



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **What is the Southeast Florida Regional Partnership?**

The Southeast Florida Regional Partnership is a growing broad-based, multi-sector partnership composed of public, private, non-profit, community-based and civic stakeholders from Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie, and Indian River counties. Partnership members include, but are not limited to, private sector organizations; water resource, housing, environmental and transportation agencies and organizations; local governments; non-profits; philanthropic organizations; human services funders; community-based and civic organizations; academia and research institutions; school boards and other educational partners; and economic development organizations.

The Southeast Florida Regional Partnership is building upon existing working relationships and partnerships to establish a regional partnership and develop an application to the Sustainable Communities Planning Grants Program. This program is sponsored by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in coordination with the United States Department of Transportation (DOT) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Partnership members are committed to the sustainable development and redevelopment of Southeast Florida, and support the following “Livability Principles.”

1. Provide more transportation choices;
2. Promote equitable, affordable housing;
3. Enhance economic competitiveness;
4. Support existing communities;
5. Coordinate policies and leverage investment;
6. Value communities and neighborhoods; and
7. Enhance community resiliency to the impacts of climate change.

### **Do these seven counties really have that much in common?**

The Southeast Florida region is comprised of Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie and Indian River counties. Together, this region represents the 5<sup>th</sup> largest metropolitan area in the country. These seven counties, though diverse, have much in common including a shared history, environment and watershed, economic interdependence, transportation system, and recreational, social and cultural activities. This seven county area is classified as “Southeast Florida” by Enterprise Florida, and defined as the “Southeast Region” in the Strategic Intermodal Plan of the Florida Department of Transportation.

**Does the Southeast Florida Regional Partnership exist only for the purpose of applying for the Sustainable Communities Planning Grants Program?**

The opportunity presented by the Sustainable Communities Planning Grants Program has provided renewed impetus for bringing together and expanding existing local and regional partnerships under the umbrella of a new “Southeast Florida Regional Partnership.” Just as other parts of the state and country have proactively organized themselves to more effectively address opportunities and challenges facing their regions, the Southeast Florida Regional Partnership has the potential to provide tremendous value and leadership in Southeast Florida beyond any individual grant opportunity. The Partnership needs to continue to mature and evolve into a forum where discussion and consensus building on issues of regional importance can occur.

**What are the roles of the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils in this Initiative?**

The Governing Boards of the South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils have directed their respective staffs to spearhead the formal organization of the Southeast Florida Regional Partnership, and preparation of a regional application to the U.S. HUD’s Sustainable Communities Planning Grants Program. The South Florida and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils are also members of the Southeast Florida Regional Partnership.

**The word “sustainable” is used a lot. What does it mean?**

The concept of sustainability holds that the demands of today must not supersede the needs of the future. Sustainability is often narrowly associated with natural systems but in reality applies to the entire living environment. This environment includes social and economic systems that are also demanding on finite resources.

Sustainable development of the Region requires balance between the resource requirements of the environment, the economy, and society. Bold strategies supporting the social and economic components of sustainability are needed in South Florida, and they must reflect interdependent relationships between the natural environment, built environment, social institutions, and the economy.

**What is the Sustainable Communities Initiative and Sustainable Communities Planning Grants Program?**

On June 16 2009, the U.S. HUD, DOT, and EPA announced an Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities. The goal of this interagency partnership is to regionally coordinate federal housing, environmental protection, and transportation planning and investment. Federal funding to support this effort is being provided under HUD’s Sustainable Communities Planning Grants Program.

The Fiscal Year 2010-11 Federal Budget includes \$150 million in start-up funding for the HUD Sustainable Communities Planning Grants Program. A fund of \$100 million has been created to encourage metropolitan regions to articulate a vision for growth tailored to specific metropolitan markets that federal housing, transportation, and other federal

investments can support. A fund of \$40 million is earmarked to support the update of local land use and zoning rules and assist states and localities in the design and implementation of planning reforms at the local and regional levels that will support the creation of “affordable, economically vital and sustainable communities.” The remaining \$10 million will support research and evaluation efforts. Second year funding (FY2011-12) for the Program is currently being discussed in Washington.

### **What do we know about the Sustainable Communities Planning Grants Program?**

The HUD Notice of Funding of Availability (NOFA) was released on June 24<sup>th</sup>. The NOFA is the guidance document that sets forth the requirements and components of competitive applications. The application is due August 23, 2010.

Link to NOFA: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/grants/nofa10/scrpg.cfm>

The NOFA clearly states that the goal of the Sustainable Communities Planning Grants Program is to support **multi-jurisdictional regional planning efforts** that integrate housing, economic development, and transportation decision-making in a manner that empowers jurisdictions to consider the interdependent challenges of economic growth, social equity and environmental impact simultaneously.

The Program places a priority in investing in partnerships that translate the Livability Principles (below) into “strategies that direct long-term development and reinvestment, demonstrate a commitment to addressing issues of regional significance, utilize data to set and monitor progress toward performance goals, and engage stakeholders and citizens in meaningful decision-making roles.”

### **Two funding categories have been established:**

**Category 1** - Funding to support the preparation of Regional Plans for Sustainable Development that address housing, economic development, transportation, and environmental quality in an integrated fashion where such plans do not currently exist.

**Category 2** - Funding to support the preparation of more detailed execution plans and programs to implement existing regional sustainable development plans (that address housing, economic development, transportation, and environmental quality in an integrated fashion.

### **Criteria “Livability Principles”**

HUD, EPA, and DOT have adopted the following six “Livability Principles” to guide their strategic activities and investments. The Southeast Florida Regional Partnership has adopted the six principles and added a seventh “Enhance community resiliency to the impacts of climate change.”

1. Provide more transportation choices;
2. Promote equitable, affordable housing;
3. Enhance economic competitiveness;
4. Support existing communities;

5. Coordinate policies and leverage investment;
6. Value communities and neighborhoods; and
7. Enhance community resiliency to the impacts of climate change.

### **Where does Southeast Florida fit in?**

Southeast Florida clearly fits into Category 1 – development of a “Regional Plan for Sustainable Development.”

A key component of the Sustainable Communities Planning Grants Program is the development of a “Regional Plan for Sustainable Development” for regions that lack a cohesive, integrated regional “vision” across issue areas and jurisdictional boundaries.

In Southeast Florida, significant resources, time and effort have been invested in planning throughout the years. There are existing regional relationships and partnerships that can be strengthened and expanded. The challenge is to integrate these partnerships and efforts across issue areas and jurisdictional lines and reach agreement on a preferred future for the region and critical infrastructure investments needed to move the region forward.

### **Why is it important to develop the “Regional Plan for Sustainable Development”?**

The HUD’s Sustainable Communities Initiative is the region’s best opportunity to access up to \$5 million to articulate and develop consensus around a “Regional Vision” and “Regional Plan for Sustainable Development.” It is expected that this Plan will: 1) serve as the framework for future federal investment; 2) support the efforts of individual counties, municipalities and other regional partners whose plans and projects further the implementation of the regional Vision and Plan; and 3) put the Southeast Florida Region in the best position possible to capture **future federal funds** for critical infrastructure projects designed to improve the region’s sustainability.

The absence of a regional, collaborative partnership and shared vision for Southeast Florida has left our region at a competitive disadvantage when we seek to access needed state and federal resources. Envision Utah, One Bay (Tampa), Portland Metro 2040, Denver Metro Vision 2040, Sacramento Area Blueprint (2004), and Myregion.org (Orlando) are examples of regions that have well established multi-sector partnerships and regional strategies for quality communities and growth. While Southeast Florida has made progress in many issue areas, including transportation, water supply, and climate change planning with the recent signing of the four-county Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact, these examples are the exception rather than the rule.

### **How much funding is available?**

In Fiscal Year 2010-11, \$98 million is available for the Sustainable Communities Planning Grants Program for the two categories of funding discussed above. An additional \$2 million is reserved for “capacity support grants” to be distributed through a future NOFA. According to the HUD NOFA, the grant amount awarded under the Program to an eligible entity that represents a large metropolitan area with a population of 500,000 or more ranges from \$500,000 to \$5,000,000.

**What is the grant match requirement?**

Matching funds are not required. However, to be eligible for funding, 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. Applicants will receive credit for leveraging resources greater than 20 percent of the requested amount.

**Where does the Southeast Florida Regional Partnership expect to get its match?**

Southeast Florida’s public, private, non-profit, and philanthropic partners are making significant investments to promote the creation of more sustainable communities. Project consultants assisting the Southeast Florida Regional Partnership are researching whether or not these existing investments may count toward the 20% leveraged resources requirement. We will bring to the Partnership their research findings and guidance from the NOFA once it released for discussion on the match issue.

**Who is applying for the grant on behalf of the Southeast Florida Regional Partnership?**

The South Florida Regional Planning Council, in partnership with the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, is applying for the grant.

**If the grant funds are awarded, how will they be used?**

The grant funds will be used to support the development of the Southeast Florida Regional Partnership, and development and implementation of a work plan which will lead to the creation and adoption of the Regional Vision and Plan for Sustainable Development.

**Why should my organization participate or support this effort?**

The Regional Vision and Plan for Sustainable Development in Southeast Florida will be a long-term vision and plan extending out to 2060. A primary goal of the application to the HUD Sustainable Communities Planning Grants Program is to access funding to develop the long-term vision and infrastructure investment plan for the sustainable development and redevelopment of the region.

The development of the Regional Vision and Plan will require broad input and collaboration from stakeholders and communities throughout the region. A key component of the “Regional Plan for Sustainable Development” will be a statement of key infrastructure investments that are needed to support implementation of the Plan and enhance the sustainability of the region and its existing communities over time.

**How will this benefit my community?**

To the extent that your organization’s priority projects contribute to a more sustainable region – enhancing communities, economy, and the environment – and are articulated in

the adopted Vision and Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, it is expected that your project will be ranked higher by federal and state reviewers than projects that are not identified in the Regional Plan. In other words, grant applications for projects identified as contributing to the overall sustainability of the region by virtue of being referenced in the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development should be more competitive than they would be otherwise.

### **How can you and/or your organization support this regional effort?**

Everyone can contribute to this regional initiative.

1. Join the South Florida Regional Partnership!
2. Execute the Partnership Memorandum of Understanding
3. Write a Letter of Support for the grant application
4. Pass a Resolution in support of this regional initiative
5. Help grow the Partnership by reaching out to potential partner organizations
6. Become a member of the application development team

The Memorandum of Understanding, sample letter of support, and sample resolution can be accessed via [www.sfrpc.com](http://www.sfrpc.com) or [www.tcrpc.org](http://www.tcrpc.org) by clicking on the Southeast Florida Regional Partnership logo.

### **What is expected of Partner organizations?**

The Sustainable Communities Planning Grants Program is specifically designed to support the efforts and collaborations of regional partnerships. At this point in time, it is expected that Partner members, organizations and individuals, will work collaboratively and in good faith to grow the Partnership and assist in the preparation of a competitive application to the extent that they are able.

It is requested that “Partner” organizations execute the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and support the application with a letter and resolution of support. The MOU is the “Partnership” document. This document is important because it affirms the existence of a committed group of regional stakeholders that are working together to forward the seven livability principles outlined above, six of which are specific priorities of U.S. HUD, EPA, and DOT.

Page 20 of the NOFA provides guidance regarding what it expects of “consortium members.” If the Partnership’s application is successful, a “formal consortium agreement” is expected to be executed no later than 120 days after the effective start date of the grant agreement. The consortium agreement must describe each consortium member’s specific activities under the Program, including timetables for completion. It will be up to the individual members of the Partnership to decide whether they wish to enter into the consortium agreement at that time.

Link to NOFA: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/grants/nofa10/scrpg.cfm>

**Will signing the MOU now obligate me in any way?**

The MOU is not a legal document. It does not obligate the signatory to provide anything, including financial or staff resources. Participation in the work of the Southeast Florida Regional Partnership is voluntary.

**For additional information, please contact:**

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