



An Analysis of HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning and Community Challenge Grants

Executive Summary

The past few months have been an exciting time as large and small communities, representing all corners of the country, have worked on developing collaborative planning processes that will address the unique conditions in their region and which will improve the quality of life for the diverse people that live, work and play there.

The impetus for this has been competition for grants springing from the unprecedented partnership announced last year between the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency.

In October, HUD and DOT announced the winners of the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning (SCRPG), Community Challenge, and TIGER II planning awards.

Reconnecting America staff has been busy reviewing successful and unsuccessful applications for innovative ideas, common themes and unique concepts. We have also compiled a list of winners of all the awards with descriptions of the proposed activities.

Our primary focus was on collecting applications for the SCRPG grants since we have been involved in many regional efforts to implement equitable transit-oriented development. Prior to the announcement of grant recipients, we were able to obtain 47 SCRPG applications from across the country through web research and outreach to our contacts at various metropolitan planning organizations. Seventeen of these regions received awards. There was an overwhelming focus on transit corridors and equitable housing development in many of these applications, especially among applications from regions with an existing plan and looking to implement that plan or fill in gaps.

Our key findings:

- Approximately 132 regions around the United States received an award from HUD or DOT through the Sustainable Communities and/or TIGER programs.
- 40 of the 50 largest metropolitan statistical areas received an award. Phoenix, Baltimore, and San Antonio were the largest regions to receive no awards.
- Very few regions received more than one award. Many regions that did not receive a Regional Planning grant received either a Community Challenge or TIGER II grant.
- Nine common themes emerged among successful applicants to all award programs: equity, corridor planning, station area planning, comprehensive planning, connectivity, zoning/land use reform, healthy eating, and data sharing and modeling.
- Applications that contained more specific strategies and implementation efforts around these key themes were more successful than those that were more general.

Spreadsheets are available of the Regional Planning, Community Challenge, and TIGER II planning grants here. (insert link to PDF spreadsheets)

To view the official press releases and award descriptions from HUD & DOT, click on the following links:

- Maps showing HUD and DOT Sustainable Communities grant locations:
http://reconnectingamerica.org/public/download/2010_hud_dot_award_maps
- DOT TIGERII Planning Awards FY 2010:
http://reconnectingamerica.org/public/download/dot_tigerii_award_spreadsheet
- HUD Sustainable Communities Community Challenge Joint DOT TIGERII Awards FY 2010:
http://reconnectingamerica.org/public/download/hud_dot_challenge_award_spreadsheet
- HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Awards FY2010:
http://reconnectingamerica.org/public/download/hud_scrpg_award_spreadsheet
- Matrix of Regions Receiving More Than One Grant :
http://reconnectingamerica.org/public/download/matrix_regions_receiving_more_than_one_grant
- HUD SCRPG Award Press Release:
http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/press/press_releases_media_advisories/2010/HUDNo.10-233
- SCRPG Award Descriptions:
http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/program_offices/sust



[ainable_housing_communities/Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grants](#)

- HUD/DOT Challenge Award Press Release:

http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/press/press_releases_media_advisories/2010/HUDNo.10-242

- Challenge Award Descriptions:

http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/program_offices/sustainable_housing_communities/HUD-DOT_Community_Challenge_Grants

- TIGER II Planning Grant Descriptions:

<http://www.dot.gov/docs/tiger2planninggrantinfo.pdf>

Introduction

The past few months have been an exciting time as large and small communities, representing all corners of the country, have worked on developing collaborative planning processes that will address the unique conditions in their region and which will improve the quality of life for the diverse people that live, work and play there.

The impetus for this has been competition for grants springing from the unprecedented partnership announced last year between the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency.

In October, HUD and DOT announced the winners of the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning (SCRPG), Community Challenge, and TIGER II planning awards.

Reconnecting America staff has been busy reviewing successful and unsuccessful applications for innovative ideas, common themes and unique concepts. We have also compiled a list of winners of all the awards with descriptions of the proposed activities.

Our primary focus was on collecting applications for the SCRPG grants since we have been involved in many regional efforts to implement equitable transit-oriented development. Prior to the announcement of grant recipients we were able to obtain 47 SCRPG applications from across the country through web research and outreach to our contacts at various metropolitan planning organizations. Seventeen (17) of these regions received awards. There was an overwhelming focus on transit corridors and equitable housing development in many of these

applications, especially among applications from regions with an existing plan and looking to implement that plan or fill gaps. The following paragraphs summarize our key findings of this analysis, starting with our overall findings, followed by a review of overlapping award regions, and finally a look at common themes and concepts among successful applicants.

Overall Findings

HUD and DOT issued approximately 107 grants for planning-related activities through both Sustainable Communities and TIGER II grants. Forty-five regions and 61 individual communities received planning grants. DOT also issued another 42 TIGER II grants for capital projects with this round of funding, in addition to its previous award of 51 TIGER I grants back in February 2010. Approximately 199 awards have been given to 132 regions through each of these programs. Public transportation and transit-oriented development are key concepts in an estimated 72 of the 199 awards (36.1%). This is broken down as follows:

- 26 Regional Planning grants (11 Category 1, 15 Category 2)
- 17 Community Challenge grants
- 10 Joint HUD/DOT Challenge/TIGER II grants
- 15 TIGER II grants (11 planning, 4 capital)
- 4 TIGER I grants

Regional Analysis

Approximately 59 of the 100 largest metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) received some type of award. Of the 50 largest MSAs, 40 received an award. The largest regions to receive no awards were Phoenix, Baltimore, and San Antonio. The regions receiving the most awards were the New York City tri-state region (7), Dallas/Fort Worth (5), Detroit (5), and the San Francisco Bay Area (5). In terms of money, the New York City tri-state (\$121.5 million), Chicago (\$109.4 million), and San Francisco Bay Area (\$89.3 million) regions received the most funding from all Sustainable Communities and TIGER grant programs.

The following table displays the top 10 regions receiving the largest sums of money. Note that regions awarded capital grants under TIGER I and/or TIGER II received more money than regions awarded planning grants, so some regions that did not receive any planning grants still rank highly on this list.

Region	Total Amount	# Awards
New York Tri-State	\$121.5 million	7
Chicago	\$109.4 million	4
San Francisco	\$89.3 million	5
Dallas/Fort Worth	\$79.9 million	5
Detroit	\$72.1 million	5
Seattle	\$69.0 million	3

Tucson	\$63.0 million	1
Washington, DC	\$62.6 million	3
Kansas City	\$54.3 million	3
Providence/New Bedford	\$53.7 million	4

Overlap in Awards

Regions and communities that are disappointed about the award process should note that very few regions received grants under all three or even two of these programs. Only five regions received both a Regional Planning and a Community Challenge grant from HUD. In no cases, however, was the grantee the same.

Region	Regional Grantee	Challenge Grantee
Boston	MAPC	City of Somerville
Chicago	CMAP	South Suburban Mayors & Managers Association
New York City Tri-State	Regional Plan Association	Jersey City Redevelopment Agency*
Salt Lake City	Salt Lake County	Salt Lake City Corporation

*Joint HUD/DOT Challenge/TIGER II Grant

Nine regions received both a Regional Planning grant from HUD and a TIGER II planning grant from DOT. In all cases, the grantee for the TIGER II and Regional Planning grants were different.

Region	Regional Grantee	TIGER II Planning Grantee
Asheville	Land-of-Sky Regional Council	City of Asheville
Chicago	CMAP	Village of Barrington
Detroit	SEMCOG	Oakland County
Greensboro	Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation	City of Lexington
Kansas City	Mid-America Regional Council (MARC)	City of Gladstone
Madison	Capital Area Regional Planning Commission	City of Madison
Minneapolis/St. Paul	Met Council	City of St. Paul
New York Tri-State	Regional Plan Association	NYC DOT Jersey City Redevelopment Agency*
St. Louis	East-West COG	City of University City*

*Joint HUD/DOT Challenge/TIGER II Grant

Oklahoma City was the only region to receive both a Community Challenge grant and a TIGER II planning grant.

Region	Challenge Grantee	TIGER II Grantee
Oklahoma City	City of Oklahoma City	Central Oklahoma Transportation & Parking Authority

Link to matrix: The following matrix displays the overlap between regions and the various grant programs, including capital award grants from both TIGER I and TIGER II

Common Themes & Interesting Concepts

From our review of the 47 SCRPG applications before the award announcement, several common themes and interesting concepts emerged. Once HUD and DOT released the official award descriptions, we reviewed these applications again to see which themes and concepts were predominant in successful regions. We also looked at the descriptions for winning Community Challenge and TIGER II planning grants to get a broad consensus of the types of activities that HUD and DOT were interested in funding. Overall, we identified nine themes: equity/affordable housing, corridor planning, station area planning, comprehensive planning, connectivity, economic development, zoning/land use reform, healthy eating, and data sharing & modeling.

- **Equity:** Regions and communities that emphasized equity and affordable housing in their proposals were highly successful in winning grants. The Puget Sound region in Washington, for example, proposed creating a Regional Equity Network among various agencies, community organizations, and foundations to promote equitable housing development. Regions around Cleveland, Ohio;

Boston, Mass.; Charlottesville, Va.; Detroit, Mich.; Madison, Wisc.; and Salt Lake City, Utah, each proposed creating regional housing plans as part of SCRPG grant activities. At the county level, Augusta-Richmond County in Georgia won a joint Community Challenge/TIGER II grant to prepare a redevelopment plan for a 4.5-mile corridor through the heart of downtown Augusta, which will include an affordable housing component. The City of Cincinnati received a Community Challenge grant to study the feasibility of an inclusionary zoning ordinance. Several cities, including Somerville, Mass., and Dallas, Texas, proposed creating affordable housing land banks as part of their grants.

- **Corridor Planning:** A predominant focus of both Regional and Community Challenge grants was corridor-level activities. The Regional award winners heavily focused on multiple corridors while the Challenge award winners were mostly related to a single corridor. Among grant recipients from regions with an existing plan (Category 2 grants), the emphasis was on transit corridors. In Seattle, the regional consortium will prepare a strategy for up to 25 transit corridors and 100 new transit stations planned for the year 2025. Boston will create corridor plans on its existing transit corridors and identify priority development, preservation, and infrastructure investment areas. The Twin Cities consortium in Minnesota will focus on transit corridor planning activities, and has developed a seven-phase continuum for planning and development strategies, with each corridor falling somewhere along this continuum. The Hartford, Conn., region will focus on a “Knowledge Corridor with its SCRPG grant” while Denver, Colo., will prioritize activities along the West Corridor with its joint Community Challenge/TIGER II grant.
- **Station Area Planning:** Several regions have proposed conducting site-specific TOD planning activities in their successful Regional Planning grants, including Salt Lake City and the Twin Cities, both of

which would prepare demonstration projects that could be replicable throughout their respective regions. Many communities also received Community Challenge or TIGER II grants for new or existing station areas, including the cities of Dallas and Santa Monica, Calif. Others would focus on downtown or neighborhood revitalization efforts.

- **Comprehensive Planning:** The nature of the Sustainable Communities grants means that most regions and communities are focused on creating comprehensive plans at the regional or local level. Many award recipients from regions without an existing regional comprehensive plan (Category 1 grants) are working together for the first time to create a regional plan, and just getting all the right people to the table and attempting to work together will be the main focus of these efforts. In other more advanced regions, implementation of existing regional plans is the primary goal, or they plan on filling in gaps such as affordable housing, transportation, or sustainability.

- **Connectivity:** Concepts such as complete streets, last-mile connections, and off-street trails were an emphasis of several Challenge and TIGER II grants. Burlington, Vt., St. Paul, Minn., and Dahlonega, Ga., will all use Community Challenge grants to prepare complete streets guidelines, while Pittsburgh, Penn., and the Pueblo of Laguna, N.M., will use TIGER II grants to build new trail systems.

- **Economic Development:** Workforce development was a key goal of the Des Moines, Iowa, region's Regional Planning grant, while international economic development was a priority for the South Florida region. The Rockford, Ill., and Helena, Ark., regions will both focus on economic revitalization in their Regional Planning grant activities.

- **Zoning/Land Use Reform:** About a dozen communities received Community Challenge grants to reform their land-use regulations and zoning codes to foster more compact, mixed-use development. Somerville, Mass.; Indianapolis, Ind.; and Providence, R.I., all seek to

rewrite their entire zoning codes. Cincinnati, Ohio; Flint, Mich.; and New Haven, Conn., will create mixed-use or TOD overlay zones. Glens Falls, N.Y., will conduct a feasibility study for reforming its current zoning codes.

- **Healthy Eating:** Three places received grants to improve food access and healthy eating. The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission seeks to integrate the local food system in the Columbus area communities, while the Pittsfield, Mass., region will emphasize local food production in its regional comprehensive plan.
- **Data Sharing & Modeling:** Several regions aim to use Regional Planning grant funding to promote data sharing between communities and create regional data depositories. Platteville, Wisc., and Austin, Texas, both emphasized this concept in SCRPG applications. The Houston and Greensboro, N.C., regions would use funds to engage in scenario planning activities as part of community outreach.

Conclusion

The first round of Sustainable Communities and TIGER awards went to a wide variety of communities and regions to fund a diverse array of planning activities. There was no “one-size-fits-all” approach to preparing a successful application, as communities and regions large and small received awards. While common themes such as equity and corridor planning predominated, there were many unique concepts as well that only one or two regions proposed.

Applications that contained more specific strategies and implementation efforts around these key themes were more successful than those that were more general. Many unsuccessful applicants proposed activities that were beyond their scope or they were too vague about how they would achieve their goals.



Overall, the process that went into creating many of these applications has resulted in new relationships within regions that will be tremendously beneficial as regions continue to plan for the future sustainability and livability of their inhabitants. Reconnecting America looks forward to continuing to support the planning and investment activities that build economic resilience, transportation choices, and housing opportunities for Americans across the country, in regions large and small through our research, technical assistance, and on-the-ground experience.