



**Middle Tennessee Mayors Caucus | Cumberland Region Tomorrow | Chambers of Commerce
HUD Sustainable Communities: Middle Tennessee Application Framework
Submitted August 2010**

Primary Goal

If grant funding is awarded through HUD's Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant program, regional partners will work together to adopt a **shared vision for the future of Middle Tennessee** and a **regional comprehensive plan for growth and sustainable development** to be shared by local communities, resource management agencies, and private-sector organizations across the ten-county Middle Tennessee area. The vision will create a new regional framework for growth and development to ensure the sustainability, livability, prosperity, diversity, and opportunity for all who live in Middle Tennessee; and the plan will establish a cohesive set of strategies to achieve the stated vision.

The effort is not intended to create an additional layer of planning or policy, but instead begins with the premise that the sharing of information and the integration of plans related to the individual elements of regional growth (e.g., transportation, housing, economic development, etc.) into a comprehensive strategy will benefit those interested in the long-term sustainability of Middle Tennessee.

The final products of this effort will be endorsed by each participating public and private-sector partner for use in **shaping** their own respective **plans, policies, programs, projects, and service** in a way that supports the overall vision for the region.

Major Tasks

The application for Middle Tennessee includes the following 6 major tasks, which build upon the collective work of key partner organizations over the last decade:

- 1. Communications Strategies & Coalition Building** – Building upon the regional consortium assembled to develop the application, the first task of the effort will be targeted at ensuring sufficient representation from interested stakeholders -- particularly those who will be responsible for implementing any of the recommendations that stem from the endeavor. Moreover, thoughtful outreach will be offered to ensure that the traditionally underserved populations are at the table from the onset to afford them the opportunity to shape solutions that will most directly affect their respective communities. Specific tasks include:
 - o Establish regional brand identity through the "Power of Ten" concept;
 - o Develop central website and other communication materials;
 - o Identify spokesperson to appear as the face of the effort, taking advantage of the region's celebrity resources;
 - o Expand regional public and stakeholder contact lists;
 - o Establish people-networking infrastructure with additional capacity to reach citizens through their local neighborhood opinion leaders;
 - o Establish steering committees to direct future efforts (Mayors Caucus, P2020, etc.).

2. **Regional Visioning** - Building upon the original CRT regional visioning project of 10 years ago and learning from other regions' visioning efforts (e.g., Envision Utah, Central Florida's How Shall We Grow, Envision Central Texas, etc.), the consortium will engage the community at-large in a major re-visioning effort. This time around, however, the task will be continued through local adoption efforts with significant progress towards its integration into the appropriate implementation vehicles across the region. The regional visioning task will include the following elements:
- o **Baseline Data Collection & Trend Analysis** – Compile latest data to describe baseline conditions for land use, housing, transportation, jobs, water utilities, energy consumption and conduct trend analysis to forecast a future outcome of our current business-as-usual growth model.
 - o **Community Values Research** – Conduct primary and secondary research and community conversations using local leaders, including local visioning organizations, to identify and document community and regional values that will guide the development of the vision.
 - o **Visioning Guidelines, Goals, and Objectives** – Translate the identified community values into a set of guiding principles, goals, and objectives for a sustainable future.
 - o **Scenario Planning** – Evaluate various growth scenarios against community values to test the outcomes associated with different decision-paths. Scenario planning will be used to help shape community preferences for growth and conclude only after a preferred scenario is selected, illustrated, and translated into useful material for use in establishing a shared vision.
 - o **Adoption of a Vision for 2040** – Following the transition of preferred growth scenario, guiding principles, and supporting community value into a coherent regional vision document that describes what our region should look like by the year 2040. The leadership organizations will facilitate the adoption of that vision at a local level among public and private-sector organizations.
3. **A Comprehensive Plan for Sustainable Development** - Following the adoption of a shared vision, regional partners will work together to identify a cohesive set of specific actions that should be taken by state and local governments, regional organizations, resource management agencies, the business community, non-profits, and individual citizens in order to assist in the implementation of that vision over a period of time.

The early stages in the development of the regional comprehensive plan are intended to focus on the integration of the great work already underway in the region and the incorporation of best practices from peer communities across the nation. One of the primary objectives of such a plan will be to help reduce the burden associated with inter-agency and multijurisdictional collaboration and information sharing. Careful consideration should be made to determine how to accomplish this task without creating another layer of policy and planning which could further disconnect those most directly involved in the implementation of community plans and programs. Ultimately, however, the plan represents more than an assemblage of strategies and action items; it represents a commitment by stakeholders to do their part in helping to create the shared vision.

Comprehensive Plan Elements:

- o **Regional Green Print and Open Space Preservation Plan** – Expand upon the Davidson County plan being developed by Mayor's Office and The Land Trust for Tennessee and the incorporation/ expansion of the regional Green Print document to include farmland, public recreation areas, and green space.

- o **Regional Economic Development Plan** – Align the efforts of Partnership 2020 with a broader regional vision for growth which includes an emphasis on a sustainable jobs+ housing balance, workforce development readiness, open space preservation, coordinated infrastructure investment, and consistency with urban/rural land use policies.
- o **Regional Transportation Plan** – Incorporate and refine the two MPO regional transportation plans to cover the entire 10-county area and ensure consistency with the regional vision.
- o **Regional Housing Plan** – Develop a regional housing plan to provide an inventory of stock, forecast of demands, analysis of deficiencies, analysis of fair housing opportunities, establishment of goals & objectives, and strategies to ensure adequate housing for range of incomes and household sizes.
- o **Regional Water Infrastructure Plan** – Develop a regional plan to coordinate water infrastructure planning including a regional inventory of water resources, analysis of future demand, analysis of existing delivery mechanisms/ utilities, analysis of deficiencies, and development of strategies to improve coordination to ensure continued access to safe water for years to come.
- o **Regional Arts, Culture, and Tourism Plan** – Develop and/or or update our inventory of existing regional assets and develop strategies for their protection, enhancement, promotion.

Each element of the comprehensive plan will have analysis that looks specifically at the following issues:

- o Fair and Affordable Housing;
- o Location of Social Services (e.g. childcare, schools, healthcare, workforce development, etc.)
- o Access to Healthy Food;
- o Poverty;
- o Active Living and Personal Health;
- o Energy Conservation; and
- o Climate Change.

4. Demonstration of Implementation Strategies – In order to provide for the long-term sustainability of the plan, task 4 will develop a sampling of potential training and technical resources that could serve as models for the implementation of the plan and accompanying strategies. The proposed tools and resources to be created build upon previous Quality Growth work across the region, along with related seminars provided in recent years by lead regional organizations:

- o **Reinvestment Readiness Toolbox** – Develop an easy-to-use chest of strategies and tools geared toward reinvesting in and recreating existing communities in a way that addresses social equity, healthy and active living, and neighborhood service needs. The toolbox will provide policy guidance, model codes and ordinances, design methodologies that support infill/redevelopment, rehabilitate/ re-use brownfield sites, adjoining arterials and inner-ring neighborhoods, and use of energy efficient building strategies that provide more energy efficient development.
- o **Transit Oriented Development Toolbox** - Develop a set of customizable TOD strategies and tools including the creation of site-specific TOD recommendations for select locations and the development of tools to help improve the transit-friendliness of other locations through traditional neighborhood and compact cluster development designs. The toolbox also will incorporate strategies to achieve affordable housing options, which are too often neglected TOD

redevelopment projects, and ways to connect the opportunity that comes with new development to existing neighborhoods.

- o **Physical Activity, Health, and Transportation Research** – Improve our understanding of the relationship between health and transportation through a major survey of socio-economic characteristics, home and work locations, personal travel behaviors, levels of physical activity, and general health traits of households throughout the entire region. Such data are rarely, if ever, collected together to allow for the meaningful analysis of the interrelated issues that are being addressed through the Sustainable Communities work program. The Nashville Area MPO, in a partnership with Vanderbilt University and GeoStats, has recently conducted a pilot-test of methodologies and has a significant share of the required funding in place.
 - o **Health Impact Assessment Toolbox** – Develop tools and templates for local governments and regional planning organizations to assess the health impacts of various plans and programs including proposals for changes in the built environment such as private land development and public infrastructure investments. This effort will be coordinated with Nashville’s current Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) grant.
 - o **Local Comprehensive Planning Support** – Provide technical assistance and funding to local communities in need of resources to start or finish a comprehensive plan or to amend an existing plan to conform to the adopted regional vision. Technical assistance also will be provided to update zoning codes and land development regulations, where appropriate.
 - o **Knowledge Sharing and Best Practice Training** – Develop a central clearinghouse for distributing best-practice information and related training programs to help with a broad array of objectives including decision-making processes for public facility site-selection (e.g., schools, libraries, etc.), design and implementation of complete streets policies and programs, promotion of context sensitive solutions, provisions for fair housing, programs for helping the homeless, and other important issues as they arise.
5. **Development of Long-Term Accountability Measures** - To ensure compliance with the regional vision and plan for sustainable development, the project team will develop a set of performance measures that allow the region to track progress towards its stated vision and to make comparisons and benchmark against competitor regions across the nation. This task will involve the identification of trackable indicators, performance measure targets, a peer group, and the assignment of data collection and reporting to the appropriate entities to carry-out the tracking over time. Specific products to come from this task include:
- o **Research & Data Collection Plans for Established Indicators** – Determine the specific set of performance measures to track over time, the most appropriate peers to benchmark against, and the most suitable agencies to be responsible for collecting, compiling, and reporting the indicators.
 - o **Annual State-of-the-Region Report Card** – Using outside assistance, develop a standardized way of reporting indicators to the community in an interesting and meaningful way – using the local media as a resource.
 - o **Regional Awards and Certification** – Develop an ongoing program to recognize and reward local communities, businesses, and regional partners that are promoting the vision through individual action.

6. **Establishment of Sustainable Partnerships and Ongoing Education** - Ultimately, for the effort to be successful, it must be sustained over the long-haul through the establishment and/or strengthening of regional partnerships and commitments. This task will devise specific strategies to sustain the effort beyond the initial scope of work. The task could include the **evaluation of our current regional governance structure**, the **development of formal compacts** among agencies or jurisdictions to share resources and to commit fulfilling their respective roles in implementing the vision/ plan. Additionally, the task could include the **development of a Regional Sustainable Development Academy** that would be responsible for creating a forum for an ongoing regional dialogue and funding for the **reinforcement of the vision/ plan** for the benefit of current and future leaders.

Application Team Organization

The application, submitted on August 23, 2010, represents various groups and interest from across Middle Tennessee and was developed using the following organizational structure:

1. **Primary Applicant** – The **Nashville Area MPO** served as the primary applicant, holding ultimate responsibility for final editing and submission of a qualified application to HUD by the announced due date (August 23).
2. **Lead Organizations** – The application was developed under the leadership of three existing regional partnerships in the area including the **Middle Tennessee Mayors Caucus**, **Cumberland Region Tomorrow**, and area **Chambers of Commerce** representing the public sector, non-profit quality growth advocacy, and local and regional economic development initiatives, respectively.
3. **Regional Consortium** – The application was molded through a collaboration of individuals and organizations from across Middle Tennessee that play a role in shaping plans, policies, programs, or projects related to housing, transportation, economic development, health, education, equity issues, water and other utility infrastructure, the environment, urban design, and rural preservation.

For More Information

Michael Skipper, AICP, Nashville Area MPO, Mayors Caucus – skipper@nashvillempo.org | 615-862-7186

Bridget Jones, PhD, CRT – bridget@cumberlandregiontomorrow.org | 615-986-2699