



NEWS RELEASE

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Adolfo Carrion, NY-CT Mayors, County Execs, Planning Orgs Launch Unprecedented Bi-State Sustainability Collaboration

\$3.5 Million Grant to Fund New Initiative

New York, NY) – U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Regional Administrator Adolfo Carrion today formally presided over the kickoff event for the *New York-Connecticut Sustainable Communities* initiative, an unprecedented bi-state collaboration that is the recipient of a \$3.5 million HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative Grant. He was joined by representatives from five New York and four Connecticut cities, the Nassau County and Suffolk County Executives, the New York City Planning Commissioner, and the heads of six regional planning organizations, who collectively comprise the consortium.

By developing livable communities and growth centers around the region's transit network, the *New York-Connecticut Sustainable Communities* initiative seeks to expand economic opportunity by creating and connecting residents to jobs; fostering new affordable, energy-efficient housing; providing more transportation choices; strengthening existing communities; and making the region more globally competitive. The grant will be administered by Regional Plan Association, a non-profit regional planning organization. For more information on the initiative, log on to www.sustainableNYCT.org.

Joining HUD Regional Administrator Adolfo Carrión at the kick-off event were: Nassau County Executive Ed Mangano; NYC City Planning Commissioner Amanda Burden; NYS DOT Commissioner Joan McDonald; Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch; White Plains Mayor Thomas Roach; New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson; Norwalk Mayor Richard Moccia; representatives from Suffolk County, New Haven, Stamford, Yonkers and Mount Vernon; and principal representatives from major planning organizations.

Activities that will be undertaken include large-scale transit-oriented development and neighborhood sustainability projects at key nodes in the MTA Metro-North Railroad and MTA Long Island Rail Road commuter rail systems, strategies to advance climate resilience, open space protection and access to affordable housing, and enhancements to existing regional sustainability plans. A description of individual projects is attached.

Consortium members include the cities of New York, New Haven, Bridgeport, Norwalk, Stamford, Yonkers, White Plains, New Rochelle, and Mount Vernon; Nassau and Suffolk counties; the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), South Western Regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (SWRMPO), Greater Bridgeport/Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (GBVMPO), South Central Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG); and the Long Island Regional Planning Council (LIRPC) and Regional Plan Association (RPA).

An Advisory Board will initially consist of eleven state agencies and non-profit organizations, including the Connecticut Housing Finance Agency; Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development; New York State Department of State; New York State Homes & Community Renewal; the Empire State Development Corporation; Local Initiatives Support Corporation; Urban Land Institute; International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives; WE ACT for Environmental Justice; the One Region Funders Group; and the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority.

The goal of the Consortium is to reposition the New York-Connecticut region to fully harness its innovation capabilities in a competitive global environment, build on its strong foundation of energy efficiency, and become as equitable as it is efficient. Its primary focus is to leverage the most extensive and robust transit system in the nation by developing livable communities with mixed-income housing and employment at key nodes in the MTA Metro-North Railroad and MTA Long Island Rail Road network.

The \$3.5 million grant is part of HUD's new *Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program* to support more livable and sustainable communities across the country. The grants, totaling \$100 million, will support State, local, and tribal governments, as well as metropolitan planning organizations, in the development and execution of regional plans intended to build economic competitiveness by connecting housing with good jobs, quality schools and transportation. The grants are part of the Obama Administration's *Partnership for Sustainable Communities*, which brings EPA, HUD, USDA and USDOT together to ensure the agencies' policies, programs, and funding consider affordable housing, transportation and environmental protection together.

- QUOTES FOLLOW -

Quotes from NY-CT Sustainable Communities Consortium Launch

“I look forward to working with the *New York-Connecticut Sustainable Communities* initiative to advance smart growth in the New York Metro-area”, said HUD Regional Administrator Adolfo Carrión. “The President’s vision of a bottom-up model for federal investment, which began when I first undertook a listening tour with the White House Office of Urban Affairs, is now finally going to be realized. The President, the HUD Secretary and our agency, as well as our federal elected representatives will have a locally-created regional blueprint for investing federal resources that will advance economic competitiveness, environmental responsibility and quality communities. Congratulations to the Consortium...I look forward to seeing the benefits of their hard work in planning the region’s future.”

New York State Department of Transportation Commissioner Joan McDonald, Co-Chair of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, said, “With Governor Andrew Cuomo’s support, this unique collaboration will allow us to work across state lines to promote sustainable development throughout the region. Working together, we have the opportunity to help families gain better access to affordable housing and expand their transportation options while protecting the environment and reducing our energy dependence.”

“To remain globally competitive and broaden prosperity, we need to maintain and build around the region’s transit network, our unique competitive advantage,” said Robert Yaro, President of Regional Plan Association. “From Babylon to Brooklyn to Bridgeport, the goal of this partnership is to leverage the billions in state, local and federal transit system investments by developing accessible jobs and mixed-income housing in the cities, village centers and communities the network serves.”

New York City Planning Commissioner Amanda Burden said, “We know that our city shares with the region not only a transportation system, a labor force, and an economy, but also common opportunities and challenges for the future. To remain competitive in an international economy, we must work together and direct growth in areas accessible to our expansive transit and rail network. I am proud to stand with representatives from throughout the region committing to this goal. This important effort will enable New Yorkers to benefit in multiple ways from the key commuter rail lines that run through their communities. Our goal is to foster complete neighborhoods where residents have improved access to transportation options, services, and employment opportunities, advancing Mayor Bloomberg’s pioneering PlaNYC agenda. The Sustainable Communities Consortium is a new paradigm for working together to accomplish great things for the people of this region.”

“This collaborative effort will help our region enhance affordable housing efforts, reduce congestion, improve the environment and expand economic opportunities so that residents can be put back to work,” said Nassau County Executive Edward P. Mangano. “On Long Island, undeveloped land around railroad stations and existing downtowns provide an opportunity for a new model of suburban growth that both protects existing neighborhoods and open space while generating job opportunities.”

“In Suffolk County, we are faced with the delicate balance of preserving our beautiful environment, while at the same time encouraging economic growth in areas suitable for re-development. Our focus here is the revitalization of our downtown hubs that are centered around public mass transportation lines,” said Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy. “But this type of sustainable re-development does not occur in a vacuum nor does it stop at any one county line, and it is encouraging to have so many partners working towards the same direction of a good regional transit network that will support our economic development.”

"Through an integrated approach to transportation, development and housing challenges, we can ensure that economic growth goes hand-in-hand with a healthier environment and higher quality of life," said Hon. Noam Bramson, Mayor of the City of New Rochelle. "Our region is ideally positioned to benefit from and contribute to a greener economy, and our linked efforts will strengthen all communities within the Consortium."

"The City of Mount Vernon is pleased to be strengthening its connection to the region by working alongside other Consortium communities on sustainability and transportation planning initiatives," said Hon. Clinton Young, Mayor of the City of Mount Vernon. "Our collaborative approach to this process will ensure that the progress we make as individual municipalities affects positive change beyond our respective borders."

"Yonkers looks forward to joining the sustainable community initiative to further regional revitalization," said Hon. Phil Amicone, Mayor of the City of Yonkers. "This effort mirrors our focus for the past ten years and the ongoing revitalization that is occurring throughout the City of Yonkers. With over \$2 billion dollars in completed new development and construction centered around our downtown transit system and our newest development of Ridge Hill which is building a new sustainable community that blends a mix of commercial, residential, entertainment and retail at the largest lifestyle center development in the country, Yonkers is a leader in this effort and looks forward to connecting within the region."

Hon. Bill Finch, Mayor of Bridgeport said, "Everything we can do to focus on development in our cities will help in lowering our taxes, decreasing our carbon footprint and reducing our dependency of foreign oil. President Obama's Sustainable Communities Grant Program coordinates the three federal agencies key to achieving these goals."

"We look forward to using the Sustainable Communities grant to leverage our resources and move closer to coordinated solutions to transportation problems," said Hon. Michael Pavia, Mayor of Stamford.

"Norwalk is a historic waterfront community with four rail stations linking to other coastal cities and New York," said Hon. Richard Moccia, Mayor of Norwalk. This Sustainable Communities Initiative grant allows Norwalk to continue planning for the future of the city and put policies in place to ensure continued public and private investment designed to attract new residents and jobs to our station areas without displacing those that have spent a lifetime making our community their own.

"New Haven continues to grow in part due to emerging business and institutional relationships along the New Haven Line," said Hon. John DeStefano Jr., Mayor of New Haven. "The consortium will focus the attention of the entire region on rail transportation as a driver of future economic growth."

- PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS FOLLOW -

NY-CT Sustainable Communities Project Descriptions

As recipients of a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning grant, the New York-Connecticut Sustainable Communities initiative will implement 16 interrelated projects that address the region's complex challenges at multiple scales—metropolitan, community, corridor and subregion—to expand economic opportunity; foster new affordable, energy-efficient housing; provide more transportation choices; strengthen existing communities; and make the region more globally competitive.

New York City's Department of City Planning (DCP) will lead three activities that will promote sustainable development within the five boroughs, improve connections to the metropolitan region and develop best practices that can be applied in other parts of the region:

- **Bronx Metro-North Corridor:** In close cooperation with local communities, strategic actions will be developed to fully capitalize on the Bronx Metro-North Corridor, connecting area residents to job centers in the region and maximizing access to existing and proposed commuter rail stations in the Bronx. The strategies will seek to spur investment in lively, sustainable, mixed-use neighborhoods, with new mixed-income housing, improved station visibility, pedestrian access and intermodal connections around select Bronx Metro-North Stations.
- **Sustainable East New York:** DCP will develop a comprehensive sustainable strategy for the Cypress Hills and East New York neighborhoods in Brooklyn in collaboration with the local community and civic partners. Capitalizing on the area's strong regional and local transit access, the initiative will identify opportunities for new mixed-income housing, improved access to transit and employment opportunities, streetscape improvements, and healthy food options to create a framework for a more vibrant, transit-oriented neighborhood.
- **Climate Resilience:** As our region grows around our transit network, climate change and sea level rise present real long-term challenges. DCP will build on NYC's pioneering work on climate resilience to identify strategies that can be used throughout the region to minimize damage and disruption from coastal flooding and storm surges.

On Long Island, the counties of Nassau and Suffolk and the Long Island Regional Planning Council will cooperate on three related projects to promote equitable affordable housing opportunities, develop transportation choices, improve the region's economic competitiveness, and enhance rural and suburban neighborhoods by safeguarding rural landscapes and fostering density in transit-served locations:

- **Nassau Infill Redevelopment Study:** The County will conduct a feasibility study of sustainable infill development and opportunities to promote transit-oriented development around up to three of the 19 LIRR stations in the Preliminary Regional Nassau Hub Study Area. Building off the County's new Master Plan, this study creates opportunities for serving the needs of current and future residents by: 1) rethinking land use patterns; 2) fostering transit oriented development 3) reducing auto dependence; 4) lowering carbon footprint and; 5) expanding population and tax base.
- **Suffolk County Transfer of Development Rights Study:** With a history of innovative open space protection programs, Suffolk County will develop recommendations for increasing the effectiveness of current transfer of development rights (TDR) programs in order to reduce redundancy and increase efficiency to better promote workforce housing, downtown revitalization, open space preservation, natural resource protection, transit-oriented and targeted economic development. Outcomes should be applicable to similar parts of the regions and growing exurban areas throughout the U.S.
- **Long Island Housing Strategy:** The Long Island Regional Planning Council, working with the counties of Nassau and Suffolk and other partners, will perform research, outreach and public education on the needs, benefits and impediments to increasing the availability of mixed income housing. The outcome will include a "Fair Share Housing Plan" to create mixed income housing options for all distributed throughout Long Island in transit supported locations.

In Connecticut, four large-scale transit-oriented development projects at key nodes along Metro North's New Haven line will be designed to create a coastal corridor linking centers of innovation and mixed-use, mixed-income development that can provide much of the area's job and housing needs for the next generation:

- **Stamford East Main Street Station:** The city will explore the feasibility of constructing a new commuter rail station on its east side, acting as eastern anchor to the Urban Transitway Corridor opposite the city's main station and catalyzing redevelopment of several hundred acres in this transit-rich corridor. The project is part of a comprehensive, citizen-driven action strategy to lay a foundation for long-term economic growth, energy efficiency, environmental quality and reduced economic disparity.

- South Norwalk TOD: Norwalk will take the first steps towards implementing a recently completed transit-oriented development master plan for the neighborhood of South Norwalk, attracting new investment while retaining quality of life for existing residents and businesses. Outcomes will include increased economic opportunity and mixed-income housing within the South Norwalk neighborhoods, and improved public transit/circulator, pedestrian and bike access to the South Norwalk train station
- Bridgeport Barnum Station: Bridgeport will explore the feasibility of constructing a new commuter rail station on its east side, acting as a central anchor to the city's east side redevelopment opportunities totaling over 700 acres. The project will provide a regionally-critical second Northeast Corridor rail access point for Connecticut's largest city and promote mixed-use, transit-oriented development and affordable housing around the distressed East End and East Side neighborhoods.
- New Haven Union Station: The project is intended to convert the existing historic Union Station into a new mixed use intermodal transit-oriented community. As part of a larger plan, the city will move conceptual plans to the implementation phase for structuring parking near the commuter and inter-city rail station to free up land that is currently being used as surface parking for new transit-oriented development.

In the lower Hudson Valley, three initiatives will strengthen connections between Westchester's largest cities and neighboring areas in Rockland, Connecticut and New York City:

- New Rochelle Smart Growth Initiative: New Rochelle will implement a comprehensive strategy to promote commercial and residential development in proximity to the New Rochelle Transit Center as outlined in the City's draft Sustainability Plan. The resulting Transit Oriented Development Zone will help residents lead healthy, safe, affordable, and productive lives and connect to the Connecticut projects along the New Haven line and Yonkers and Mt. Vernon in the Cross County Corridor.
- Cross County Parkway Corridor Action Plan: The cities of Yonkers, Mount Vernon and New Rochelle, in collaboration with the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, will define sustainable communities issues and planning needs in the east-west Cross County Parkway corridor which connects these lower Hudson Valley cities. A corridor profile will be developed for use in the development of NYMTC's next Regional Transportation Plan.
- I-287/Tappan Zee Bridge Corridor Action Plan: The City of White Plains, in collaboration with the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, and in consultation with other I-287 corridor communities, will define sustainable communities issues and planning needs in the Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Corridor, including connections to railway and other transit hubs, existing and planned. A corridor profile will be developed for use in the development of NYMTC's next Regional Transportation Plan.

Region-wide activities will synthesize the different activities of the grant and provide a planning framework to guide sustainability planning at both regional and local levels. All Sustainable Community partners will participate, with Regional Plan Association and the four participating metropolitan planning organizations—NYMTC, SWRPA, GBVMPO and SCRCOG—leading these activities.

- Sustainability Plan Enhancement: The region has several comprehensive plans, from regional transportation-land use plans to county master plans to award-winning municipal sustainability plans. The activity will identify ways to better align the plans with each other and with federal and state regulations, and link them with an execution plan to overcome geographic and functional silos that impede putting them into action.
- Knowledge Sharing: To sustain and grow the effort, the initiative will create a network of engaged government officials, civic and community leaders, business leaders, entrepreneurs, planners and private citizens that cuts across geographic, racial, ethnic, income and programmatic boundaries. Activities will be organized around two committees, a Northern Sector committee for communities in the Metro North service area and an Eastern Sector committee for the LIRR service area.
- Regional Housing Analysis: Regional Plan Association will analyze the impediments for residents of the region to take advantage of housing opportunities throughout the region without regard to race, ethnicity, family status and other characteristics. It will identify opportunities to link transportation, employment and housing resources into promote fair and affordable housing in high opportunity areas.