

Partnership for Sustainable Communities: Recent Regional Accomplishments Q2



The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) continued their collective efforts to help communities improve access to affordable housing, increase transportation options, and lower transportation costs while protecting the environment. Regional milestones and successes for the Partnership for Sustainable Communities (PSC) between April and June 2014 include:

Communicating Successes

Representatives from Federal, State, and local agencies in Region 9 attended a close-out event for the Sacramento region's Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant. The event provided an overview of the accomplishments of the HUD grant focusing on new partnerships and grassroots activities that expanded regional knowledge-sharing, increased understanding about vulnerable populations in the region, and assembled the first regional view of HUD's ongoing investment in the region. Key highlights included: 1) a discussion panel on a model Sustainable Communities Environmental Assessment process for streamlining environmental reviews of infill residential and mixed use projects; 2) a case study on the award winning La Valentina housing projects and the zoning code challenges confronting smart growth/green building development; 3) a presentation on the new Regional Opportunity Index mapping tool developed by the University of California Davis, Center for Regional Change to assess regional social and economic vulnerabilities and opportunities; and 4) a panel on new partnerships made possible by the HUD grant such as the Design 4 Active Sacramento collaborative, established to influence the policies and systems of the built environment that impact public health.

Coordinating Policies and Programs

Region 8 EPA gave the welcoming remarks at the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Sustainable Communities Initiative Consortium Meeting. The Denver region has been awarded \$4.5 million from HUD to support planning and implementation activities throughout the region. DRCOG has coordinated municipalities, counties, state agencies, housing authorities, nonprofits, corporate interests, and philanthropic and academic organizations to enhance and implement Metro Vision, while addressing one of the region's most pressing and exciting challenges: leveraging the planned \$6.7 billion expansion of the FasTracks transit system. The Sustainable Communities Initiative intends to integrate public health, environmental quality, and built environment into their corridor and TOD planning efforts, by including strategies that address health issues such as asthma, obesity, access to health care, and food deserts.

Supporting Communities

Region 7 PSC staff participated in the HUD-sponsored City of Waterloo Community Roundtable. HUD, the Small Business Administration, and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) presented on Federal program assistance opportunities for addressing community needs. Roundtable discussion items included brownfields, affordable vs. market rate housing, creating entrepreneurs in blighted areas, smart growth, schools, housing, using large employers' resources for housing, need programs for the preservation of aging homes, housing trust fund, attracting developers to the City, lack of rental housing available to Section 8 recipients, and ways that Federal and other governmental agencies can help.



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Region 1 – EPA and HUD staff partnered to provide two trainings on Energy Star Portfolio Manager for Multifamily Housing, as part of the New England PSC Resilience Work Group.

Region 2 – Regional PSC staff participated in the Creative Placemaking Leadership Summit, organized by Together North Jersey, National Consortium on Creative Placemaking, ArtPride NJ, New Jersey State Council on the Arts, and North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority. There were workshops on integrating arts and culture into community plans and placemaking efforts and ways to coordinate arts, land use, transportation and economic development.

Region 3 – The city of Pittsburgh received a \$30 million HUD Choice Neighborhoods grant, which will leverage over \$90 million in local public and private funds to revitalize neighborhood of Larimer. The planning process includes a holistic Transformation Plan designed to positively impact the neighborhood and promote sustainability.

Region 4 – PSC staff delivered presentations on joint projects at the American Planning Association Conference in Atlanta, Georgia, including activities related to the Selma-Montgomery Trail, Sun Rail Project, and the Gulf Coast Regional Planning Commission.

Region 5 – PSC staff conducts monthly Livability conference calls that cover a variety of topics, including PSC Anniversary Planning; Environmental Sustainability Performance Measures & Data; FTA Website; FTA/FHWA Planning Certifications; and Strong Cities, Strong Communities.

Region 6 – PSC staff joined State and local partners and the general public in workshops related to the Central New Mexico Climate Change Scenario Planning Project.

Region 7 – EPA staff and other Federal partners attended a kick-off meeting for the Strong Cities, Strong Communities project held in St. Louis, Missouri. These Federal partners form a team that will be providing assistance to the city over the next two years.

Region 8 – HUD and EPA staff joined regional PSC at the Greater Western Yellowstone Consortium, where there were updates on the HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative Grant work and discussions of possible objectives for the last year of the grant.

Region 9 – EPA staff and regional Partners are identifying priority locations that align with HUD's Community Needs Assessment cities and key FTA transit investments. Potential projects include: land use planning in rural communities; light rail station area planning and renewable energy; redevelopment of vacant and contaminated properties; ensuring environmental and public health benefits of HUD Choice Neighborhood grants; and climate change adaptation efforts within downtown redevelopment.

Region 10 – HUD, FHWA, and EPA staff met to discuss ways to advance the Partnership in Oregon, including linking to the state's Regional Solutions Centers initiative, which integrates government, citizen, business, educational, and philanthropic resources in a community-based approach to identifying priorities and solving problems.

