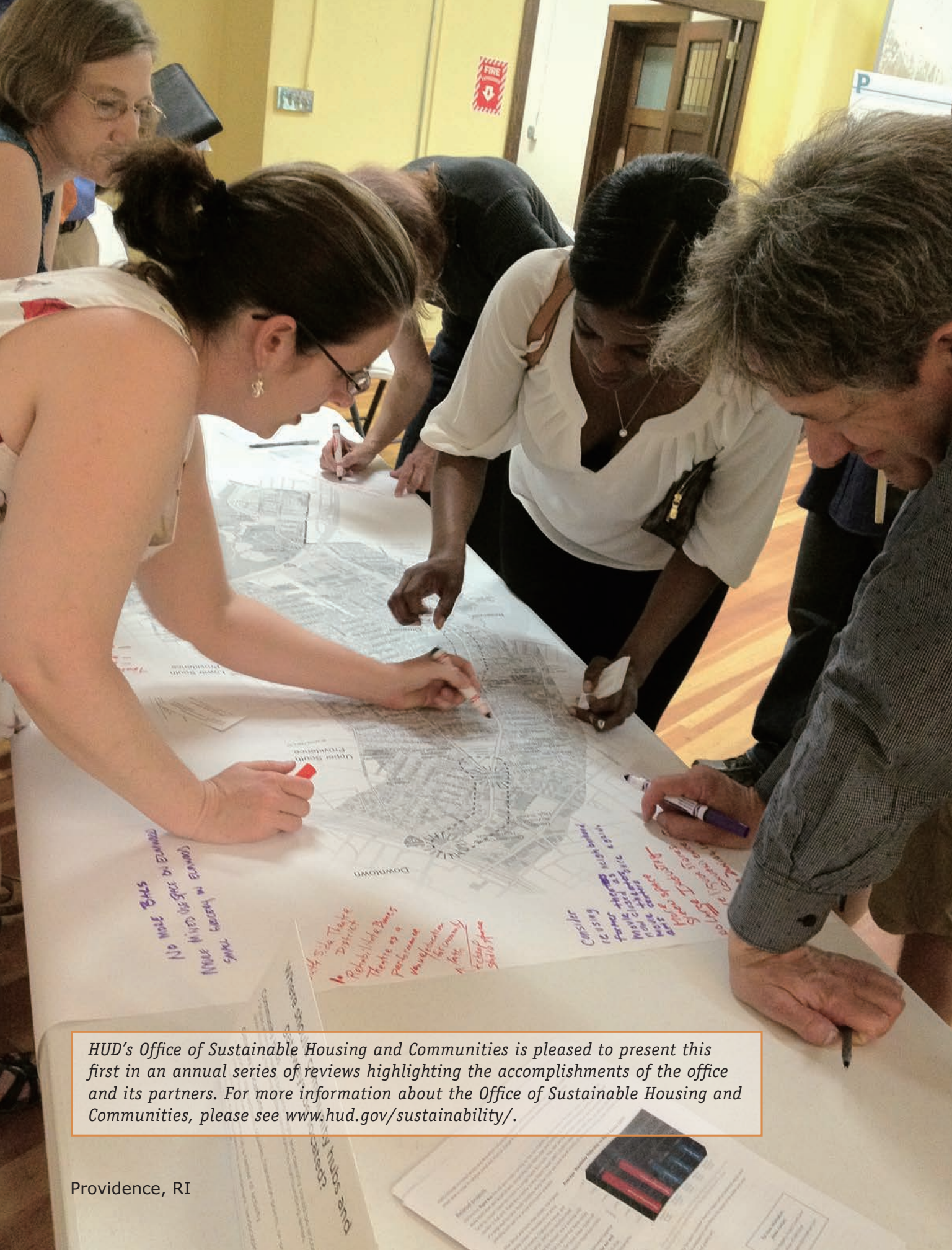
Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities:

HELPING COMMUNITIES REALIZE A MORE PROSPEROUS FUTURE



HUD's Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities is pleased to present this first in an annual series of reviews highlighting the accomplishments of the office and its partners. For more information about the Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities, please see www.hud.gov/sustainability/.

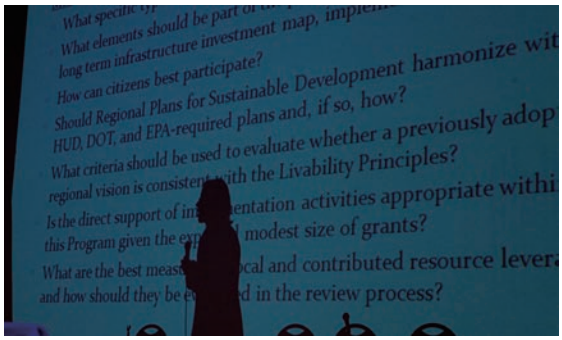
Providence, RI

Introduction

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities (OSHC) was created in 2010 to help communities realize their visions for a more prosperous future. OSHC was created as part of the Obama Administration's Partnership for Sustainable Communities, which is a ground breaking effort created to address the fact that the average American household spends 52 cents of every dollar on just housing and transportation expenses. These costs not only present a burden for working families, but limit additional local spending and savings. By aligning federal investments in housing, transportation, infrastructure, and the environment, OSHC is helping communities get more out of every federal dollar spent by leveraging private, philanthropic and local government funds and catalyzing hubs of opportunity across the country.

Working with the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, OSHC is helping communities create master plans that are led by local stakeholders to better meet their housing, transportation, and environmental goals. OSHC manages two sustainable communities planning grant programs which help communities capitalize on regional assets and create blueprints for their future. It also works to infuse sustainability and energy efficiency policies and programs across HUD's program and field offices. OSHC accomplishes its mission of creating economically strong, environmentally sustainable, and inclusive communities by connecting housing to jobs, fostering local innovation, and supporting energy-efficient and healthy, affordable housing.

Two distinct initiatives are housed within OSHC, the **Sustainable Housing Initiative (SHI)** and the **Sustainable Communities Initiative**. **OSHC's Sustainable Housing Initiative (SHI)** advances energy efficiency, green building and sustainable design in affordable housing. SHI also works in partnership with a diverse group of organizations and stakeholders: multifamily property owners, Public Housing Authorities, state and local recipients of formula and competitive grants, and private-sector lenders and developers. As program lead for HUD's Annual Performance Goal, a target of more than 300,000 energy efficient, healthy new and existing homes from 2010-2013, SHI helps to retrofit existing housing, supports energy-efficient new construction, and promotes financing mechanisms to reduce energy use in HUD-assisted affordable housing and private market developments. SHI leads initiatives and fosters collaborations that lower energy usage and costs for individuals and families and works to advance market transformation through promoting healthy and green building practices in our nation's homes



Sustainable Communities Listening Tour

In February 2010, HUD released an advanced Notice of Funding for its Regional Planning Grant Program and embarked on a Sustainable Communities Listening Tour to hear from leaders on the ground about how its grant program could be most helpful in spurring local innovation and economic prosperity. More than 700 people participated in OSHC's in-person sessions and 600 individuals joined web-based discussions.

OSHC's Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI) stimulates a pioneering approach to community development to enhance U.S. competitiveness. Through two forward-thinking grant programs, HUD's SCI encourages integrated regional planning to guide state, metropolitan, and local investments in job creation, transportation, and housing, and helps regions and localities undertake new approaches to community planning. The **Regional Planning Grant Program** supports locally-led collaborative efforts that bring together diverse interests from the many municipalities in a region to determine how best to target housing, economic, and workforce development, and infrastructure investments to create more jobs and regional economic activity. The **Community Challenge Grant Program** helps individual localities develop innovative solutions to development challenges, including modernizing local land-use rules and reducing barriers to affordable housing, mixed-use development, and the reuse of older buildings and structures. In FY 2010 and FY 2011, HUD awarded 143 grants in 48 states, totaling $240 million that have in turn leveraged close to $253 million in private investment and commitments from local partners. The communities that have received these grants vary from rural and tribal communities in West Virginia, South Dakota, and Washington to larger cities, such as Chicago, Seattle, and Kansas City.

Figure 1 shows the communities and regions funded in FY 2010 and FY 2011 through the Sustainable Communities Initiative. A complete list of grantees is available on our website at www.hud.gov/sustainability/.

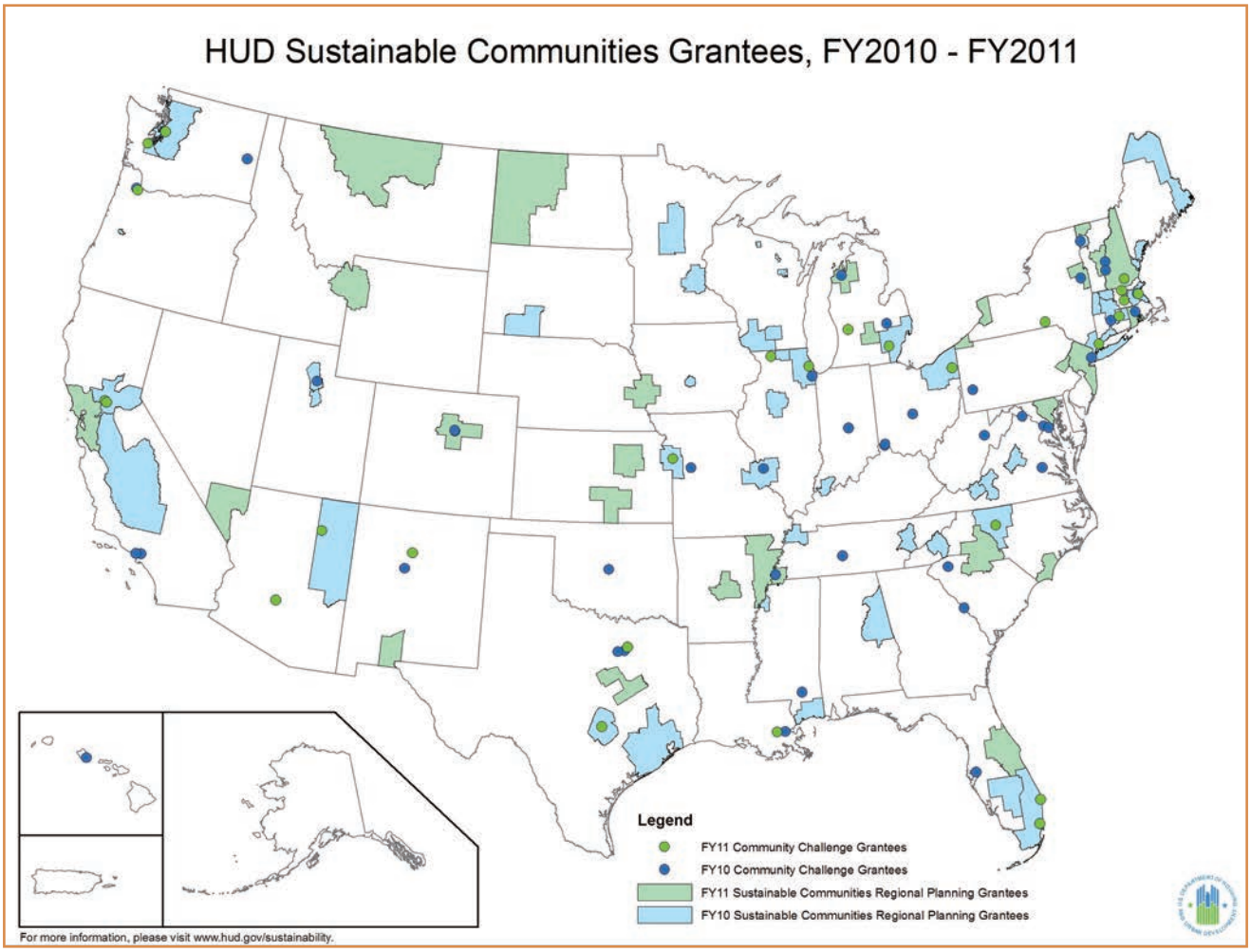


Figure 1. Map of HUD Sustainable Communities Planning Grantees, FY 2010 – FY 2011
Source: HUD, February 2012

The **Regional Planning Grant Program** Supports Locally-Led, Collaborative Efforts to Build Regional Economies. Eligible Regional Planning Grant Activities Include:

- Development of a comprehensive Regional Plan for Sustainable Development;
- Activities to ensure meaningful resident participation in the planning process;
- Coordinated intergovernmental planning and related public and private development;
- Alignment of infrastructure investment to ensure equitable land use planning;
- Activities to strengthen management and decision-making capacities to execute sustainable regional planning;
- Technical planning studies on local development issues; and
- Identification of performance measures to track progress.

As part of its work to support grantees, OSHC has established a new online **Sustainable Communities Learning Network.** Through this portal, OSHC, in conjunction with national capacity-building experts, provides training on topics of interest to Sustainable Communities grantees and holders of Preferred Sustainability Status, facilitates peer exchange of ideas and practices among grantees, and provides direct technical support to low- and moderate-capacity grantees. The Sustainable Communities Learning Network focus areas are based on the expressed interests from OSHC grantees, and currently include:

- Leadership Development;
- Scenario Planning;
- Community Engagement and Equity Assessments;
- Implementation Tools and Strategies;
- Rural, Small Town and Tribal Issues; and
- Water and Wastewater Planning.

OSHC, in conjunction with HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research, has also established the **Sustainable Communities Resource Center.**[1] The Resource, Center provides a platform for members of the public and anyone interested in sustainability to learn about best practices and cross-agency information to help integrate housing, transportation, and infrastructure investments and leverage private resources to address environmental, social, and economic needs. It identifies successful strategies being developed across the country and provides informational support to any community seeking tools and training to adopt sustainable community development practices.

Preferred Sustainability Status

In recognition of the unmet demand for Sustainable Communities grants and the quality of innovative approaches being developed, HUD established Preferred Sustainability Status (PSS), which allows qualifying applicants access to technical skill training, connection to peer exchange networks, and bonus points on related HUD discretionary grant applications. Nine regions that received PSS in FY 2010 were awarded HUD Sustainable Communities grants in FY 2011, and 18 Sustainable Community grantees also have received funding through HUD's Choice Neighborhoods initiative - an indication the PSS program and such reciprocal relationships within government are helping communities, even when OSHC funds are not available.

1. *http://www.huduser.org/portal/sustainability/home.html*

Building A Shared Vision Of Livability And Sustainability

OSHC is HUD's representative to the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, an unprecedented collaboration between HUD, DOT, and EPA, and works closely with the Partnership to fulfill its mission. By coordinating federal investments in infrastructure, facilities, and services, the Partnership is laying the groundwork for an economy that provides good jobs now and creates a strong foundation for long-term prosperity that can meet multiple economic, environmental, and community objectives with each dollar spent.

At the Partnership for Sustainable Communities' inception, the three agencies created six **Livability Principles** to guide their work and programs:

1. Provide more transportation choices.
Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.

2. Promote equitable, affordable housing.
Expand location and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.

3. Enhance economic competitiveness.
Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services, and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.

4. Support existing communities.
Target federal funding toward existing communities through strategies like transit-oriented, mixed-use development and land recycling in order to increase community revitalization, increase the efficiency of public works investments, and safeguard rural landscapes.

5. Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment.
Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.

6. Value communities and neighborhoods.
Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities, whether rural, urban, or suburban, by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods.

South Florida Regional Planning Council

SUSTAINABILITY THEMES

Inspired by the Livability Principles, OSHC's initiatives and grantees are making significant strides towards a more prosperous and sustainable future in the following ways:

Creating Thriving Economies

Re-energizing America's regions, cities, and towns increases U.S. competitiveness. By creating great places to live and work, linking transportation options to affordable homes, and safeguarding natural assets, we are helping communities flourish long into the future.

Ensuring Affordability and Choice

Offering housing and transportation choices in urban, suburban, and rural areas provides families access to employment and economic opportunities and improves the vitality of neighborhoods and communities. Energy efficiency cost savings are another way OSHC is helping families reduce their housing costs.

Leveraging Resources and Reducing Red Tape

Taxpayers across the country are seeing how HUD-funded planning initiatives can reduce duplication, achieving multiple benefits for every dollar invested, and pave the way for new private and public sector investments.

Supporting More Resilient Communities

Communities are realizing their long-term planning must consider the effects of climate change.

Promoting Healthy and Livable Communities for All

Ensuring that communities are valued for their unique characteristics and that the planning processes in which they are engaged represents all voices creates neighborhoods that are healthier, safer, and more diverse.

HELPING COMMUNITIES REALIZE A MORE PROSPEROUS FUTURE provides an overview of projects, programs, and activities supported by HUD's Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities, organized by the above five themes.

COMMUTE SEATTLE
LIVE MORE. DRIVE LESS.
www.commuteseattle.com
HUTCHINSON CENTER

Seattle, WA

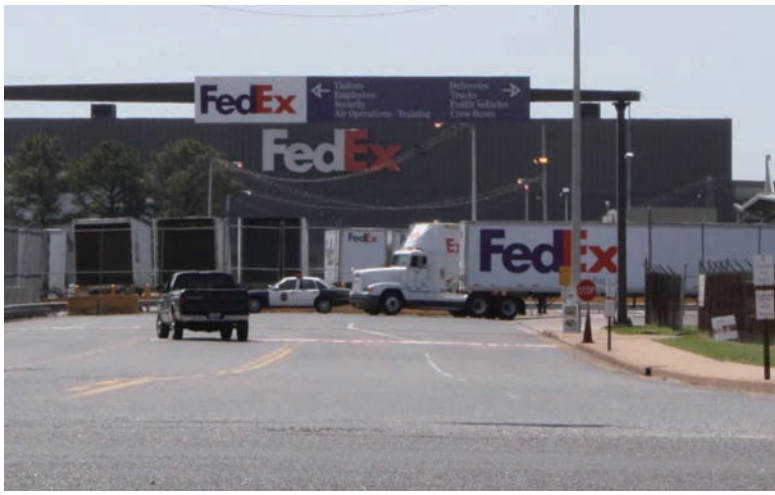
CREATING THRIVING ECONOMIES

Pittsburgh, PA

As local governments' economic resources are continually diminished, they are faced with stretched budgets, drastic cuts in services and infrastructure maintenance, and reduced staff capacity to reposition local investments. These stresses emerge at a time when labor markets are highly mobile and attracting talent depends, in part, on building communities that deliver good schools, strong local economies, affordable housing near jobs, and access to cultural and recreational amenities. In a time when businesses often follow talent, the importance of building livable and sustainable communities has never been more important.

Attracting Jobs and Industry

Regions that embrace sustainable development have a built-in competitive advantage in attracting jobs and private investment. Sustainable planning encourages companies to invest in communities that have cleared the way for investment that is supported by the market as well as the neighbors.



The integrated housing, transportation, and economic development strategy employed by **Memphis, TN** is stimulating investment in the vicinity of the Memphis International Airport – The Aerotropolis. The strategy, developed with the support of a Community Challenge Grant, led to the attraction and retention of nearly 3,000 logistics and manufacturing jobs in the area. Additionally, there are another 3,000 new jobs committed to the area by companies such as FedEx, Electrolux, Mitsubishi Electric Power, and Nucor Steel. Now Memphis's challenge is to improve the quality of life in the neighborhoods surrounding the Aerotropolis so that new workers have affordable housing near their jobs.

With a $3.7 million grant from HUD as the catalyst, the **Austin, TX** region is linking its long-term regional transportation plan and local public works capital plans to 37 mixed-use centers. These hubs of offices, light manufacturing, residential, and commercial uses, strategically positioned along the region's transit system, are expected to generate over 7,000 new permanent jobs in the next 10 years, in addition to supporting thousands of construction jobs as the projects are built. That's a strong return on investment.

Mayor of Austin, Lee Leffingwell, speaking at the Community Challenge Grant press conference, January 4, 2012.

In **Kansas City, MO,** the **Mid-America Regional Council** and its partners are using an FY 2010 Regional Planning Grant to create a unified vision for sustainable development. To develop a region of vibrant, green, connected

Kansas City Missouri Before and After Bancroft School Project: This image is a rendering of the Mid America Regional Council's renovation of the abandoned Bancroft School. This project will create 50 units of affordable housing, some in the renovated school and some in adjacent townhomes.

places, the Kansas City team identified six corridors that will serve as demonstration projects for Creating Sustainable Places, the focus of this effort. Dispersed throughout the Kansas City Metropolitan Area, the sites will be the focus of extensive redevelopment projects. Initial estimates project that successful implementation of Creating Sustainable Places could attract up to 110,000 jobs to the corridors by 2040.

Place-Making for Economic Revitalization

Many communities' zoning and building codes need to be updated to reflect 21st century business needs and residential markets. Implementing sustainable communities approaches not only meets current demand for homes in these neighborhoods, but also positions communities to meet future market conditions.

"Imagine a riverfront destination that you can easily walk to, bike to, and take public transportation to and you can easily envision a place that sustains and attracts new residents and businesses."
-Mayor Luke Ravenstahl, City of Pittsburgh

Burdened by aging, underutilized industrial properties, the 6.45 mile stretch of land along the Allegheny River in **Pittsburgh, PA** is one of the largest undeveloped parcels of riverfront in the United States. Residents old and new have made it clear that the Allegheny Riverfront must adapt to the city's shifting needs and preferences. Pittsburgh, one of 61 communities to receive funding from HUD's Community Challenge and DOT's TIGER II (Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery) Planning Grant programs to carry out coordinated housing and transportation work, is using its grant funds to develop their Green Boulevard Action Plan, an ambitious, yet achievable effort to preserve

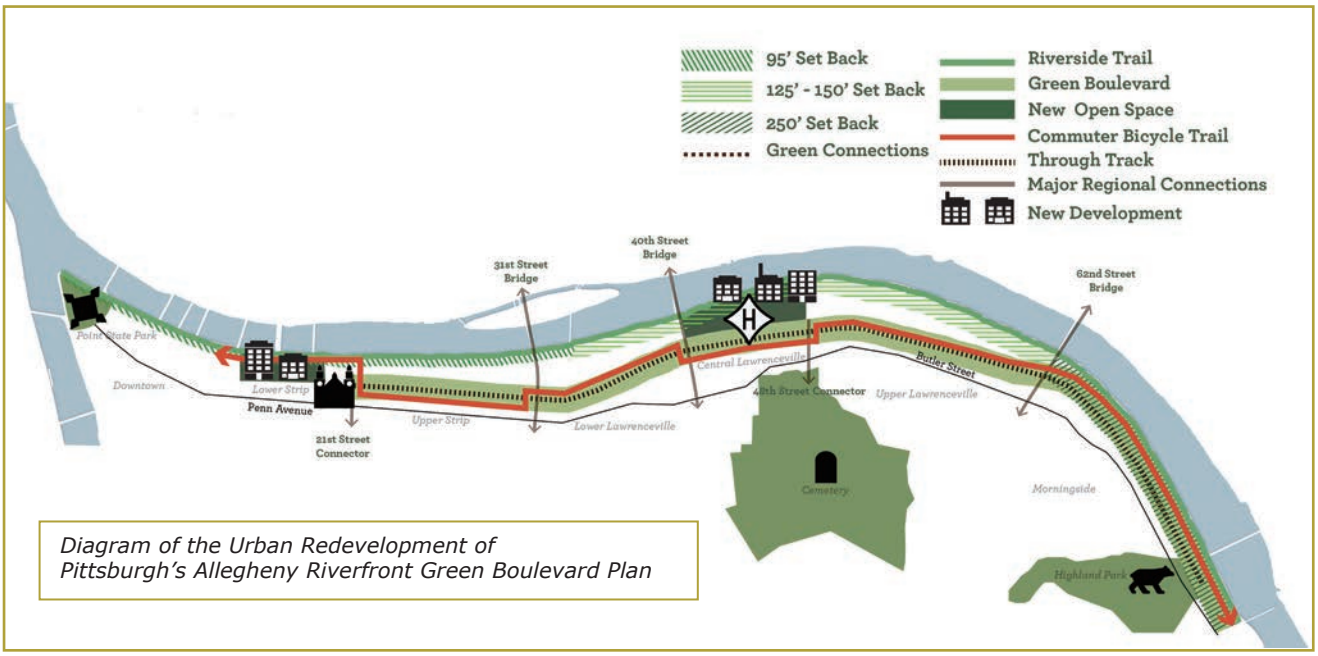


Diagram of the Urban Redevelopment of Pittsburgh's Allegheny Riverfront Green Boulevard Plan

the riverfront's green space, while also creating room for bikes, pedestrians, and passenger and freight rail. The Allegheny Riverfront Green Boulevard Planning project will include the development of a plan to convert a freight line into a green riverfront rail and trail corridor extending from downtown Pittsburgh to the city's eastern edge.

Pittsburgh Current Riverfront ARBG bike tour on the river: A bike tour of the Allegheny River will be improved by The City of Pittsburgh's Allegheny Riverfront Green Boulevard Plan.

The **City of Covington, KY** struggled for years to keep open the doors of its downtown stores, as sprawl development from Cincinnati moved into the suburbs rather than across the river to Covington. Now, as urban living is a priority for young people, this historic center across from Cincinnati is experiencing a revival with apartments and businesses moving into rehabilited buildings. Covington is using a HUD Community Challenge grant to create a Downtown Action Plan to carry out an energetic improvement strategy to revitalize its downtown. The city is developing a plan to maximize use of local, state and federal funds for renovation and rehabilitation of vacant and/or underutilized older commercial buildings. This plan will clear the way for a more vibrant community while increasing the availability of spaces attractive to businesses. The city is also working to increase the number of workers who live downtown near jobs and improve pedestrian amenities.

Fostering Economic Growth Consistent with Community Character

Limited access to jobs, services, and transportation options is challenging rural communities across the country. Rural and resource based economies are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of commodity prices, land value swings, and other market fluctuations and many are facing increased demand for social services without comparable dollars to pay for them. HUD's Sustainable Communities Initiative is helping rural and small communities chart a course for economic success that builds on local assets while preserving a community's special character.

With a network of historic towns, small and large cities, and rural areas. **Metropolitan Boston** is a thriving home to nearly 3 million residents. With a HUD Regional Planning Grant, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council is implementing MetroFuture – a regional plan for development that addresses the unique needs of both urban and rural communities. For example, OSHC funding assisted the development of new zoning rules in the town of Littleton, MA to support agricultural jobs and protect Farmland.

"Littleton is committed to economic development consistent with community character. We're host to IBM's largest software development lab in North America, but we're also a rural community with a rich agricultural tradition, active farms, and even a town-owned orchard. We want to help our farmers keep their land in agricultural uses by expanding ancillary uses, so we're big on green, as well as Big Blue [IBM].
-Keith Bergman, Littleton Town Administrator.

North Carolina's **Piedmont Triad** region (Greensboro-Highpoint-Winston-Salem area) is at the crossroads of change. It is a region proud of its agricultural and manufacturing

heritage and working to find its place in the new economy. Once known for three strong industries – furniture, textiles and tobacco – its mills and once productive fields are now silent. With a FY 2010 Regional Planning Grant awarded to the Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation, the region is planning for its future across jurisdictional lines. It will focus on deteriorating neighborhoods and abandoned manufacturing areas to foster new development patterns along the region's transportation corridors and near existing downtowns and employment centers. The plan will identify preferred development patterns and policies that will maximize the use of the region's built environment, physical infrastructure and natural resources.

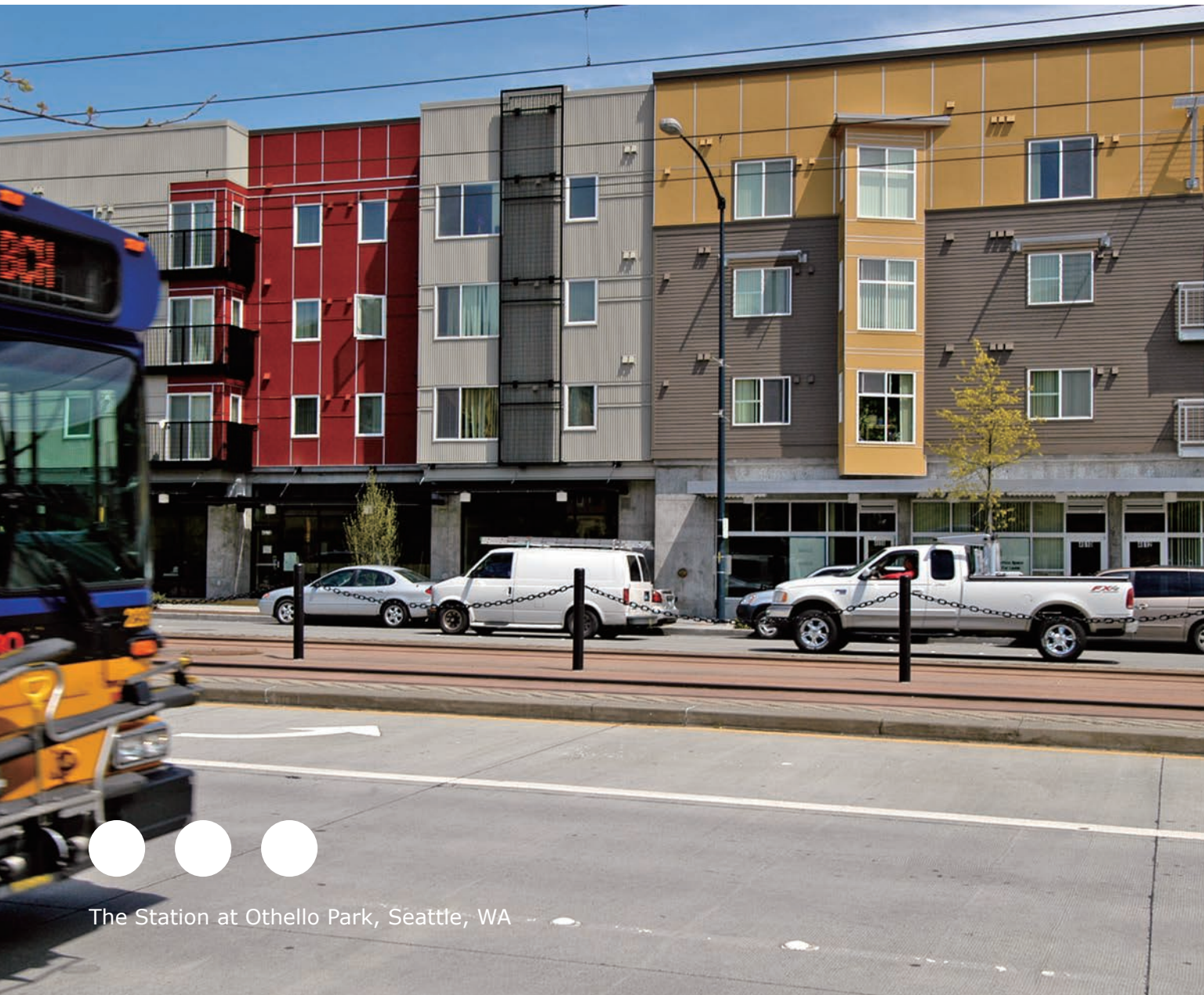
New River Valley, Virginia is a predominately rural region located in southwest Virginia covering 1,453 square miles and home to 178,237 residents. There are five localities of notable size (Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Radford, Pulaski and Floyd) and a number of small towns. The region boasts many natural assets, including the scenic beauty of the Jefferson National Forest and the Blue Ridge Parkway. Similar to other Appalachian communities there are numerous challenges. The percentage of residents living in poverty has been growing since 2000 and employment options are concentrated in the towns far from where many of the poorest residents live. Currently no public transit exists to serve the more rural counties even though many of their residents commute long distances to work. The New River Valley Sustainable Communities Consortium is developing a regional sustainability plan to address these challenges.

Northern Maine Development - Commission, Maine, representing the Counties of Washington and Aroostook, is working with its partners to chart a course for mutual economic success with an integrated plan that addresses housing, transportation, water infrastructure, and environmental planning, as well as economic opportunity and workforce development. Northern Maine is working with HUD through a 2011 Regional Planning Grants to leverage its combined regional assets, from Washington's mighty nonprofit network to Aroostook's emerging biomass energy industry, into long-term economic viability. The region's livability framework will offer solutions to problems that complement and respect their rural surroundings. The team is conducting research into small-scale sewage treatment technology and public transportation systems that are suitable for their needs. The most promising options will be tested with demonstration projects that can be replicated at the local level if they prove successful.

Citizens have been engaged in New River Valley's planning process through online surveys, smaller group meetings, and through "BUILT," a visioning tool and hands-on exercise that helps residents plan the development direction of their community.

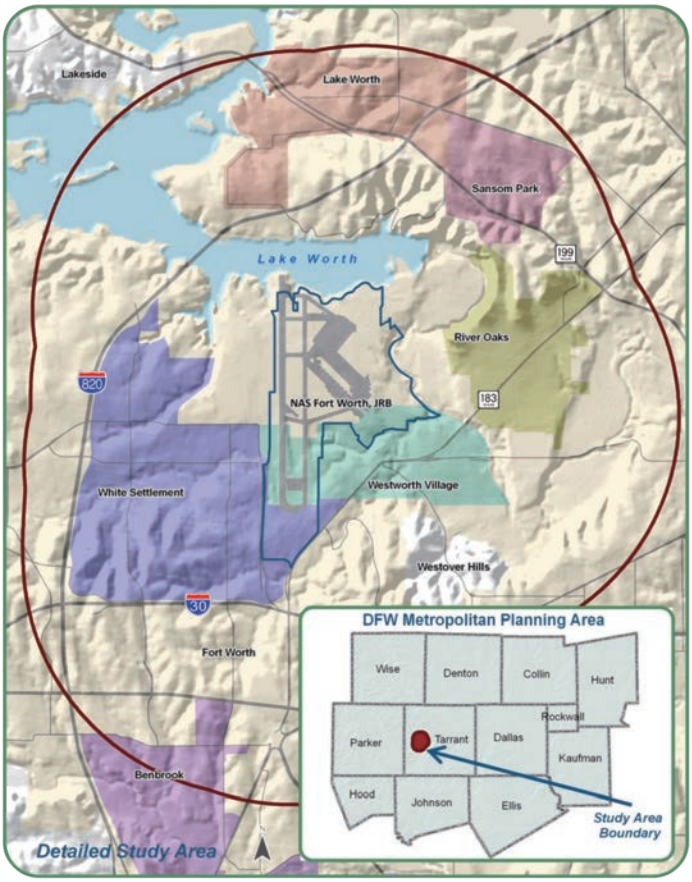
Tampa, FL

ENSURING AFFORDABILITY AND CHOICE



The Station at Othello Park, Seattle, WA

American households spend on average 52 cents on every dollar on housing and transportation expenses. These costs not only present a burden for working families, but also limit additional local spending and savings. Through its Sustainable Communities Grant Program, its Sustainable Housing Initiatives, and its Housing and Transportation Affordability Initiative, OSHC helps keep more money in the pockets of hard working families, and improves the stability of the U.S. economy. Below we highlight some examples.



Ft. Worth, TX

The Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base has been an integral part of Western Tarrant County and greater Fort Worth since 1941 and generates an estimated $1.3 billion in annual revenue for the North Texas region. Through a collaborative effort with the military and local government agencies, the North Central Texas Council of Governments, an FY10 Community Challenge grantee, is researching ways to focus more development within the area surrounding the base, which will increase the availability of affordable housing and improve access to neighborhood amenities for the thousands of families and residents who support the base. Once the North Central Texas COG has completed its set of recommended changes to zoning codes and other regulations, it will work with local municipalities to update their comprehensive plans to better support the continued growth and economic vitality of the existing Fort Worth communities and the military mission.

Traverse City, MI

Grand Traverse County, MI, recipient of an FY2010 Community Challenge grant, works to ensure more housing options for residents. A 2008 study revealed that just 37 of 231 homes listed on the local market cost less than $125,000. Responding to the growing need for affordable housing, local collaborators are focusing on developing affordable housing corridors within Traverse City that will provide access to employment and recreation opportunities.

Housing and Transportation Affordability Initiative

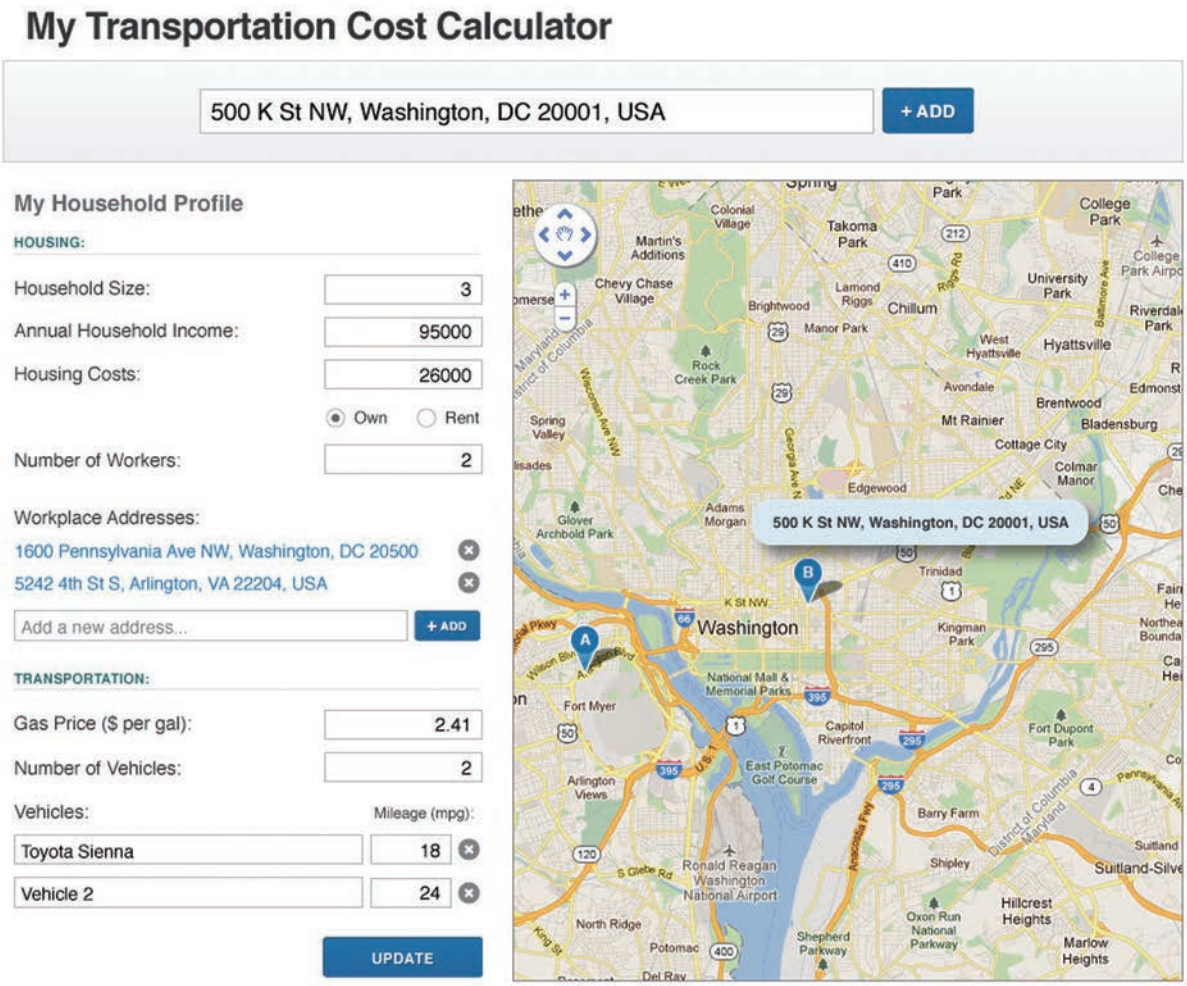
The Housing and Transportation Affordability Initiative (HTA) is a collaborative effort between HUD and the US Department of Transportation to explore the link between housing, transportation costs and location. The impetus for this work is HUD's recognition that the dearth of information on transportation costs is a significant barrier to affordable housing. Unlike housing costs, transportation costs are not readily apparent either to individual households or policy-makers, even though they are the second-biggest budget item for the majority of families. The lack of public information about transportation costs means that households often overlook transportation costs when making decisions about a place to live or work, causing them to underestimate the actual costs of living

assessments. For policymakers, the lack of data on transportation costs makes it more difficult to anticipate the consequences for affordable housing, transportation, and land-use decisions.

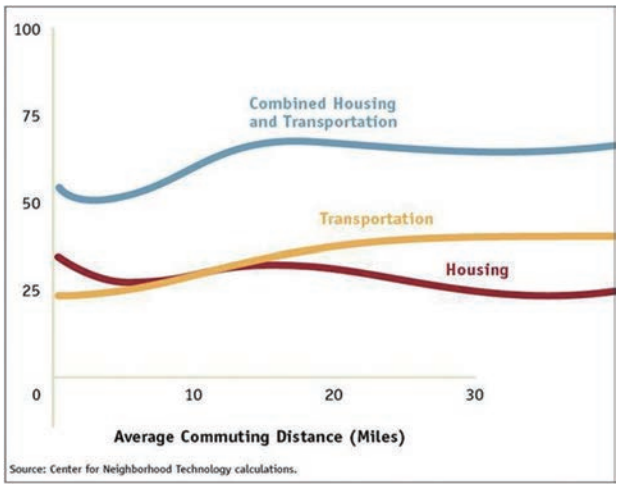
The Housing and Transportation Affordability Initiative will produce a **Location Affordability Index** that measures housing and transportation costs at the neighborhood level and a **Transportation Cost Calculator** that allows individuals anywhere in the country to enter information about their household and generate customized transportation cost estimates, as well as an analysis of the impacts of HUD programs and policies on the combined housing and transportation cost burden in American communities.

"Many homeowners and renters have traded relatively high housing costs for high transportation costs in their search of affordable housing […] While housing costs in distant suburban locations may be lower, transportation costs are higher, and the combination of housing and transportation costs now averages 57 percent of income for working families in metropolitan areas."

HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan, March 18, 2009



My Transportation Cost Calculator will enable users to input their address and basic household characteristics—including annual income, number of commuters, and locations of employment—to produce customized transportation cost estimates. Users will then be able to edit components of their predicted transportation profile to increase accuracy and add additional locations in order to compare their projected costs in alternative addresses.

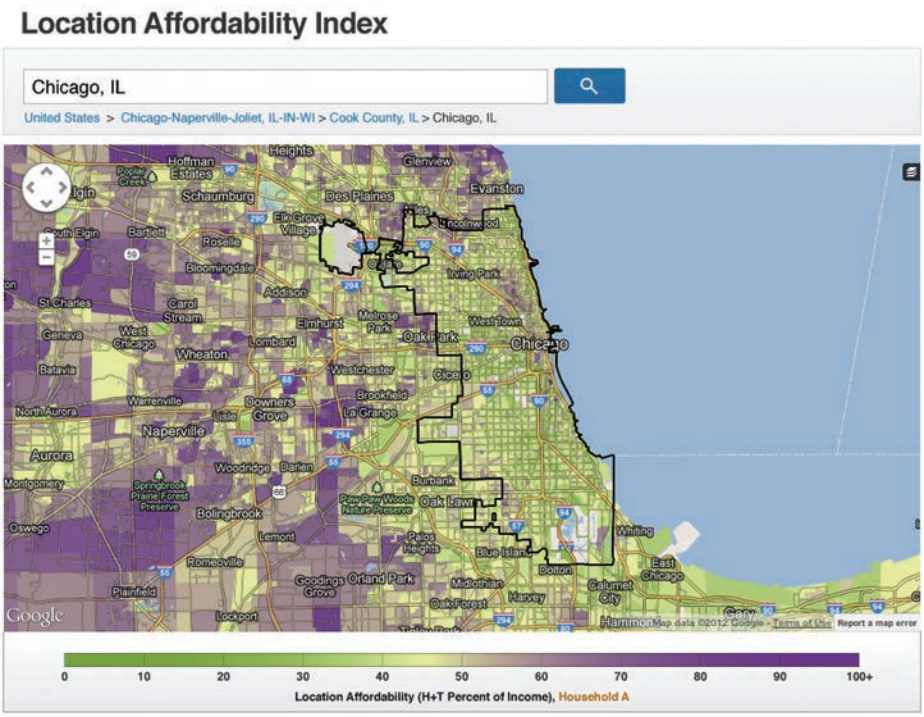


Research has shown that increases in transportation costs offset savings in housing costs starting at commute distances of 12 to 15 miles

Innovative Financing for Green Home Improvements Keeps More Money in Americans' Pockets

HUD has supported an unprecedented level of investment in energy efficiency and green building over the past four years, with the infusion of Recovery Act funds, and through HUD's on-going formula grants, mortgage insurance and rental assistance programs. This investment will yield healthier, more comfortable and energy efficient housing for building residents, and also will lower operating costs for property owners. OSHC has served as HUD's program lead for HUD's two-year Annual Performance Goal of 159,000 energy efficient and green units in HUD's portfolio of public and assisted housing. In this capacity, OSHC works to align energy standards and reporting, and provides support to HUD's program offices.

Utility costs, energy, and water, account for almost 25 percent of operating costs of public and assisted housing. By reducing utility consumption and generating cost savings, dollars can instead be used for other critical maintenance and repair needs. The **Bellingham Housing Authority** (Washington state), for example, was able to reduce energy costs by 30 percent in their 1970s-era buildings with the installation of photovoltaic solar panels, new boilers, and other measures. These updates have made buildings 17 percent more efficient than newer buildings built to 2004 energy codes. HUD's Green Retrofit Program upgraded almost 20,000 affordable homes in 200 properties, with an average energy savings reduction of 27 percent. OSHC is supporting HUD's Program Offices to scale up these efforts. These cost-saving measures help to preserve housing affordability.



The Location Affordability Index *will display data on the combined housing and transportation cost burden for every region in the country in unprecedented detail. The user will enter a city, address, or zip code to bring up a map that depicts the predicted percentage of the typical regional household's income that would go to the combined cost of housing and transportation in every neighborhood in that region. The user can change the shading of the map by selecting any of 12 regional representative households that cover a range of family types and incomes.*

HUD is working agency-wide to promote energy efficiency and green building in response to three key factors:

1. Rising utility costs in federally assisted housing, which cost HUD and the federal taxpayer more than $7 billion a year;
2. The energy burden borne by low-income households, who pay a disproportionate share of their incomes on utilities; and
3. The environmental impact of energy use in the residential sector, which accounts for 20 percent of carbon emissions in the United States.

The agency is committed to supporting the energy-efficient, green, and healthy housing market by retrofitting existing housing, supporting energy-efficient new construction, improving home energy labeling, and promoting financial products that will reduce the carbon footprint of all residential buildings.

As of September 2011, HUD has exceeded its energy goal for 2010-11, with 201,000 new or retrofitted units. Combined with the Department of Energy's retrofit activities, HUD and DOE have jointly retrofitted more than 1 million households since 2009.

HUD continues to expand the availability of financing for energy efficiency improvements. Working with the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), OSHC is helping to pilot and test innovative financial products. As a key facilitator in this process, OSHC's Sustainable Housing Initiative brings together federal agencies, states, local communities, and industry partners to expand existing opportunities and pilot new innovations in financing for green home improvements.

Green Refinance Plus is an enhancement of the Fannie Mae/FHA Risk-Share program. This program generates extra loan proceeds for property rehab and energy-efficient retrofits. Program requirements include the following:

- Properties must be at least 10 years old, with a recorded use agreement of the affordability restrictions;
- At least five percent of the refinance loan proceeds must be applied to property renovation or energy retrofit;
- All rehabilitation and energy improvements must enhance value and improve property operations; and
- Properties must undergo a **Green Property Needs Assessment** to identify a property's deferred capital needs and cost effective opportunities for increasing energy and water.

Increasing Opportunities for Energy and Cost-Savings in Affordable Housing: Green Refinance Plus

The first property to utilize **Green Refinance Plus** was City Gardens in Santa Ana, CA. This 274-unit apartment building primarily serves households with children. The property owner, LINC Housing, worked in conjunction with Enterprise Community Investment to solidify a $19 million refinance, five percent of which will go toward energy efficient upgrades. These improvements include:

- Replacing old inefficient gas-fired furnaces with ENERGY STAR-rated furnaces
- Installing low-flow plumbing fixtures
- Installing energy-efficient lighting in units and common areas
- Installing a passive solar domestic hot water system

In addition, the property was landscaped to provide relieve from "heat island" effects and

irrigated with reused grey water, lowering both energy and water consumption on the property and reducing expenses. These measures are projected to save the owner and tenant's costs on their energy and water bills.

> "**PowerSaver** is another financing tool in the tool kit," said Richard Burbank, president of Evergreen Home Performance in Rockland, Maine. "It's one of the best options for many homeowners to pay for a comprehensive home energy upgrade and protect themselves from the devastating combination of high heating oil prices, inefficient old houses, and cold winters."

Increasing Opportunities for Energy and Cost-Savings for Homeowners:PowerSaver

PowerSaver will give more homeowners the ability to live in greener homes. In April 2012, Efficiency Maine began offering PowerSaver loans to Maine homeowners. Maine currently has the oldest housing stock in the country and is more dependent on heating oil than any other state. PowerSaver will offer a clear path to reducing energy consumption.

Supporting Innovation: Energy Innovation Fund Grants

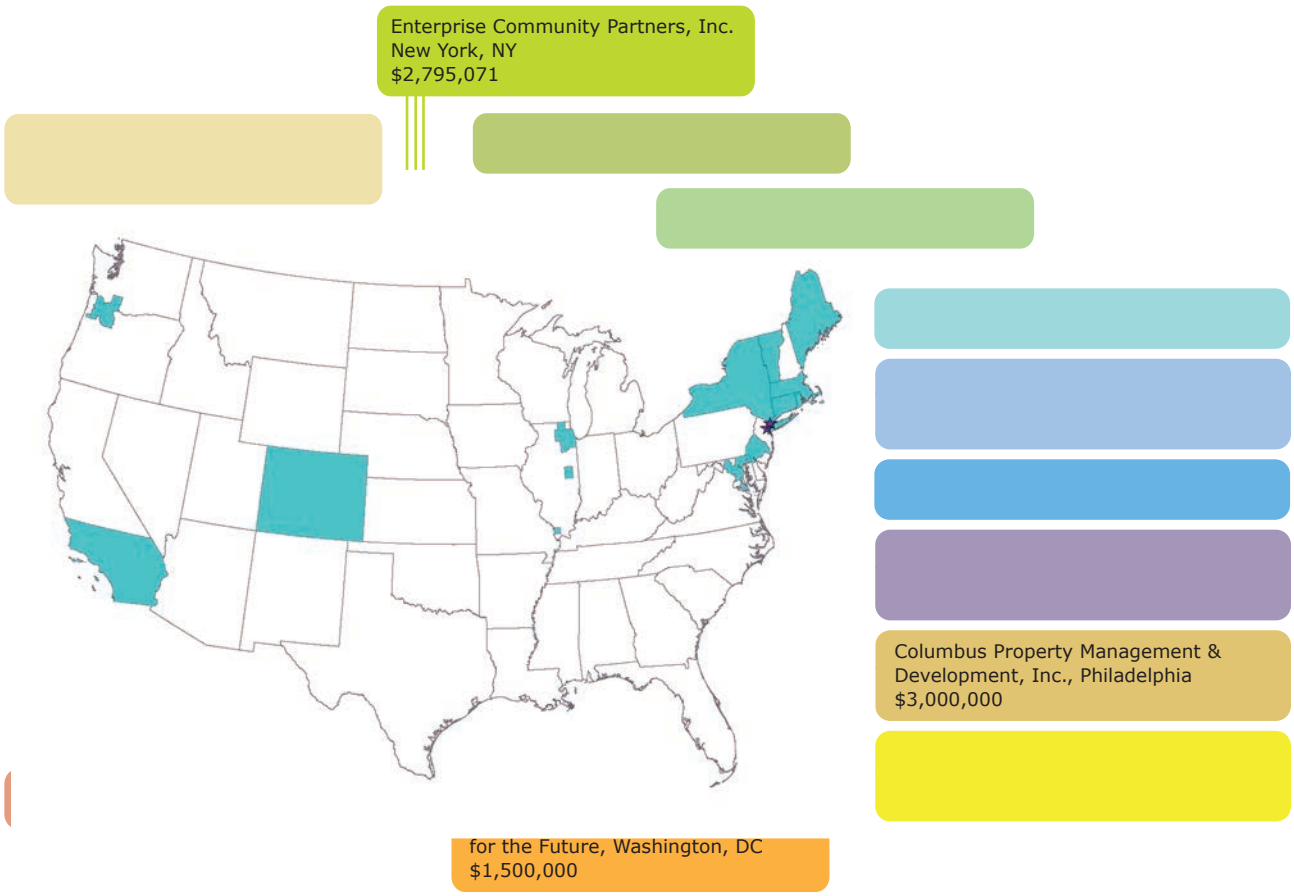
Through a new Energy Innovation Fund, the Office also supports the development of a broader green and healthy housing market. Across the country, owners of aging apartment complexes are looking for ways to reduce their energy consumption and save money. In order to test new and innovative ways to cut energy bills and to finance energy efficiency upgrades in existing multi-family residential properties, HUD awarded nearly $23 million in March 2012 to a dozen organizations on the cutting edge of bringing energy-saving solutions to the housing market. The federal grants are directly leveraging an additional $60 million in local, philanthropic and private capital.

Grantees under this program are piloting solutions to the challenges of energy efficiency and renewable energy investment in existing affordable multifamily properties, leveraging private capital and additional public funding to do so, and overcoming historic barriers to energy efficiency in rental housing, such as the "split incentive" which has stood in the way of building owners investing in energy efficiency when residents realize the savings. Moreover, these grantees are conducting applied research to document and share scalable approaches to retrofitting these properties.

PowerSaver has the potential to enable thousands of homeowners to borrow up to $25,000 for terms as long as 20 years to make energy improvements of their choice, based on a list of proven measures developed by FHA and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). $25 million in funding for this pilot energy-efficient financing program was financed by the 2010 Appropriate Act's Energy Innovation Fund.

Loan interest rates are expected to be between five and seven percent—comparable to or lower than home improvement loans available to most homeowners.

Examples of eligible improvements include: **insulation, duct sealing, energy efficient doors and windows, energy efficient HVAC systems and water heaters, solar panels, and geothermal systems.** FHA encourages consumers to utilize an energy audit to determine the most cost effective improvements for their home.



2012 Energy Innovation Fund Grantees and Their Geographic Impact

Columbus, OH

LEVERAGING RESOURCES AND REDUCING RED TAPE

Porcupine, SD

When a DOT-funded plan calls for building a roadway on one side of a community and a HUD-funded plan calls for investing in housing and community development in another part of town, we overlook opportunities to encourage interagency cooperation and private investment. OSHC plays a critical role in coordinating federal investments to meet multiple economic, environmental and community objectives, minimizing red tape and working with sister agencies to make government more efficient and responsive.

Saving Taxpayer Dollars

Across the country, taxpayers are seeing how planning initiatives that HUD is funding can conserve resources, achieving multiple benefits for every dollar invested, and pave the way for new public and private sector investment.

In places like **Salt Lake City**, UT, **Chicago**, IL, and **Fresno**, CA, Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grantees are projecting significant savings from more integrated planning. Salt Lake City has found that it can save $4.3 billion in infrastructure costs if it focuses development on the region's transportation system and existing communities. Strengthening its competitive advantage in the global marketplace, the Chicago metropolitan area has devised a plan that is projected to save $1.5 billion in future infrastructure spending. The City of Fresno, CA estimates their new comprehensive plan will save $1.1 billion in new infrastructure costs and $350 million in operation and maintenance costs over the 20 year life of the plan.

Getting the Most from Every Federal Dollar Invested

Every dollar OSHC has spent on grantees has been matched by private investments and commitments from partners. As a condition of the Sustainable Communities grant programs, awardees are required to match at least 20 percent of the requested funding amount in the form of cash, verified in-kind contributions, or a combination of these sources. Most grantees have contributed more.

Twin Cities, MN

The seven-county Twin Cities region in Minnesota secured significant funding from regional sponsors for its **Corridors of Opportunity Plan** – an initiative that promotes vibrant and healthy communities, using the region's emerging transitway system as a development focus. After receiving a $5 million HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant to support the Corridors of Opportunity Plan, the consortium of businesses and local counties, led by the Metropolitan Council, secured an additional $8,907,875 from community partners, local jurisdictions and counties, the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency and the University of Minnesota. The Twin Cities region also received additional funding from Living Cities, a collaboration of 22 of the nation's largest foundations and financial institutions. Living Cities offered $2.77 million in grants, $10 million in commercial loans, and $3 million in flexible, low-cost loans. In total, HUD's grant will leverage almost five times the initial federal investment to promote development along the Twin Cities' emerging transitway.

Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation, Oglala and Sioux Tribal Lands, SD

For rural, smaller and fiscally-restrained communities, leveraged resources have a

deeper impact on the entire community. The Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation (TVCDC) based in Porcupine, SD, on the Pine Ridge Reservation, offered nearly 27 percent of matching resources for its proposed Regional Plan and grant request of $996,073. These matching resources included over $100,000 in cash funding from TVCDC as the lead agency and a planning consultant. Additional amounts ranging from $15,000 to $25,000 were provided by Smith, Shelton & Ragona, LLC, a local law firm; the Pine Ridge Area Chamber of Commerce, and Oglala Sioux Tribal Office of Economic Development (REDA). In-kind services valued at $3,200 were provided by partnering environmental advocacy group, InNative, Inc. These resources are critical on a reservation where unemployment is 47 percent.

Federal Agencies Working Together to Simplify Community Planning

To make it easier for communities to secure federal funds, OSHC works with several federal agencies, to align planning requirements. HUD and its domestic agency partners are seeking to make it easier to use federal funding for effective local solutions by reforming guidance, issuing waivers, and expediting permits. Below, we present two case studies of federal agencies working together to simplify community planning and one profile of a state agency utilizing HUD funds to allow communities to modernize their own rules.

Department of Commerce and HUD

In October 2011, the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) announced that HUD Regional Planning Grantees could leverage their planning efforts into a region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for EDA – meaning one planning effort could count towards two federal requirements. EDA is working with the New Jersey Sustainable Communities Consortium to pilot this process.

Environmental Protection Agency and HUD

Policies, protocols and programs adopted separately can be barriers to implementing integrated solutions. Prior to this Administration local property owners who had used Environmental Protection Agency funds to a contaminated sites were not encouraged to seek HUD funds to build affordable housing. With new guidance issued in 2010, property owners only need to provide a certificate from EPA that the site has been cleaned to residential standards in order to apply for HUD funding. HUD and its domestic agency partners are seeking to make it easier to use Federal funding for effective local solutions by reforming guidance, issuing waivers, and expediting permitting for major Federally-funded projects.

Modernizing Local Development Rules to Create Resilient Economies

New Hampshire Housing, leveraged its 2011 Challenge Grant to provide competitive, matching grants to NH municipalities to reform land-use regulations. Cities and towns awarded such grants will use these funds to modernize zoning and building codes, incent development in village centers, and develop new land-use guidelines to help spur flourishing communities and economies.

Over the past three years, HUD's relatively small investments in planning have leveraged significant public and private investments, creating multiple health, safety, and environmental benefits and realizing cost-savings from avoided infrastructure or services required to serve unplanned growth. OSHC's Regional Planning Grants have provided localities muscle to address complex problems that go beyond the boundaries of any single community. In times of limited resources, this type of strategic coordination is particularly important; many local and state governments cannot undertake such efforts alone.

Creating Reciprocal Relationships

OSHC represents HUD in the Partnership for Sustainable Communities (Partnership), the landmark collaboration with the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that coordinates public investments to achieve more with less. In a pioneering effort, HUD and DOT created a single application in FY2010 to jointly fund HUD's Community Challenge and DOT's Tiger II Planning Grants, covering $68 million worth of activities that coordinate housing and transportation planning. In June 2012, HUD, DOT, and EPA announced that a select number of their competitive assistance programs would be more formally aligned. For the first time, the three agencies will take the other agencies' investments into account in making grant allocation decisions and utilize common language in notice of funding proposals. This type of reciprocal arrangement is at the core of the Partnership's success, and will bring a new level of coordination to federal investments for maximum efficiency.

Aligning Energy Standards

The majority of HUD's affordable housing portfolio, both public and assisted housing, was built before the advent of energy codes. Today, the Federal programs that help produce and preserve rental housing vary widely in energy efficiency requirements. While some variety is appropriate, given the federal government provides various forms and levels of assistance to properties along a continuum of physical and financial conditions, there is an opportunity to achieve greater alignment and maximize the potential for energy and financial savings in rental housing.

Federal agencies recognize that building codes are largely a state and local responsibility, and code compliance and enforcement is highly uneven across the country. The agencies also recognize the economic and practical benefits of energy efficiency and have begun to improve and standardize energy efficiency requirements across federal rental housing programs.

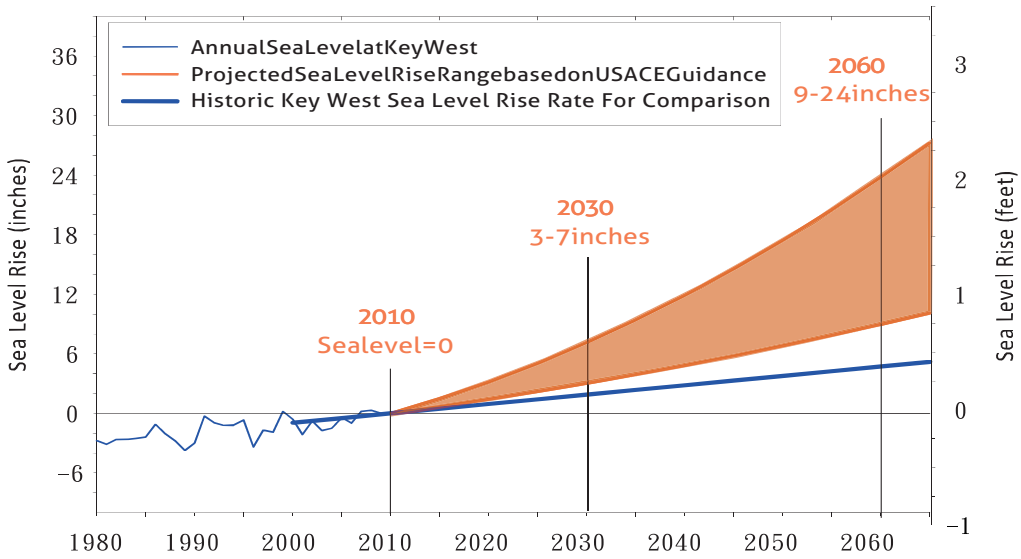
Building on that progress and extending it to cover more rental housing production and rehabilitation programs, the Obama Administration has initiated an interagency task force to reduce duplicative efforts among federal agencies and clarify federal energy efficiency standards This alignment initiative focuses on establishing minimum energy standards for competitive grant programs, reliance on recommendations in capital needs assessments for substantial rehabilitation projects, and the use of ENERGY STAR or Water Sense appliances for moderate rehabilitation of housing projects.

SUPPORTING MORE RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

West Tampa, FL

Communities throughout the country are realizing their long-term plans must include planning for the impacts of climate change. More frequent and intense heat waves, flooding, droughts, and rising sea level threaten the long-term prosperity and quality of life of U.S. communities.

While many OSHC grantees are pursuing strategies such as energy efficient building practices, walkable neighborhoods, and energy smart community design that help reduce the generation of greenhouse gases, a growing number of grantees also are addressing adaptation to climate change in their long-range regional planning efforts. **The New York-Connecticut Sustainable Communities Consortium**, led by the Regional Plan Association, with support from a Sustainable Community Regional Planning Grant, will develop tools to improve resilience in areas most vulnerable to the projected effects of sea level rise and changes in the climate. In practice, they will help minimize damages and disruptions from coastal flooding and storm surges. These tools will focus specifically on protecting the region's critical infrastructure, including power plants and water treatment facilities, and identifying design implications.



Seven-50: Southeast Florida Prosperity Plan
Under the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant, Southeast Florida has been developing a regional strategy to address resilience to climate change and economic stress.

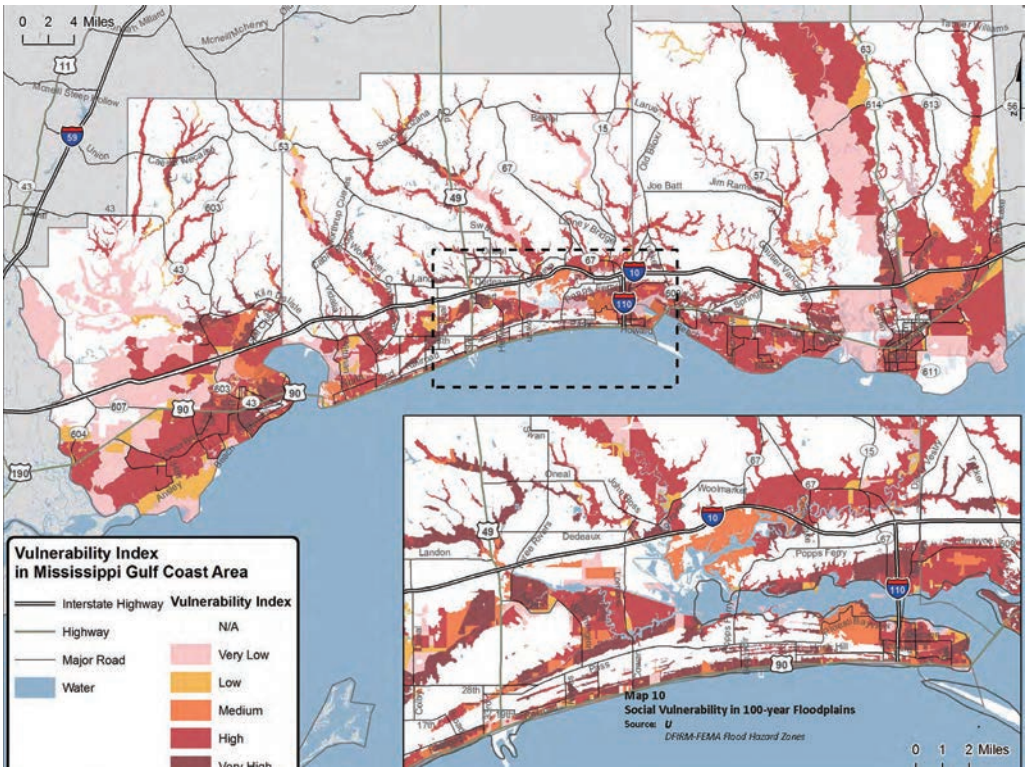
Sea level rise has already been measured in the southeast portion of Florida and it has become imperative to address this growing problem. Saltwater has begun to intrude upon inland areas and rising water tables have caused increased flooding.

Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe Counties have collaborated since 2009 over how best to coordinate climate change mitigation and adaption strategies for a region containing 5.5 million people and responsible for about one third of Florida's entire economy.

Part of the plan is to develop a regional climate resiliency strategy in order to better understand the likely impacts of climate change. There are three parts of this strategy:

- Assess the extent of sea level rise;
- Determine the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions and how the region can reduce those emissions; and
- Develop a coordinated regional adaptation strategy and a plan to protect the natural, built, and human environments.

The Gulf Regional Planning Commission, in Mississippi, a recipient of a 2010 Regional Planning grant, conducted a water assessment, which included a review of coastal vulnerability. Based on data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Mississippi is likely to experience a minimum sea level rise of 10 inches by 2100 along the Gulf Coast. According to the United States Geological Survey Coastal Vulnerability Index, up to 100 percent of Mississippi's shoreline is in the high or very high vulnerability categories, with 83 percent in the very high category.



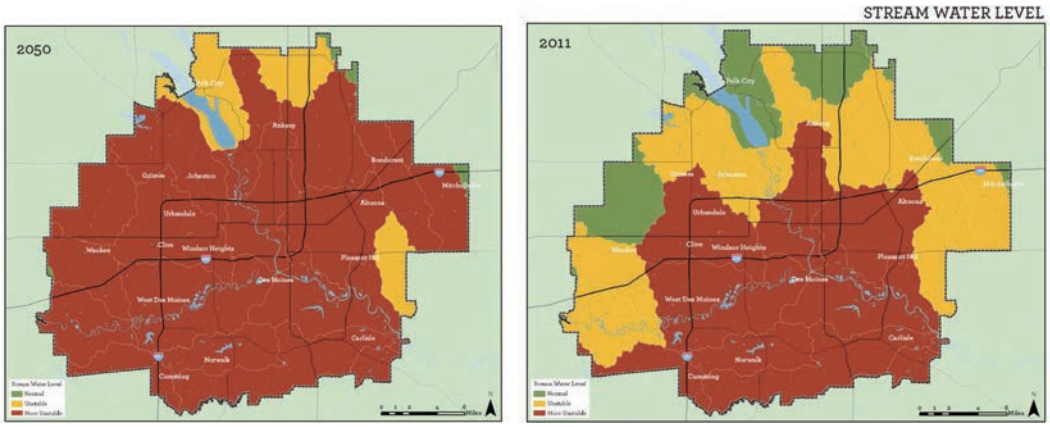
The Gulf Regional Planning Commission is responding to the risks of increased flooding, serious damages to infrastructure, and changes to the water supply by conducting planning activities to minimize the costs when such events occur. The Commission is also strengthening emergency strategies to address vulnerable populations, such as the elderly and the sick.

An FY 2010 Regional Planning Grant recipient, the **Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization,** delineated in its Tomorrow Plan, a focus on resilience for the Des Moines region.

While the Greater Des Moines area economy has largely weathered the storm of the national economic downturn, a marked increase in floods poses just as great a threat to their prosperity. In 1993, a large downpour halted rail and freight traffic, causing $716 million in losses. A 2008 flood, called "Iowa's Katrina," left crop damage estimated at $3 billion.

No locality was spared from the floods of 1993 and 2008, making it clear this was a regional problem that required a regional solution. The Tomorrow Plan addresses how all of Central Iowa can become storm ready. Projecting future land use patterns, Tomorrow Plan researchers are charting the links between residential sprawl, loss of green space, and increased flooding. Now, local leaders are working together to plan for a future that prevents environmental hazards and sustains economic prosperity.

"The Tomorrow Plan will position us to compete more effectively in a global economy and to attract top talent. Additionally, these efforts will allow our region to entice even more start-ups and to sustain the businesses already located here.
- Suku Radia, President and CEO of Bankers Trust, Des Moines, IA



A HUD-funded study found that if Greater Des Moines continues with its current growth patterns, stream water level will be unstable in most of the region by 2050. This enhanced flood risk threatens farmland and key freight routes.

NORMAL TIDE ELEVATIONS

EXTREME HIGH TIDES 2010

South Florida Regional Planning Council

PROMOTING HEALTHY AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES FOR ALL

Morrow County, OH

Ensuring that communities are valued for their unique characteristics and that the planning processes in which they are engaged represents all voices is creating neighborhoods that are healthier, safer and more diverse.

Listening to Diverse Voices

In the past, low income groups and members of racial/ethnic minority groups have often been underrepresented in community planning processes. In many cases, these communities and planners have lacked adequate community engagement tools to solicit a range of local voices to inform policy and investment decision-making. This has resulted in plans that did not reflect community needs and the exclusion of marginalized groups from access to opportunities throughout regions.

Excluding individuals and groups from community decisions hurts us all. As the demographics of our nation shifts and Latino, Asian, mixed race, and African American births now constitute the majority of births in the U.S. – it is imperative to create communities of opportunity, which give everyone access to economic and social success.

OSHC places a priority on public engagement and community outreach efforts, including engagement with marginalized populations and minority groups. Ensuring equitable and inclusive development helps communities retain young people, attract working families, and allows current demographics to drive neighborhood transformation.

Below we highlight three communities who are using HUD grants to re-assess community demographics and needs.

Denver, CO

Denver, CO is taking significant strides to address equity on a regional level. The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) is using a $4,500,000 Regional Planning Grant to fund their Metro Vision 2035 plan. As part of this initiative, the DRCOG is developing an interactive website where users can create their own maps using the Denver Regional Equity Atlas, the product of a joint effort between the Piton Foundation and Reconnecting America. The Denver Regional Equity Atlas which takes stock of economic, education, mobility, and health disparities in the Denver area and will be used to aid state and local decision-makers. The Atlas provides

Fair Housing Equity Assessment & Regional Analysis of Impediments

Equity and access to opportunity are critical underpinnings of the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant program. One way to address questions of equity and opportunity access across a region is the Fair Housing and Equity Assessment (FHEA), which Regional Planning grant recipients are required to complete. The FHEA includes the following assessment components:

1. Segregated Areas and Areas of Increasing Diversity and/or Racial/Ethnic Integration;
2. Racially/Ethnically Concentrated Areas of Poverty;
3. Access to Areas of High Opportunity;
4. Major Public Investments; and
5. Fair Housing Issues, Services, and Activities

Many grantees are taking the extra steps needed to transform their FHEA products into a Regional Analysis of Impediments. The Regional AI offers considerable value in assessing fair housing issues, as many of the fair housing issues that are most intractable are best addressed at a regional level.

The Regional Analysis of Impediments has a broader analytical scope than the FHEA in that it must encompasses issues associated with race, color, national origin, sex, religion, familial status, and disability, which are important protected classes covered by the Fair Housing Act.

City of Denver conducts planning for their Decatur-Federal Station Area planning process funded by HUD Challenge and DOT Tiger II Planning Funds.

a visual aid to help users understand the challenges low income populations in the city and surrounding suburbs face in accessing jobs, good schools and healthy food.

Mid-America Regional Council (MARC)

In Kansas City, MO and Kansas City, KS, the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), recipient of a FY2010 Regional Planning grant and a FY2011 HUD Community Challenge grant, is working to create an equitable regional process that bring all voices to the table.

The Mid-America Regional Council conducts an equity workshop to focus on regional dialogue and redevelopment.

MARC's equity efforts support the following objectives:

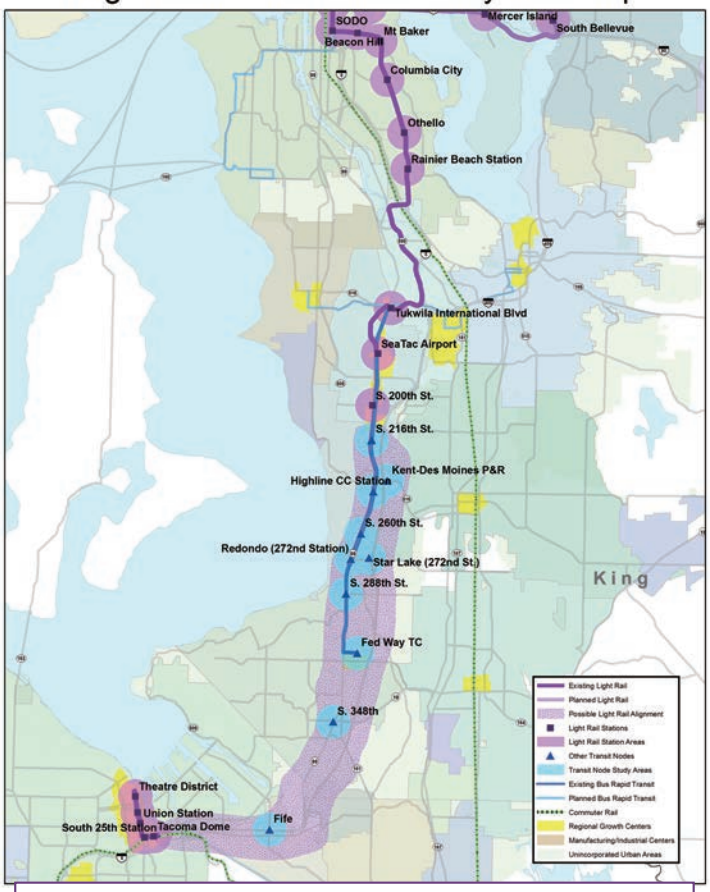
1. Supporting the development of a regional equity network geared to inform and influence the preparation of a sustainable community plan for the region;
2. Working with land use and transportation planners on incorporating equity outcomes in each component of the adopted final plan;
3. Creating a peer exchange with regional equity advocates; and,
4. Developing a tailored community engagement model along transportation corridors and across the region.

Puget Sound Regional Council

In Seattle, WA, home prices have nearly doubled from 2000 to 2008, forcing families to move farther from job centers in search of cheaper housing. To address this challenge, a consortium of cities, counties, and public and nonprofit partners, led by the Puget Sound Regional Council, is using a HUD Regional Planning Grant to implement the Growing Transit Communities project. This initiative will invest in key transit corridors and ensure equitable, meaningful participation in decision-making. Working with the Runstad Center at the University of Washington, Growing Transit Communities is using innovative technology that allows local residents to visualize development scenarios in real-time, demonstrating how the planning process can be brought directly to the region's diverse communities.

"What's impressed me the most is how we're working with residents and communities in ways we never have before. This not only builds support for a shared vision, but builds the local capacity to make that vision a reality."
- Ben Bakkenta, Project Manager, Puget Sound Regional Council

Growing Transit Communities Study Area Map



The central Puget Sound region is looking at how to create equitable transit communities in the South Corridor's 24 existing and future light rail and bus rapid transit station areas.

Promoting Healthy Communities

Public health experts are looking at the connections between health and where people live, learn, work, and play. Research has shown that places and environments have a major impact on health outcomes. Key components of a neighborhood, such as the housing, transportation, economic development, and land-use development play important roles in promoting or preventing good health in a community. For example, diet and access to healthy food is a critical factor that affects wellbeing. Similarly, physical activity is a major factor in addressing chronic illness, and access to walkable spaces like parks can influence the amount of activity within a neighborhood.

HUD's Sustainable Communities grantees are undertaking a wide range of innovative approaches to address health within their communities. Many are making critical connections between health outcomes, land use, planning, and holistic program implementation. These efforts range from creating green home improvement programs that focus on resident health and wellness to enhancing residents' access to healthy food. A number of grantees also include health care experts on their project teams to ensure that public health is considered and adequately addressed in the planning process. Below we highlight four examples where communities have incorporated public health concerns into community planning efforts.

"The fact that we can predict health, economic, and educational outcomes of children based on zip code is a tragedy. And it's not who we are as Americans."
– Secretary Shaun Donovan, HUD

One strategy being used by **Denver, CO** is the application of the Health Development Measurement Tool (HDMT), which is a comprehensive toolkit that supports the advancement of community health through urban infrastructure investments. Through a collective effort with the Denver Housing Authority and numerous local, state and national agencies and a local resident- business steering committee, the South Lincoln Redevelopment Master Plan leveraged over $7.5 million in OSHC grants with $22 million in HOPE VI and an additional $27 million in philanthropic funds from the Ford Foundation and Living Cities, to transform the South Lincoln neighborhood. South Lincoln is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Denver with 270 public housing units on 15.1 acres.

Tacoma Link Light Rail is supporting vibrant new activity in Tacoma's South Downtown neighborhood. With HUD Sustainable Communities funding, the City is conducting an up-front environmental review of the neighborhood, designed to speed up the permit process and incent new development in this designated regional growth center.

After receiving an HDMT assessment, the community made a commitment to address health issues including improved mobility, access to healthy food, and increased energy-efficiency and social cohesion. The new development includes energy-efficient and green building practices to align with LEED for Neighborhood Development, Enterprise Green Communities and ENERGY STAR. To address local availability, economic implications, environmental considerations, the team examined several energy source options, including solar photovoltaic panels and biomass. Leveraging the projected savings from their energy efficiency improvements, the neighborhood was also able to plan for holistic healthy neighborhood improvements including pedestrian-friendly, landscaped streets, greenspace enhancements, and a community garden and food hub to bring fruits and vegetables into the neighborhood through existing local markets, new stores and farmers' markets.

Oklahoma City, OK is working with public health experts to enhance PlanOKC, a comprehensive plan funded by a FY2010 Community Challenge grant. After being ranked one of the fattest cities in the country by the Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Oklahoma City's Mayor Cornett started a campaign in 2008 to encourage the city to lose one million pounds. Building on this momentum, Planokc examines data connections between the built environment and health in Oklahoma City. To infuse "health in every policy," the PlanOKC team has established a Healthy Communities Oversight Group comprised of citizens and public health professionals. This group reviews phases of PlanOKC development and recommends ways to incorporate health in the plan. By seeking input from the public health community, Oklahoma City is working to provide healthier choices for residents and reverse the city's obesity trend.

Western New Hampshire

In New Hampshire, the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC) is using an FY 2010 Community Challenge Grant to conduct Food Source Mapping and Housing Needs Assessments in Western New Hampshire to help community leaders increase the supply of affordable housing within walking distance of food sources. As part of this process, the UVLSRPC is working to map the availability of food options near housing. To complete the data

collection, the Commission is enlisting the help of local citizens and providing them with GPS training to collect data on food sources and walkability. The findings will help communities understand what food options are currently available and which areas are facing food insecurity. UVLSRPC will also use the findings to understand ways to improve the distribution of foods from local farms. The Commission will use the assessments to inform local leaders and advocate for policies that promote improved health outcomes throughout Western New Hampshire.

In **Columbus, OH,** the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is using a FY 2010 Community Challenge Grant to remedy the lack of access to fresh food in Weinland Park by integrating a local food system into the community. The MORPC plans to integrate a number of projects, including: new community gardens on foreclosed, vacant, and abandoned properties, a neighborhood food campus for food distribution and classes in food production and entrepreneurship, transportation planning, and the creation of a "healthy food team." MORPC is conducting research into best practices in urban agriculture, environmental site analysis, and design development. MORPC and its partners are also working to develop a curriculum tailored to urban gardening and entrepreneurship.

Fourth Street Farms, a new community garden located in the heart of Weinland Park -- a distressed, mixed-income neighborhood between downtown Columbus and Ohio State University that is the site of a HUD funded plan to incorporate all aspects of local food (growing, processing, distributing, eating) into its revitalization.

The Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission boasts five local food councils to help each of the region's 12 counties implement their Local Food Assessment and Plan.

Conclusions

Building the Momentum: Looking to the Future

Since its creation in early 2010, HUD's Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities (OSHC) has catalyzed pioneering community development work that is energizing regions and communities across the country. Through its Sustainable Communities Initiative and its engagement with the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, OSHC is building strong regional economies, attracting new private investment, and creating new job opportunities to improve the lives of American families and communities. OCHS's Sustainable Housing Initiative is keeping more money in the pockets of taxpayers by helping to reduce energy use and utility bills in affordable homes.

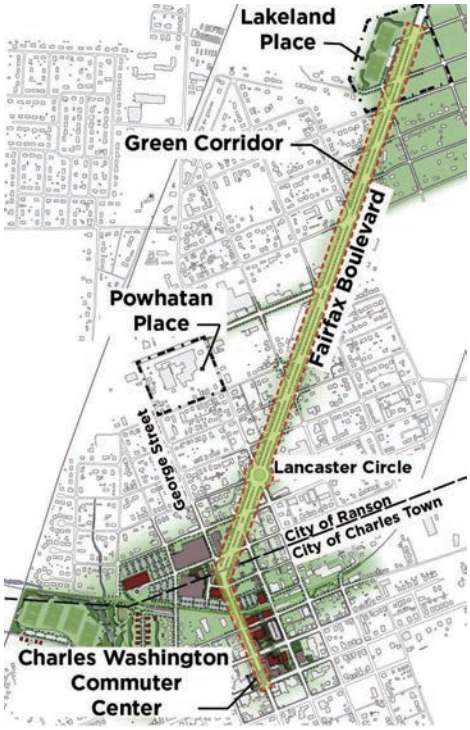
Demand for OSHC's assistance has far exceeded available resources. For example, only about 10 percent of applicants for OSHC's competitive Sustainable Communities grants have been funded. Community activities supported by OSHC grants have been extremely popular on the local level.

To continue building on the successes of the Sustainable Communities Initiative, OSHC appointed 70 Sustainability Officers in June 2010 in HUD regional and field offices, to help communities across the country leverage public and private resources to plan a more vibrant and competitive future. Through its Sustainable Communities Learning Network, OSHC is assisting both grantees and Preferred Sustainability Status communities adopt best practices and utilize new community development tools. Additionally, through HUD's new online Sustainable Communities Resource Center, OSHC is distributing information about public/private partnerships and economic development to the public at large.

"Our Region's prosperity and quality of life hinges on our ability to reduce fragmentation and duplicative effort. With the support of the Sustainable Communities Initiative and regional stakeholders, the Southeast Florida Regional Partnership has a unique opportunity to rethink and change "business as usual." Enhanced regional collaboration and strategic investment will set the stage for positive, transformational change.
- Ralph A. Marrinson, Chair, South Florida Regional Business Alliance

A fundamental tenet of OSHC's work is that integrated economic development planning can be done in communities of all types. OSHC has supported work in communities in 48 states and the District of Columbia, ranging in size from the vast metropolitan areas of New York and Chicago to rural and tribal areas in South Dakota, northern Wisconsin, and southwestern Virginia. Different regions and communities have developed different approaches to this work, which suit their individual circumstances and visions for the future. OSHC's Sustainable Communities Initiative is developing national models and best practices to help communities across the country embark on robust economic development.

The City of Ranson, West Virginia, a community of about 4,500 people, was faced with a steady decline in manufacturing, 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 due to a reduction of its manufacturing economy, leaving the community with contaminated, vacant sites and a downtown in physical and economic decline. Simultaneously, Jefferson County's population has grown steadily, but with few strategies to guide investment toward existing structures left vacant from decades of economic decline. Joining forces with federal and state agencies, Ranson City and nearby city of Charles Town have developed a plan for revitalization. OSHC and the Partnership for Sustainable Communities has been a key player in moving that plan forward. The plan centers on transforming Fairfax Boulevard, the main thoroughfare between the two cities. A "green corridor" will surround the boulevard, providing a pedestrian-friendly connection between the two cities that provides access to regional job centers and community facilities. 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 help of the HUD Community Challenge Grant, the city drafted new zoning requirements to develop streets that would be safe and comfortable for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorized vehicles, bring buildings closer to the street, and accommodate a mix of uses and affordable homes.



Measuring Progress

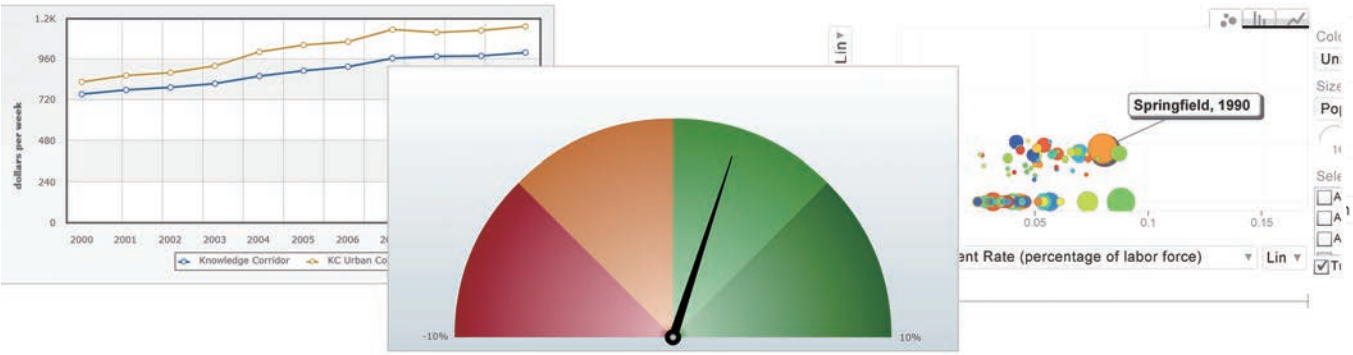
To develop a common framework for measuring progress toward sustainability outcomes across the country, OSHC is working with its grantees on program evaluation. One innovative aspect of the Sustainable Communities Initiative is that it encourages community-driven, data-supported work that helps communities develop program goals and ways of measuring progress toward those goals, appropriate to their local context, created through a community engagement process. Figure describes how Hartford, CT's, measures its progress.

To evaluate grantees' effectiveness across all programs, OSHC is tracking progress toward high-level, interdisciplinary goals that flow from the Partnership for Sustainable Communities Livability Principles. In coordination with DOT and EPA, OSHC developed a set of Flagship Indicators, based on Core Planning Outcomes, which provide standardized measurements to evaluate the work of diverse grantees. OSHC has asked it 2011 grantees to utilize these indicators for its self-evaluations, and is collecting data across programs to track overall impact.

TRACKING LOCAL GOALS

The Knowledge Corridor Consortium (KCC), led by the Capitol Region Council of Governments of Hartford, CT, a 2010 Regional Planning Grant recipient, is tracking a set of indicators tied to local sustainability goals. Progress towards KCC's goal "to maximize housing choice and housing affordability and to insure fair housing policies for all of the region's citizens," for example, is being measured through indicators such as: foreclosure rate, high concentrations of poverty and minority segregation, and housing cost burden. By creating a robust "How Are We Doing?" webpage, the KCC has made it easy for the public to follow the Consortium's progress and understand regional trends over time. User-friendly data is available at the broad regional level, as well as at the local town level.

Tools Used by the KCC to Track Sustainability Indicators



Visit http://www.sustainableknowledgecorridor.org/site/content/how-are-we-doing to see the KCC's data-tracking tools.

Sustainability Outcomes and Flagship Indicators

Sustainability Outcome	Definition	Flagship Indicator
Transportation Choice	Communities feature multiple safe and convenient options for people to walk, bike, or ride in order to reduce congestion and air pollution, lower transportation costs, and improve public health.	Total percentage of workers commuting via walking, biking, transit, or rideshare
Housing Affordability	Communities include a variety of housing choices that are affordable for all, and reverse a long-standing trend of steadily increasing housing costs.	Percentage of rental units and owner-occupied units affordable to households earning 80% of area median family income
Equitable Development	New growth and sustainability benefits extend to all community members, reducing costs and ensuring access to vital services for both the general population and for low to moderate income households.	Combined Housing and Transportation Affordability - Proportion of average household income spent on housing and transportation costs (calculated both for the project area as a whole and for areas with over 50% low-moderate income households)
		Access to healthy food choices - Percent of total population that resides in a low income census tract and resides more than one mile (ten miles in rural areas) from a supermarket
		Access to open space - Percent of total population that resides within a half-mile mile (one mile in rural areas) of a park or open space (calculated both for the project area as a whole and for areas with over 50% low-moderate income households)
Economic Resilience	Communities with stable, efficient, and diverse economies are better able to withstand economic shocks.	Economic Diversification Index - Diversity of the local economy as compared to the diversity of the national economy
		General local government debt-to-revenue ratio
Growth Through Reinvestment	Focusing new housing and commercial growth in areas that have already been urbanized increases the vitality of existing communities and safeguards rural landscapes. It also makes better use of existing public infrastructure while avoiding the expense of expanding infrastructure to new areas.	Net acres of agricultural and natural resource land lost annually to development per new resident

Madison, WI high school students pa[illegible] exercise as part of the Capital Area Planning Commission [illegible] grant.

In addition to the above, OSHC is tracking three Planning Outcomes, which are more qualitative and process in nature. These include:

- Public Engagement
- Governance
- Integrated Planning and Investment

In addition to the groundbreaking sustainable communities work, OSHC's Sustainable Housing Initiative will continue to foster catalytic ways to reduce energy and utility bills, while preserving housing affordability and promoting green building innovation. The initiative is helping to transform markets by providing leadership and building capacity to support greener, more energy-efficient, and healthier HUD-assisted and market-rate housing.

From east coast to west coast, from rural to urban communities, HUD's Office of Sustainable Communities is fully engaged in improving the lives of Americans. OSHC, in collaboration with the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, is helping to create thriving regional economies, where business investments are creating new opportunities, and where communities are realizing their hopes for a prosperous future.

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Photos on front cover (from Left to Right):
Columbia, TN; Salt Lake City, UT; Greensboro, NC

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