

Attachment 1: Abstract

The Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program comes at a pivotal moment for the Chicago region. In October of this year, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), will adopt the GO TO 2040 long-range regional comprehensive plan. This plan links transportation, land use, housing, economic growth, the natural environment, and human and community development, with the overarching goals of improving livability and bringing about sustainable prosperity. GO TO 2040 is both comprehensive and specific; while based on a broad examination of the challenges and opportunities which face our region, it also drills down to make targeted and implementable recommendations in 12 key areas. Having been developed through an inclusive scenario-based process that relied on broad stakeholder involvement, the plan now enjoys support that is widespread and deep. **The purpose of the Chicago region's application is to advance the implementation of the GO TO 2040 comprehensive regional plan.**

Program description

This application proposes creating a new program to instill GO TO 2040's ideas at the local level, where they must ultimately be implemented. Called the GO TO 2040 Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program, this program creates new resources for technical assistance and coordinates with existing technical assistance activities. It will result in a series of innovative, replicable projects in the Chicago region that support livability principles, implement GO TO 2040, and build capacity in local communities. LTA's focus on the community level is deliberate – in this region, land use regulation is a local responsibility, and the community level is where livability principles and place-based solutions must be applied.

Focusing on the intersection between housing, land use, and transportation – three inextricably linked areas – local projects will include the following elements:

- Studies that address housing needs and create locally-appropriate solutions by assessing existing and projected housing demand, building from the innovative work of the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and Chicago Metropolis 2020 in their *Homes for a Changing Region* program.
- Activities that advance the implementation of previously-adopted Transit Oriented Development plans by addressing local ordinances and other regulations, building on previous studies funded through the Regional Transportation Authority and using data created by the Center for Neighborhood Technology.
- Activities that advance the implementation of previously-adopted community plans in disadvantaged communities, such as the *New Communities Program* of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation and the MacArthur Foundation, or building on the *Plan for Transformation* of the Chicago Housing Authority.
- Preparation or updates of comprehensive or small-area plans, or updates to ordinances, codes, or other development regulations, focusing on building capacity for planning at communities.
- Assistance to interjurisdictional housing groups that seek to plan for housing across communities within a subarea of the region to build capacity at these groups, leveraging initiatives of the Metropolitan Planning Council and by the Chicago Community Trust.

The LTA program will prioritize projects that are truly comprehensive, including at a minimum the elements of housing, land use, and transportation, but also addressing other issues. Projects including

components related to energy conservation, environmental protection and green infrastructure, supportive housing, food access and local food, arts and culture, workforce development, and public health – and that include relevant governmental agencies and nongovernmental groups that work on these issues – will also be prioritized. To be truly comprehensive, a local project supported through LTA should address and integrate as many of these issues as possible.

If fully funded, the LTA program will focus technical assistance resources on 10 to 20 local projects each year, using transparent criteria and a broad input process to determine how and where to target these resources. Individual communities, community-based organizations, and interjurisdictional groups of local governments will all be eligible project sponsors. Technical assistance to complete the projects will not be limited to the resources requested through this application, as it will be augmented by extensive resources from other members of the Chicago region's consortium of applicants.

Consortium description

The success of any program of this type hinges on its ability to leverage existing resources and to build from, rather than duplicate, the work of other agencies. The Chicago region has assembled a broad and diverse consortium of applicants, including all of the groups mentioned above plus many others. CMAP will serve as the lead applicant and will coordinate the activities of the consortium, which includes local governments, regional and state agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and philanthropic groups. The consortium includes members with long experience in planning, such as local governments, civic organizations, regional and state agencies, and housing authorities; it also includes many non-traditional partners, including those specializing in arts and culture, public health, and workforce development. All of these groups will be involved in the management of the LTA program through a tiered organizational structure that allows broad participation, efficient decision making, and fair representation of all the region's communities.

Consistency with Sustainable Communities Initiative and HUD priorities

The *GO TO 2040* plan is consistent with the Livability Principles developed through the Sustainable Communities Initiative, and its implementation will advance these principles. In fact, the plan explicitly recommends that federal and state investments should be aligned with the Livability Principles, and identifies immediate actions that the region can take to begin to make this happen. Both the plan and the LTA program focus on the interplay between housing, land use, and transportation – a critical area to address to advance the Livability Principles.

The LTA program also responds directly to a number of HUD's expressed priorities. It identifies strategies to ensure effective outreach to disadvantaged groups, and includes consortium members who will be able to actively engage community-based organizations that represent disadvantaged groups. The program will include a component that analyzes the fair housing impacts of local projects, under the guidance of the region's fair housing group. It also will build capacity at local governments through the provision of technical assistance to communities that need it, will publicize these experiences across the region through the involvement of education and training providers, and will analyze the success of each local project to improve the program in future years.

In closing, the Regional Planning Grant Program comes at just the right time to jump-start the implementation of *GO TO 2040*, which is a top priority of our seven-county region. CMAP's extensive coalition building during the plan's three-year development has now ideally positioned our region to work as a cohesive unit in implementing the priorities of the Sustainable Communities Initiative and of metropolitan Chicago.