

The North Jersey Sustainable Communities Consortium: Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD)



Overview

In November 2011, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded the North Jersey Sustainable Communities Consortium a **\$5 million grant** (with an additional \$3 million in leverage funds from our project partners) to develop a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD) in the 13-county North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority region of New Jersey.

The plan will be both "place-based" and "issue-based" and will use sustainability, transit system connectivity and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) as the central framework for integrating plans, regulations, investments, and incentive programs at all levels of government to improve economic and environmental conditions, while promoting regional equity and resource efficiency.

The outcome of plan implementation will be a more sustainable future for the region that invests in existing communities where housing, jobs, educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities are made more easily accessible to most residents of the region without having to drive to them.

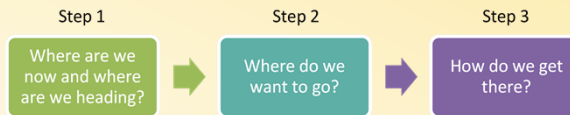


About the Consortium



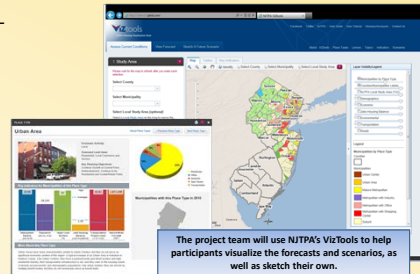
Plan Development

Plan development will be divided into three phases. Public outreach will play a key role in the development of the plan. Each phase will seek to answer specific questions through scenario planning exercises that gather input and explore priorities of residents throughout the 13-county region.



Scenario Planning

NJSCC will undergo a year-long scenario planning process to define the vision for the 13-county region through a consensus-based process. The process will engage local officials, multiple levels of jurisdiction, planning professionals, stakeholders and the general public.



Key Topics

Livability and Environment

- **Land Use and Urban Design** — Mixed Uses, Compact Forms, Code Barriers, Public Spaces, Place-Making
- **Housing** — Affordability, Diversity
- **Transportation** — Mobility and Accessibility to Opportunities
- **Natural Systems** — Green Infrastructure, Air Quality, Water Quality and Supply, Resource Lands, Agriculture & Aquaculture
- **Energy and Climate** — Greenhouse Gas, Climate Adaptation, Energy Use, Green Buildings

Economic Competitiveness and Workforce Development

- **Asset-Based Economic Development** — Physical Assets, Natural Resources, Civic Institutions,
- **Industry Sector Development** — Major Employers, Competitive Strengths, Emerging Industries, Clusters
- **Workforce Preparedness and Training** — Workforce, Knowledge and Skill, Work Ethic
- **Business Environment and Entrepreneurial Support** — Incentive and Funding Programs, Regulations

Society and Community

- **Health and Safety** — Food Access and Nutrition, Emergency Prevention, Safe Communities, Active Living and Recreation
- **Education** — Opportunities and Environment, School-Community Engagement, Ecological or Financial Literacy
- **Arts and Culture** — Heritage, Architecture, Arts and Culture, Performing Arts, Civic Support



Goals of the Process

As stated in the grant application, the goals of the RPSD process are to:

- Strengthen the region's economic base by growing jobs in key industry sectors and leveraging existing assets, including existing workforce, port/airport, etc.
- Align existing plans, programs, and regulations to support economic growth
- Improve transportation connections and choices to better link where people live with where they need to go
- Focus residential and employment growth in areas with existing infrastructure (including transit service) to reduce future costs at all levels of government.
- Engage a broad spectrum of the public, businesses, local government officials and other interested parties to develop locally defined long-term planning goals for the region



The North Jersey Sustainable Communities Consortium: Get Involved.



Join Us

Counties, municipal governments and other organizations in (or serving) the NJTPA region are invited to join the North Jersey Sustainable Communities Consortium.

Benefits of Participation

Counties and eligible cities that join the Consortium will receive a variety of benefits. Here are just a few:

- Capacity building grants to help cover costs of participation
- Local Demonstration Project funding for more specific planning work at the local level
- Direct Technical Assistance Programs
- Receive “bonus points” and/or “preferred consideration” when applying for some Federal grant programs sponsored by HUD, USDOT, USEPA and other agencies.
- Priority access to expertise and assistance provided by Federal agencies.

More information on joining the Consortium can be found at:

www.policy.rutgers.edu/NJSCC

Local Demonstration Projects

Local Demonstration Projects (LDP) will create “on-the-ground” success stories and will be an important component of creating a supportive implementation framework and informing plan development. LDPs will achieve measurable, demonstrable goals that make a difference in helping individual communities position themselves for a more sustainable future.

Potential LDPs include a variety of local project planning and other implementation activities to make transit corridors and communities “more livable.” Examples include rezoning for infill, workforce housing within targeted communities, creating and implementing community-based shuttle networks, projects that link future transit investments to local decisions about land use, housing and jobs.

The Selection process for projects will have several components, including workshops to describe the LDP program to local consultants, and to identify potential local partners. An RFP will be issued and project selection will ultimately be based on several criteria/factors, including issue, geography, level of commitment, etc.

Approximately 15 projects will be selected within the three grant years



Workshops will be held in Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 in advance of selection rounds.

Technical Assistance

NJSCC will establish a direct technical assistance program that includes **three key components:**

1. A “help desk” to connect residents, officials and businesses with expertise and resources to advance the RPSD
2. A web-based library of resources to assist with local planning activities
3. A speakers bureau of experts to make presentation at meetings and events on relevant topics

Education/Training

Education and Training events will be developed to promote innovation at the local level by disseminating **best practices**, highlighting **success stories** and encouraging **peer learning**.

- An Annual Consortium Membership Meeting
- Half-day “issue-oriented” workshops
- A variety of webinars and other web-based learning opportunities
- Presentations at existing conference venues

Local Capacity Grants

Funds are available to support participation in the planning and implementation process.

\$10,000 Year 1 start-up grant will be provided to all Consortium signatories.

- Provide plans and data when requested
- Participate actively in meetings
- Support outreach activities and serve as liaison to municipalities
- Support plan implementation

Optional capacity grants are also available (\$50,000-\$100,000).

- Convene and conduct outreach to municipalities
- Conduct detailed planning studies
- Other activities defined in consultation with project team



NGO Micro-Grants

An NGO “micro-grant” program will support the participation of community- and issue-based advocacy organizations in the RPSD planning and implementation process.

These grants will support a variety of activities, including public participation and outreach to local communities, RPSD development and data collection, detailed studies, and other activities defined by the project team.



NJSCC Project Team

The Bloustein School for Planning and Policy at Rutgers University (Rutgers-Bloustein) will serve as the administrative and fiscal agent for the grant. Rutgers-Bloustein will also act as the liaison between the Consortium and HUD and will oversee the day-to-day work of the project team and the implementation of the overall work plan.

Rutgers-Bloustein Staff

- Jon Carnegie, Project Director
- David Aimen, Project Manager
- Miriam Salerno, Senior Research Specialist



Project Team Partners

- NJTPA
- NJ TRANSIT
- PlanSmart NJ
- Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey
- Sustainable Jersey
- Regional Planning Association
- New Jersey Regional Coalition
- New Jersey Future
- Office of Planning Advocacy, New Jersey Department of State