AGENDA NOTE - HRPDC ANNUAL RETREAT

ITEM #5: SUSTAINABILITY: A GROWING FEDERAL FOCAL AREA

SUBJECT:

Sustainability is the theme of the FY 2012 Retreat. It is the topic identified as the link among a number of the federal and state grant programs used by the HRPDC to support its programs.

BACKGROUND:

The HRPDC staff has identified sustainability as a central theme to the several critical issues facing Hampton Roads. HRPDC Executive Director Dwight Farmer will provide a brief overview of sustainability as the organizing theme to the FY 2011 Retreat and the linkage among the HRPDC capabilities and resources as well as the critical issues to be discussed by the Commission and staff.

To support this discussion, attached is a briefing paper prepared by the three lead federal partners in the interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities. This paper highlights the six livability principles, which have been incorporated into a number of the federal programs.

DISCUSSION

Attachment 5

Partnership *for* Sustainable Communities

SUPPORTING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

On June 16, 2009, U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Ray LaHood, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Shaun Donovan, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Lisa P. Jackson announced the formation of an interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities. This action marked a fundamental shift in the way the federal government structures its transportation, housing, and environmental policies, programs, and spending, and Americans are already seeing the impacts. The three agencies are working together to support urban, suburban, and rural communities' efforts to expand housing and transportation choices, protect their air and water, attract economic growth, and provide the type of development residents want.

Sustainable communities are places that provide homes working families can afford; safe, reliable, and economical transportation options; and access to jobs, schools, parks, shopping, and cultural destinations. Not only do all of their residents enjoy the same protection from environmental and health hazards, but they also share in the economic and social benefits that can come from development. By coordinating housing, transportation, and other infrastructure investments, the Partnership is promoting reinvestment in existing communities, expanding residents' access to employment and educational opportunities, and catalyzing community revitalization that uplifts people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities.

PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES GUIDING LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES

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

HUD, DOT, and EPA have worked together to distribute nearly $2 billion in grants that support vital transportation infrastructure, equitable comprehensive planning, and brownfields cleanup and reuse. Some grants are targeted to areas where disinvestment and industrial pollution have left a legacy of abandoned and contaminated sites. Other grants require recipients

The Fairmount commuter rail corridor in Boston's low-income neighborhoods of Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan is one of the Partnership's Brownfields Pilots. The photo and rendering show the area around the Uphams Corner station before and after transit upgrades and planned redevelopment.

to have clear plans for involving underserved populations in their proposed activities. The three agencies are also working to integrate sustainability and environmental justice into their programs and to remove federal regulatory and policy barriers to sustainable community development in distressed areas.

The Partnership is also helping to build the capacity of environmental justice and equitable development organizations to engage in planning their neighborhoods' and regions' futures. A working group is examining how the Partnership can support the efforts of environmental justice communities to achieve sustainability. Additionally, the three agencies help to convene an annual Equitable Development Workshop offering information and training on current policy trends, opportunities for collaboration, and successful initiatives around the country.

PROGRESS TOWARD MORE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES AND MORE EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

In its first year, the Partnership has undertaken several projects that bring together environmental justice, equitable development, and sustainable communities.

Team-EJ, the Partnership's Environmental Justice Working Group

The Partnership created Team-EJ, a working group focused on the connections between environmental justice and sustainable communities. Team-EJ, chaired by EPA's Office of Environmental Justice, is working with the Partnership to better understand how the three agencies can integrate environmental justice and sustainable community goals and use their existing resources to address environmental justice needs. The group produced the *Environmental Justice and Sustainability Deskbook* to provide information on the resources available to communities through EPA, HUD, and DOT. The deskbook will be available at www.epa.gov/smartgrowth.

HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grants

In October 2010, HUD awarded $100 million to support metropolitan and multijurisdictional planning efforts that integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments. HUD, DOT, and EPA screened grant applications for engagement of populations not typically involved in planning, such as low-income people, minorities, people with limited English proficiency, youth, seniors, and persons with disabilities. Extra points were awarded to communities in economic distress. With comprehensive regional plans created through an inclusive process, communities can better address the interdependent challenges of economic competitiveness, revitalization, social equity and access to opportunity, public health, environmental protection, and climate change.

> "By working together, [HUD, DOT, and EPA] can make sure that when it comes to development—housing, transportation, energy efficiency—these things aren't mutually exclusive; they go hand in hand. And that means making sure that affordable housing exists in close proximity to jobs and transportation. That means encouraging shorter travel times and lower travel costs. It means safer, greener, more livable communities."
>
> –President Barack Obama

Joint DOT TIGER II-HUD Community Challenge Grants

For the first time, DOT and HUD joined forces to award $68 million—$28 million in transportation planning grants from the second round of TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) funds and $40 million in HUD Community Challenge Planning Grants to support local planning activities that integrate transportation, housing, and economic development. Again, HUD, DOT, and EPA screened grant applications for the engagement of underserved populations and economic distress.

JACKSONVILLE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE SHOWCASE COMMUNITY

EPA's Environmental Justice Showcase Communities program convenes federal agencies, state and local government entities, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders to help underserved communities shape their neighborhoods' futures. One Environmental Justice Showcase Community—Jacksonville, Florida—is receiving assistance from the Partnership to help address local environmental, health, and economic challenges. EPA, HUD, and DOT representatives participated in the project's kickoff event, where they toured the northeastern part of the city, a disadvantaged area with several Superfund and brownfield sites and high rates of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, asthma, and infant mortality.

During the initiative's kickoff event in April 2010, community leaders talked with federal and local government officials and private-sector partners on one of the contaminated sites slated for redevelopment.

The agencies are supporting the local partners' vision, which includes a community health center designed using green building techniques and located on a cleaned-up brownfield site close to public transportation, community gardens, parks, and other recreational opportunities. The center may also provide training for health care jobs in partnership with historically black colleges and universities. Building on the momentum around the showcase initiative, HUD Region IV has selected the Jacksonville pilot as a Partnership for Sustainable Communities Signature Project and will explore how housing can be used to make HUD-assisted low-income households more economically self sufficient.

> "We are delighted that EPA, HUD, and other federal agencies are working with us to tackle our environmental justice issues. The Partnership for Sustainable Communities can help us build on the important work of our local partners and create a green, healthy, and sustainable community in which we can live, work, and play."
>
> Wynetta Wright, Director, Eastside Environmental Council, Inc., Jacksonville

Communities can work with environmental justice and equitable development groups to make sure that all the members of a community have a chance to be engaged in planning and visioning efforts.

Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Pilot Initiative

In October 2010, in collaboration with HUD, DOT, and other agencies, EPA's Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Pilot Initiative awarded $4 million to 23 communities, many of which are economically disadvantaged. The grants will support the creation of plans that integrate site cleanup and reuse and address community needs such as housing, health facilities, recreation, and job creation.

Brownfields Pilot Communities

In 2009, EPA, HUD, and DOT selected five pilot communities—Boston; Indianapolis; Iowa City, Iowa; Denver; and National City, California—that are dealing with economic distress, multiple brownfield sites, and a lack of affordable housing, but that have public transit around which to center revitalization efforts. The three agencies are providing technical assistance to help these communities clean up and reuse contaminated and vacant properties and minimize displacement by supporting affordable housing around transit. The Partnership will use lessons learned from the pilots to make future federal investments more effective in economically disadvantaged places. The agencies considered environmental justice criteria when selecting the pilots.

Equitable Development Workshop

The three agencies, along with the Local Government Commission, convene an annual Equitable Development Workshop in conjunction with the New Partners for Smart Growth Conference. The workshop facilitates collaboration between smart growth and environmental justice stakeholders and build the capacity of community-based organizations to engage in planning and development in their neighborhoods and regions. Panel and training topics include leveraging federal funding, collaborating with state and local government, and financing equitable development. More information can be found at www.newpartners.org.

RESOURCES

HUD Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities:
http://www.hud.gov/sustainability

DOT Livability Page:
http://www.dot.gov/livability

EPA Office of Sustainable Communities:
http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/osc/index.htm

EPA Office of Environmental Justice:
http://www.epa.gov/compliance/environmentaljustice/index.html

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