and Management (15 points)
- vi. Project Implementation Schedule (5 points)
- vii. Applications Budget Proposal (3 points)
- viii. HUD's Departmental Policy Priorities (5 Points)

d. Matching and Leveraging Resources: 5 points

e. Achieving Results and Program Evaluation: 20 points

f. Economic Distress Bonus Points: 2 points

Total: 102 points

