

# Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant



## Fact Sheet

**Background:** The US Department of Transportation, the US Environmental Protection Agency, and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development have announced an interagency partnership for sustainable communities to improve economic prosperity, provide access to affordable housing, create more transportation choices at lower costs, and protect the environment in metropolitan regions and rural communities.

**What is Sustainability?** A widely-recognized definition of sustainability is “policies and strategies that meet society’s present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” While this definition is quite general, the DOT, HUD and EPA partnership has identified the following six principles to provide additional guidance on the concept of sustainability:

- Provide more transportation choices
- Promote equitable, affordable housing
- Enhance economic competitiveness
- Support existing communities
- Coordinate policies and leverage investment
- Value communities and neighborhoods

**Why Sustainable Community Planning?** Metropolitan areas, like the Houston-Galveston region, already conduct region-wide plans for specific topics such as transportation, air quality, and other sectors. A sustainable development plan will build upon previous planning efforts to help communities identify integrated goals, evaluation metrics, and implementation strategies. This holistic approach will help ensure that resulting projects and strategies achieve multiple sustainability objectives.

**How will this Initiative Benefit the H-GAC Region?** Preparing a Regional Plan for Sustainability for the H-GAC region will provide communities with an opportunity to comprehensively address critical challenges such as housing, transportation, environmental protection, and economic development. The planning process will foster collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries. Local communities that adopt a Regional Plan for Sustainability or similar local plan may be more competitive nationally for emerging federal funding opportunities.

**Funding:** HUD has announced that \$98 million is available through the [Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant](#). Large metro areas, population greater than 500,000, are eligible for a maximum grant of \$5 million. Matching is not required but leveraged resources totaling 20 percent are required in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. In order to apply for the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program, eligible applicants must form a consortium. H-GAC will serve as the lead applicant.

### Timeline:

- Complete grant application is due to HUD by **August 23, 2010**.
- Additional timelines and dates will be posted on the H-GAC website: [www.h-gac.com/community/sustainability](http://www.h-gac.com/community/sustainability).
- Grant period may be up to 36 months.

**How to get Involved?** Local interested parties and organizations will have the opportunity to participate as Stakeholder Consortium members. Opportunities for [stakeholder participation](#) include the Regional Transect Group, the Technical Advisory Group, and public workshops and visioning activities. See the [Organizational Structure](#) for more information.

For questions on comments, please e-mail [sustainability@h-gac.com](mailto:sustainability@h-gac.com) or visit our [online discussion forum](#).

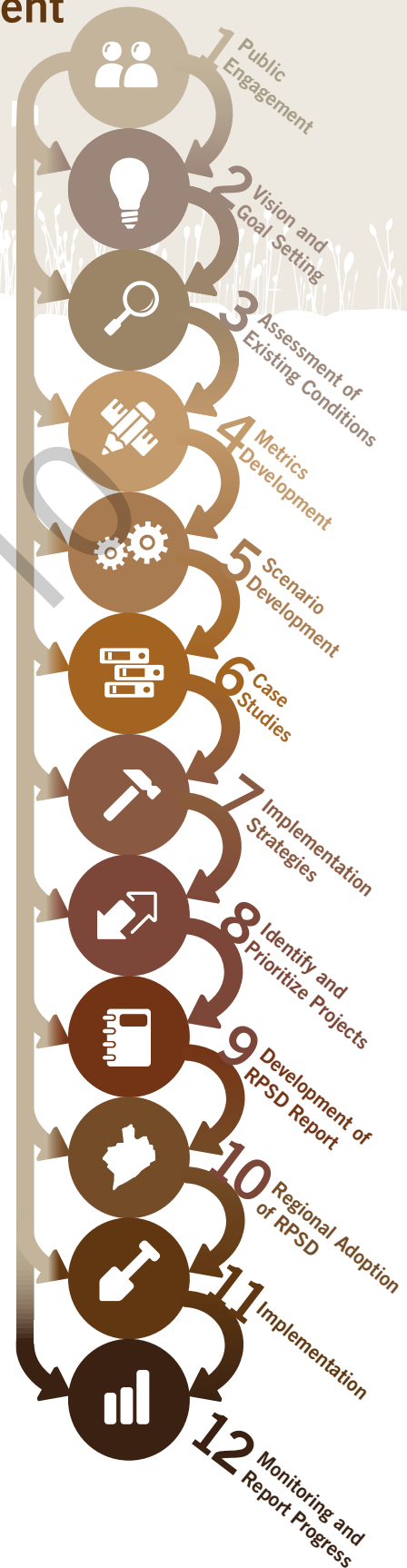
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*The Partnership for Sustainable Communities*

# Regional Plan for Sustainable Development for the Houston Gulf Coast Planning Region

- H-GAC and 24 Coordinating Consortium partners received a \$3.75 Million Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant to develop a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development for the Houston Gulf Coast Planning Region.
- Plan development will be driven by extensive public engagement, technical advisement and fact-based analysis.
- Hands-on stakeholder advisory groups, including subject matter experts and regional representatives, will assess existing conditions to create a baseline of sustainability in the region.
- Local governments and representatives will play a key role in the development of this plan as members of the stakeholder advisory groups.
- Consortium is working to finalize the contract with HUD and develop bylaws for working together, with stakeholders and with the Governmental Advisory Committee.
- Stakeholder/public engagement will begin in Spring 2011.
- Public engagement will be critical to the entire planning process, beginning with a public visioning exercise to develop regional goals and gain consensus on a regional vision for sustainability.
- Stakeholder groups will meet independently as well as collectively to coordinate efforts, share ideas and review recommendations.
- Resulting recommendations will be forwarded to a Governmental Advisory Committee, made up of elected officials, for further action.
- The grants are part of the Obama Administration's Partnership for Sustainable Communities, which brings EPA, HUD, USDA and DOT together to ensure that the agencies' policies, programs and funding consider affordable housing, transportation, and environmental protection together.
- Members of the Coordinating Consortium include Bay City Community Development Corporation, Blueprint Houston and Center for Houston's Future, Bolivar Blueprint/Peninsula Development Coalition, Inc. (PenDeCo.), Brazoria County, Chambers County, City of Galveston, City of Houston, City of Huntsville, Fort Bend County, Greater Houston Builders Association, Gulf Coast Economic Development District, Harris County, Houston Advanced Research Center, Houston Tomorrow, Houston Wilderness, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO), Montgomery County, Neighborhood Centers, Inc., Port of Houston Authority, Texas Southern University, United Way of Greater Houston, VN TeamWork, Inc. and Waller County Economic Development.



# Organizational Structure

## LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

Primary stakeholders and elected officials provide oversight and ensure planning process results in viable strategies for implementation.



### Roles of the Coordinating Committee

- Coordinates Technical Advisory Group and Regional Transect Group
- Implements Citizen Participation Plan
- Presents recommendations to Governmental Advisory Committee
- Monitors progress of plan development

### Representatives of the Coordinating Committee

- Government – Regional Planning Agency: H-GAC, Lead Applicant and Fiscal Agent
- Government – Policy Making
- Government – Service
- Research/Education
- Non-Profit/Advocacy



**TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP**  
Subject matter experts review existing materials, develop sustainability strategies, and identify connections between sectors.

**THE PUBLIC**  
Public participation engages a broad spectrum of the public to provide continuous input and feedback throughout the process.

**REGIONAL TRANSECT GROUP**  
Regional representatives review strategies and metrics for applicability in urban, rural, suburban and coastal areas.