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HUD Announces Winners of \$100M in Sustainability Grants

by [Tanya Snyder](#) on October 14, 2010

Planners in 45 regions in 27 states have a little more to work with today in their efforts to shape sustainable growth.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced the winners of nearly \$100 million in grants from its new [Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program](#), intended to connect “housing with good jobs, quality schools and transportation.” The grants are meant to either help regions develop sustainability plans or to assist with the implementation of plans where they exist.

Last month, Streetsblog’s [Angie Schmitt](#) [wrote about](#) the promise these grants offer to urban areas like Cleveland that have been hollowed out by highway-oriented growth in far-flung suburbs. They represent an opportunity for regions to turn sprawling patterns of growth into targeted development that fosters walkability and viable transit options.

“Regions that embrace sustainable communities will have a built-in competitive edge in attracting jobs and private investment,” said HUD Secretary [Shaun Donovan](#) in a statement accompanying the announcement. “Planning our communities smarter means parents will spend less time driving and more time with their children; more families will live in safe, stable communities near good schools and jobs; and more businesses will have access to the capital and talent they need to grow and prosper.”



Minneapolis-St. Paul got \$5 million to support development along transit corridors. [Finance & Commerce](#)

The grants announced today are the same kind that would be funded by the [Livable Communities Act](#), introduced last year by Sen. Chris Dodd (D-CT). That bill would offer grants to foster coordinated land use and transportation planning across the country. It is currently hanging in limbo, with Dodd about to leave the Senate. No one knows how long Congress will re-convene for its lame duck session after the elections, or what they will take up.

But bill or no bill, the HUD grants are filling a gap.

A sample of the regions that won grants today:

* The **Minneapolis-St. Paul** Metropolitan Council received \$5 million to support planning “along the growing network of transit corridors.” According to Met Council chair Peter Bell, “The funds are a means to focus our efforts on shaping development along transit corridors in ways that make transit more successful, promote housing and transportation affordability and availability, and make communities more vital.”

* **Cleveland** received \$4.25 million to rein in the devastating sprawl [Angie described](#) last month. Metro Cleveland’s regional planning agency hasn’t actually been doing much regional planning — and the result has been a depressed, abandoned urban core surrounded by rapid growth on the suburban fringe. This grant requires a more proactive approach to planning for future development “with an eye toward sustainability.”

* The **Chicago** region also got \$4.25 million for its [GO TO 2040](#) plan. HUD didn’t want to dictate livability prescriptions to regions, and in Chicago, at least, the regional agency is leaving a lot of the details up to the locality. But the idea is to “support more compact development and redevelopment” by improving transit and options for walking and bicycling. They’re also keeping an eye on protecting green space and local historic character.

The winners weren’t all major metropolitan regions. From Anniston, Alabama to Urbandale, Iowa, small towns and rural areas got a boost too. You can see the full list of winners [here](#). [PDF](#)