

C Community Development Committee
For the Metropolitan Council meeting of December 8,
2010

Item: 2010-416

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date December 7, 2010
Prepared:
Subject: Authorization to Negotiate and Execute Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Agreement with HUD

Proposed Action:

Authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a Grant Agreement with HUD for a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant in the amount of \$5 million.

Summary of Committee Discussion / Questions:

Members of the Community Development Committee had several questions regarding the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant. One member requested more explanation of the project "Analysis of Energy Efficient Mortgage and Location Efficient Mortgage Products." Staff explained that this project will explore ways to develop mortgage products that factor in energy and transportation costs. A member asked if there will be an evaluation of the grant after it is completed to determine what was accomplished? Staff responded that while it is a planning grant, and many of the outcomes will occur long after the grant period, evaluation is a major part of grant administration. Another question related to the Northstar Corridor, which runs outside the seven-county Metropolitan Council jurisdiction. Can any of this grant be used outside this area? Staff responded that the Policy Board, which oversees the grant, will need to address that question. A Committee member asked, with all the comprehensive plans recently completed, what will this grant add to the region? Staff indicated that while comprehensive plans address land uses, the thrust of planning under the grant will focus on implementation. Using the model of the Central Corridor, the projects will focus on identifying investments needed to implement the plans.

The Committee voted unanimously to authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a Grant Agreement with HUD for a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant in the amount of \$5 million.

C Community Development Committee

Meeting date: December 6, 2010

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date:	December 6, 2010
Subject:	Authorization to Negotiate and Execute Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant agreement with HUD
District(s), Member(s):	All
Policy/Legal Reference:	MN Statutes 473.145, Regional Framework Policies 1, 2, 3
Staff Prepared/Presented:	Mark VanderSchaaf, Director, Planning and Growth Management, 651 602-1441
Division/Department:	Community Development/Planning and Growth Management

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council:

Authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute a Grant Agreement with HUD for a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant in the amount of \$5 million.

Background

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010(Public Law 111-117) provided funding for a Sustainable Communities Initiative to improve regional planning efforts that integrate housing and transportation decisions and increase the capacity to improve land use and zoning. HUD's grant is part of a federal partnership that includes the U.S. Department of Transportation, its Federal Transit Administration, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The program made available approximately \$100 million for competitive Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grants.

The Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant (SCRPG) Program supports metropolitan and multijurisdictional planning efforts that integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments to empower jurisdictions to consider the interdependent challenges of:

- (1) economic competitiveness and revitalization;
- (2) social equity, inclusion and access to opportunity;
- (3) energy use and climate change; and
- (4) public health and environmental impact.

In August the Metropolitan Council applied on behalf of a regional consortium that includes Minnesota Housing, the Counties Transit Improvement Board, Hennepin and Ramsey counties, the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul and the McKnight Foundation.

The Metropolitan Council was awarded a \$5 million grant which, with the help of local leveraged resources, will support planning along the region's network of transit corridors. Only 45 of the 225 applicants received funding.

The grant will emphasize public involvement in creating five major corridor-wide plans and strategies for optimal development of the Southwest LRT, Bottineau, Cedar Avenue Bus Rapid Transit, Northstar Commuter Rail and the Gateway Corridor (I-94 East). This work will build upon the existing planning done for the Central Corridor, creating studies, strategies, and innovative ways for building economic competitiveness by connecting housing with good jobs, quality schools and transportation. In all, the grant includes 21 separate but integrated projects intended to serve as models for use throughout the region.

The grant will run for three years beginning in 2011. It will enable the Council, the Consortium and its local partners to support voluntary comprehensive development strategies for the transitway corridors and support local communities to implement corridor strategies. The grant will address economic/workforce development, alternative energy systems, housing energy efficiency/affordability, stormwater and green infrastructure in the Central Corridor. The grant will support technical studies and data collection addressing jobs/housing balance, feasibility of a "Program of Projects", fair housing "best practices", improving Housing Link and energy and location-efficient mortgages.

In addition to the core group of partners, the project has the support and participation of the University of Minnesota, Central Corridor Funders Collaborative and the Ford Foundation. The Alliance for Metropolitan Stability, Minnesota Center for Neighborhood Organizing and Nexis Community Partners will compose a team that will support community engagement.

Rationale

The SCRPG will enable the Council and communities to build on existing planning efforts to advance multi-modal transportation choices, promote affordable housing with access to jobs, transit- and pedestrian-friendly development, environmental preservation and energy efficiency.

Funding

HUD will grant \$5 million to the Council on behalf of the Consortium and communities to promote sustainable communities throughout the region.

Known Support / Opposition

Over 30 communities and organizations submitted letters to the Council in support of this grant. Many local philanthropic organizations such as McKnight Foundation are supportive of this grant. There is no known opposition to the grant.