

## Capital Region Sustainable Communities Initiative Activities

In February 2011, the Capital Region Partnership for Sustainable Communities received a \$2 million, three-year Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant (SCRPG) from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Guided by the SCRPG Livability Principles, the Partnership will use SCRPG funds to carry out the following activities.

**Activity A: Develop a broad partnership to advance regional sustainable development.** The Capital Region Partnership for Sustainable Communities will work together to: identify shared long-term desired outcomes for regional sustainable development; provide guidance for CRSCI projects; provide leadership to advance desired outcomes through education and outreach; and promote implementation of the desired outcomes through their incorporation into local plans, policies and practices, and by using sustainability indicators to measure progress.

**Activity B: Prepare plans for enhanced transit and transit-oriented development.** Regional and local plans promote regional transit and transit-oriented development. To help accomplish these outcomes, the CRSCI will commission studies and conduct planning and design to promote enhanced transit including bus rapid transit and transit-oriented development along regional transportation corridors, better connect low-income neighborhoods and communities of color to employment and activity centers, and to foster redevelopment that addresses neighborhood needs. Desired outcomes of these activities include reduced vehicle-miles traveled and increased access for low-income neighborhoods to jobs and services.

**Activity C: Prepare plans for sustainable urban growth.** Regional and local plans promote urban growth in walkable, diverse neighborhoods, and preservation of important natural resources and farmland. To help accomplish these outcomes, the CRSCI will conduct multi-jurisdictional scenario planning in communities and surrounding rural areas throughout the region. Environmental inventories of long-range planning areas and GIS-based modeling will enable analyses of alternative growth scenarios. Charrettes will engage stakeholders and citizens to help design and select preferred scenarios. Desired outcomes include local comprehensive plan amendments that guide growth to infill and redevelopment areas, and to walkable, diverse neighborhoods, and that better protect natural resources and farmland.

**Activity C: Close equity, housing and air quality gaps in local and regional plans.** Local and regional plans for area development and preservation lack some components of a full regional plan for sustainable development, as described in the SCRPG NOFA. Specifically, the plans, taken together, lack a regional housing strategy, measures to ensure participation of traditionally under-represented groups, and strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality. The CRSCI will work to close these gaps by engaging members of the SCRPG consortium to inventory existing and related efforts, identify best practices and prepare recommendations for updates to local and regional plans.

**Activity E: Demonstrate sustainable development through catalytic projects.** Communities in the Capital Region have embarked on catalytic projects that demonstrate sustainable development practices. The CRSCI includes four catalytic projects of regional significance:

- *Sustainability Commerce Center* – Bring together leading established and emerging entrepreneurial firms in the field of sustainability (energy, construction, transportation, food systems, materials, consulting, etc.) to grow green businesses and job opportunities. The facility will feature building design, construction and operations using the most advanced measures of sustainability. Located in Madison’s primary redevelopment district, Capital East, adjacent to downtown along a proposed light rail corridor and a proposed high-speed commuter rail line, the Center will also provide space and programming for public education on sustainability.
- *100 Percent Stormwater Infiltration for High-Density TOD* - Create and implement stormwater guidelines and templates to control post development runoff volumes for a planned transit-oriented development in the City of Fitchburg to demonstrate practices that allow high density development to maintain the hydrology of receiving streams and maintain the groundwater of the region on which it depends for its municipal water supply. The strategies and practices developed will provide guidance for developments throughout the region.
- *Fresh Vegetable Packing House* - Prepare a business plan for the development of an aggregation, storage and distribution facility that connects growers in the Capitol Region with wholesale buyers in southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois for the purpose of preserving, strengthening and promoting local Wisconsin agriculture and improve healthy food access in underserved communities.
- *Local Fresh Food Market in South Madison Area* – Prepare a business plan, in conjunction with Growing Power, for the development of a neighborhood-scale market that connects growers in the Capitol Region with retail buyers in the low-income and largely minority Southdale Neighborhood, as well as other area neighborhoods currently not served by a nearby grocery store.

**Activity F: Establish sustainability indicators and track progress towards long-term desired outcomes.**

The CRSCI will partner with the University of Wisconsin, Department of Urban and Regional Planning (URPL) to work with CARPC and consortium partners to develop sustainability indicators, prepare and implement a data management plan, analyze data, and assess progress towards goals using performance metrics.