

DRAFT

Summary: HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program

Federal Partners: Department of Housing & Urban Development (Lead Agency)
Department of Transportation
Environmental Protection Agency

Purpose: The Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program supports metropolitan and multi-jurisdictional planning efforts that integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments. The program seeks to empower jurisdictions to consider the interdependent challenges of economic competitiveness, social equity, energy use and climate change, public health and environmental impact. With an emphasis on developing *strategies* that direct long term development and reinvestment through a commitment to addressing issues of regional significance the HUD initiative builds on six Livability Principles as summarized below.

- More Transportation Choices
- Equitable, Affordable Housing
- Enhance Economic Competitiveness
- Support Existing Communities
- Coordinate Policies & Leverage Investments
- Value Communities & Neighborhoods

Southern Maine Partnership for Sustainable Development

Geography: In order to meet HUD eligibility criteria the Planning Areas of the Portland Areas Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS) and the Kittery Area Comprehensive Transportation System (KACTS) both of whom are federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's) form the "multi-jurisdictional" area proposed in the Southern Maine Partnership's successful application. Representing a population of 418,108 the project area stretches from Kittery to Brunswick and out to the Towns of Sanford and Standish.

Consortium Partners: A Formal Consortium Partnership consisting of 28 local, state and other organizations (others may join) was formed to implement the Program. Key organizations of the Partnership include the Greater Portland Council of Governments acting as the Lead Applicant, the Southern Maine Regional Planning Commission, the University of Southern Maine - Muskie School of Public Service and Cumberland County. The governance structure of the Partnership includes By Laws, a Board of Directors and Executive Committee and two Co-Chairs representing the PACTS and KACTS planning areas respectively.

Award Amount: \$1.6 million with a local match of close to \$1.6 million.

Project Schedule: 3 Years

Project Description:

The southern Maine region acting primarily through its local municipalities is faced with a future that is built on continuing with existing trends or making choices that will facilitate a more sustainable future. This challenge was captured in the 2006 Brookings Institution report *Charting Maine's Future*, that "...ineffective state and local planning and growth management structures leave Maine towns and regions susceptible to dynamics thatweaken town centers, exacerbate sprawl, and degrade rural landscapes."

Faced with trends that project lengthy commutes, evolving demographics including the nations oldest population, an aging and expensive infrastructure, a dependence on foreign oil, narrow housing choices, and the lack of a stable economic base, the Southern Maine Partnership initiative seeks to develop through an aggressive grass roots effort, strategy based choices that integrate transportation, land use and economic development.

The "Trend vs. Choice" central theme of the project will be informed by a comprehensive, fully inclusive public engagement process that will highlight long term impacts of current development patterns in an effort to identify viable alternative choices.

Acknowledging Maine's home rule tradition the "Trend vs. Choice" process will seek to establish a common foundation around which municipalities and residents will reach consensus on realistic policy strategies that incorporate the six Livability Principles.

Establishing a solid base of political support will be essential to implementation of the plan. As envisioned, the core implementation strategy will be a formal compact structure that establishes a process for achieving regional sustainability while preserving elements of home rule decision making.