

**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
OVERVIEW OF NEW AND CROSS-CUTTING INITIATIVES
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES**

The Budget requests continued funding for two initiatives funded in fiscal year 2010. The 2011 Budget funds the Sustainable Communities initiative at \$150 million, equal to fiscal year 2010. HUD believes that affordable housing is best developed "in context" of communities and regions, because proximity to transit, jobs, and retail and other amenities influences the long-term success of both the housing and its occupants. Walkable, transit-oriented, mixed-income and mixed-use communities substantially reduce transportation costs (now a greater part of many family budgets than housing costs), create energy savings (i.e., reducing Vehicle-Miles Traveled), reduce transportation-related emissions and enhance access to employment and educational opportunities. This initiative has four components.

First, HUD will continue to collaborate with the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to offer Sustainable Communities Planning Grants with the requested funds. The program will catalyze the next generation of integrated metropolitan transportation, housing, land use and energy planning using the most sophisticated data, analytics and geographic information systems. These integrated plans would inform state, metropolitan and local decisions on how and where to allocate Federal, state, and local transportation, infrastructure and housing investments. Better coordination of transportation, infrastructure and housing investments will result in more sustainable development patterns, more affordable communities, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and more transit-accessible housing choices for residents and firms.

Second, the Initiative would fund challenge grants to help localities implement the Sustainable Communities Plans. These investments would provide a local component to the regional planning initiative, enabling local and multi-jurisdictional partnerships to put in place the policies, codes, tools and critical capital investments to achieve sustainable development patterns. The funding is intended to incentivize rapid changes in practice by local jurisdictions and to properly scale this transforming initiative to meet the substantial interest by communities in meeting sustainability visions initiated in 2010.

Third, the proposal would support the creation and implementation of a capacity-building program and tools clearinghouse designed to support both Sustainable Communities grantees and other communities interested in becoming more sustainable. As of 2009, the number of Mayors that have signed the Climate Protection goals is significantly more than could be supported through the planning and challenge grant program. This clearinghouse and educational program will be designed to assist a wide array of stakeholders and build the capacity of all levels of government to implement sustainable community strategies.

Finally, the Initiative would provide additional funding for a joint HUD-DOT-EPA research effort designed to advance transportation and housing linkages on a number of levels.

For 2011, the Sustainable Communities Initiative also expands and better coordinates Federal efforts to incentivize state and local government to plan for and implement pre-disaster mitigation strategies. Coordinating hazard mitigation efforts with related sustainability goals and activities will reduce risks while protecting life, property, and the environment. The Department will work with the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency to begin planning efforts in 2010.

Additional details for this initiative can be found in the Community Development Block Grants justification.

