

2060 Southeast Florida Regional Plan for Sustainable Development Project



**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program
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**Project Application for Category 1
Regional Plans for Sustainable Development**

**Submitted By the South Florida Regional Planning Council
on behalf of the**



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ABSTRACT

2060 Southeast Florida Regional Plan for Sustainable Development

Southeast Florida is home to 6.2 million people (one-third of Florida's total population) that, combined, create the fifth largest metropolitan region in the country. It is also a region in rapid transition. Regional issues that go beyond traditional local boundaries, such as international immigration, global trade, and tourism including expansion of the Panama Canal, Everglades restoration, transportation, water management, the housing and unemployment crisis, and climate change are reshaping the region. How we address those issues could very well determine Southeast Florida's long-term success.

A grant from the Sustainable Communities Initiatives will enable us to put in place the regional plan (the 2060 Southeast Florida Regional Plan for Sustainable Development - RPSD) and the regional partnerships (through the Southeast Florida Regional Partnership) to ensure that planning and investment decisions will yield a more prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable region. The process will be the first comprehensive effort to develop a regional plan that spans the existing jurisdictions of regional planning councils, state agency sub-districts, metropolitan planning organizations, numerous special districts, seven counties, over 100 municipalities, and a diverse mix of business, social and ethnic organizations. Our goal is summed up in the theme for our regional plan: *a better region, a better life for all*.

Because Southeast Florida is on the cutting edge of global issues such as international immigration, trade, communication, and climate change, regional solutions developed in Southeast Florida will provide a model for other regions. As those issues have become dominant, traditional regional planning and development processes have had to recreate themselves in order to stay competitive for domestic public funding, reflect demographic changes, and provide the framework for successful private investment and the creation of jobs. The regions that successfully manage that transition will create the models for future sustainable, regional planning.

Southeast Florida is well-positioned to create such a model.

- Its two regional planning councils, South Florida (Monroe, Miami Dade, and Broward) and Treasure Coast (Palm Beach, Martin, St. Lucie and Indian River) have a long history of developing innovative strategic regional policy plans under state law. They have also purposefully complemented the assets of each other. South Florida has focused on economic development initiatives and new programs dealing with community health while Treasure Coast has a national reputation built on collaborative design charrettes. On the private sector side, the Urban Land Institute's Southeast Florida/Caribbean District Council is also focusing regionally, including on housing, infrastructure, and sustainability issues.
- Starting in early 2000, almost a decade of funding from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation was used to highlight regional issues, expand the capacity of existing regional institutions, and create new entities to fill gaps.
- All counties and cities in the region have prepared comprehensive plans that are consistent with the strategic regional policy plans and state statutory requirements. Monroe County, home of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, has focused its land use plans on hurricane evacuation and protection of the largest offshore coral reef system in North America. Miami-Dade County has a long history of metropolitan-based planning, including the use of an urban growth boundary, locating transit-oriented development around a multi-modal transit system, and developing a GreenPrint plan that will integrate existing planning activities with climate change adaptation strategies. Broward County has been a leader in urban arterial corridor planning and now planning for climate change (through a Climate Action Plan and taking the lead in forming the Southeast Florida Climate Change Consortium). Palm Beach County is significantly impacted by Everglades Restoration activities and the

need to balance future agriculture needs with environmental and urban needs; they also have created a bio-science technology center supported by land use plans in several municipalities. Martin County has a long standing comprehensive plan focused on maintaining its rural areas and protecting valuable estuarine areas. St. Lucie County has taken the lead in making alternative energy and nurturing technology businesses a focus of their future planning. They are currently developing a vehicle miles traveled-based impact fee. Indian River County has consistently taken actions to conserve their historic citrus industry and maintain their fresh and estuarine natural areas.

- Regional water management is the purview of the South Florida Water Management District. The district and federal, state, tribal, and local agencies coordinate through the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force to manage restoration of the Florida Everglades, the largest natural resource restoration program going on around the globe. Transportation issues have long been the purview of single-county metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), leading to a fragmented approach to the development of regional systems, such as transit, rail, airports, and seaports. Recent regional successes in transportation include creation of the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority to plan and operate a regional rail system, increased regional coordination among the MPOs, and the development of the regional portion of the Strategic Intermodal System plan by district offices of the Florida Department of Transportation (DOT). The game changer for regional transportation is the recent agreement by the U.S. DOT and the State of Florida to build a high-speed rail line between Miami, Orlando, and Tampa that will serve the entire seven-county region. Regional organizations in the areas of housing, equitable community issues, and population diversity have yet to evolve. Those issues are currently addressed at the community level (counties, cities, and not-for-profits). For example, the Broward Housing Alliance has focused on the dramatic shifts in the region's housing market (after an unparalleled upswing, average house prices have tumbled and foreclosures have reached the pandemic stage). A coordinated regional response is also needed to address climate change. Recent international climate assessments found that Southeast Florida is one of the most vulnerable areas to the impacts of climate change, especially sea level rise.

The Sustainable Communities Initiative provides Southeast Florida with a unique and exceptionally well-timed opportunity to build on its local and regional plans, capitalize on its past successes, learn from its past failures, and forge a real regional alliance for the future. We will use the funds to:

- Develop and begin implementation of a regional vision and plan (the 2060 Southeast Florida Regional Plan for Sustainable Development) including specific implementation strategies, assignments, and timelines to ensure accountability and follow-through.
- Create integrated data, tools, and models to assess the region today, understand the region's future, and track progress toward the vision and RPSD. A monitoring plan will focus on measuring progress toward specific regional outcomes aligned with all six livability principles, plus a seventh climate change principle because of Southeast Florida's extreme vulnerability.
- Build and sustain inclusive leadership and partnerships to strengthen regional collaboration and stewardship, providing a foundation for the region's future long-term success. That the Southeast Florida Regional Partnership already has 194 member and supporting organizations, and can leverage \$136 million in federal, state and local funds toward development and implementation of the RPSD, provides a strong testimony to the region's commitment to creating a region that is economically competitive and prosperous, socially inclusive, and environmentally sustainable.
- The intersection of major federal investments in the region's infrastructure for trade, transportation, housing, and the environment with a comprehensive regional plan for sustainable development promises dividends in new jobs, vibrant communities, and a region prepared to be successful in the economy.