

DRAFT AGENDA ITEM

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On June 16 2009, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a new interagency partnership to regionally coordinate federal housing, environmental protection, and transportation planning and investment. Federal funding to support this effort is being provided under HUD's Sustainable Communities Planning Grants Program.

A key component of the Sustainable Communities Initiative is the development of a "Regional Plan for Sustainable Development" for regions that lack a cohesive, integrated regional "vision" across issue areas and jurisdictional boundaries. The U.S. HUD's Sustainable Communities Initiative is the region's best opportunity to access up to \$5 million to articulate and develop consensus around a "Regional Vision" and "Regional Plan for Sustainable Development." It is expected that this Plan will: 1) serve as the framework for future federal investment; 2) support the efforts of individual counties, municipalities and other regional partners whose plans and projects further the implementation of the regional Vision and Plan; and 3) position the Southeast Florida Region to capture federal funds for critical infrastructure projects designed to improve the region's sustainability.

The South Florida Regional Planning Council and Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council are coordinating the development of a comprehensive joint application for Sustainable Communities Initiative funding on behalf of the Southeast Florida Regional Partnership, a seven-county partnership extending from Monroe through Indian River County. The Partnership represents a broad-based group of stakeholders, including but not limited to, water resource, housing, human services, environmental and transportation agencies and organizations; community-based organizations; health care organizations and funders; local governments; non-profits; academia and research institutions; and private sector organizations.

The HUD Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), the federal guidance document for the Grant, was released on June 24th. The grant application is due on August 23rd. The Councils have requested from its partners letters and resolutions of support and the execution of a Memorandum of Understanding to memorialize the regional partnership. A list of the current membership and supporters of the Southeast Florida Regional Partnership is included herewith.

In the NOFA, HUD stipulated the creation of a "consortium" which includes, at a minimum the principal cities of the Metropolitan and Micropolitan Statistical Areas in the region; metropolitan planning organizations; regional planning councils; non-profit and faith-based organizations; and educational institutions. HUD considers the interdependence of the participating partners an asset in the grant application process.

The City of Key West, by virtue of being the Principal City for the Key West Micropolitan Statistical Area is also requested to sign the Southeast Florida Regional Partnership Consortium Agreement letter which is required by HUD as part of the application.

This non-binding agreement tracks the language in the MOU and is neither a fiscal nor funds obligation document. Nothing in the document obligates the City to expend appropriations, obligate funds or enter into any contract or other agreement, or restricts the City from participating in similar activities or arrangements with other entities or agencies. Although HUD is requesting that the consortium partners agree to enter into a formal consortium agreement with 120 days of the grant being awarded, the City is not obligated to do so.

Link to HUD NOFA: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/grants/nofa10/scrpg.cfm>

Staff Recommendation:

Staff is supportive of the opportunity to coordinate efforts in a way that may help to improve the livability of the City of Key West and the region as a whole. The wellness and prosperity of any individual City certainly depends upon regional factors including the environment, transportation systems, industrial growth, energy and resource availability, and social and economic stability. Therefore, staff recommends that the Commission approve the attached Memorandum of Understanding, Partnership Consortium Agreement Letter, and letter and resolution of support for the regional application.