

Workplan for the East Central Florida Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant

May 2012

ABSTRACT

The East Central Florida Sustainable Communities Consortium will use the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant to develop and prepare for implementation of sustainable and inclusive development plans around the future station locations for East Central Florida’s SunRail commuter rail system, anticipated to begin service in 2014. With Phase I capital investment estimated at \$357 million in Federal, state, and local funding, SunRail will catalyze a “Corridor of Commerce” to transform communities and encourage sustainable growth, particularly in minority and/or low-income neighborhoods adjacent to several of the committed stations. The grant will support detailed planning for 6 out of the 12 Phase I SunRail stations, affordable housing assessments for all 12 stations, and regional collaboration to share best practices and to guide future planning in the region.

The Consortium’s work plan will build on the work done for *How Shall We Grow?*, a 50-year shared regional vision adopted in 2007 through a voluntary Regional Growth Compact signed by representatives of 7 counties and 86 cities. In 2010 the East Central Florida 2060 Plan was adopted as a guide for local decision making to implement the regional vision. This plan meets state statutory requirements as the region’s Strategic Regional Policy Plan and constitutes the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development.

SunRail represents an historic opportunity to transform the communities using the commuter rail service as a catalyst for sustainable and inclusive growth. A Florida Department of Transportation study examined economic benefits of potential transit-oriented development at all 17 Phase I and II SunRail stations. The study estimated that development around the SunRail stations would create nearly 95,000 permanent jobs within a half-mile radius each station, with a total payroll impact of \$2.5 billion. Planning level analyses have estimated that the development would result in additional \$18.4 billion in property value in these areas, though more specific estimates will be developed through the grant activities or related transit-oriented development planning by local governments with FDOT support. These benefits cannot be fully realized without the station area planning and land development regulation changes that are a primary



focus for the proposed grant activities.

The Consortium will apply the grant resources to further develop and sustain regional and community partnerships to:

- Attract high-quality, higher-paying jobs and provide residents the opportunity to access these jobs using public transit;
- Promote social equity and access to opportunity through investments in minority and/or low-income neighborhoods near or adjacent to several of the SunRail stations;
- Provide more transportation choices, improve public health and safety, and reduce energy use by providing local transit, bicycle, and pedestrian connections to SunRail stations;
- Plan for fair, affordable, and energy efficient housing around the SunRail stations;
- Encourage sustainable, compact urban development surrounding the SunRail stations; and
- Integrate and leverage investments among state, regional, and local transportation, economic development, housing, community development, and other agencies, as well as the private and nonprofit sectors.

This project is consistent with the goals of the Sustainable Communities Partnership as well as Florida's state agency plans for transportation, economic development, and environmental protection. The grant activities will produce the following outcomes:

- Adoption of station area plans for six SunRail stations, which will be consistent with the East Central Florida 2060 Plan and the six Livability Principles defined by the Sustainable Communities Partnership;
- Assessment of affordable, fair, and equitable housing needs near all 12 Phase I SunRail stations, as well as the development of strategies for encouraging the provision of needed affordable housing;
- Alignment with economic and workforce development strategies to ensure the overall station area plans improve access to jobs and incentivize further investment in these communities;
- Alignment with state, regional, and local transportation plans to provide appropriate local transit, bicycle, and pedestrian connections to the SunRail stations;
- Identification of changes needed to local comprehensive plans and land development regulations to encourage sustainable, compact urban development in places identified in the station area plans;
- Development of specific strategies and development policies that can serve as applicable models to help revitalize minority and/or low-income neighborhoods adjacent to other stations along the SunRail route; and
- Capacity building among Consortium members to share the lessons learned from this project and extend sustainable and inclusive development practices to other communities in the East Central Florida region.

WORK PLAN

BACKGROUND

The East Central Florida region was one of the fastest growing parts of the nation over the past 50 years, with population growing from less than 300,000 in 1950 to nearly 3.2 million in 2010 (U.S. Census). Population growth began to taper off in 2007, as the traditional driver of the region's growth – relocation of families and retirees from the rest of the nation – slowed dramatically. Population growth is expected to strengthen in upcoming years, but is not likely to regain the previous pace. The region's population has become increasingly diverse during this period, with particularly strong growth in the past decade among residents of Hispanic or Latin origin.

The recession impacted East Central Florida significantly, with the most severe impacts in housing, real estate, and construction. Employment has begun to edge higher, but March 2012 employment is more than 118,000 jobs (8 percent) lower than the February 2008 peak (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). The unemployment rate surged from historic lows of near 3 percent in 2006 to nearly 12 percent in early 2010. The region's unemployment rate has since fallen below 9 percent as of March 2012. The region has been severely impacted by the collapse of home prices due to oversupply, lack of demand, and the banking and credit crisis. Single-family homes lost 40 to 50 percent of their value from their peak in 2006 through 2011. While a large housing inventory was built, affordable housing continues to be a challenge for many of the region's workers.

The region's industry mix historically has been driven by lower-wage jobs in services and hospitality, reflecting its status as one of the world's leading tourist destinations. The average wage per job was \$41,900 in 2010, 10 percent below the national average (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis). Regional and local economic development efforts include strategies to retain existing industries; to target growth in emerging industries such as creative arts and design and life sciences; and to cultivate small businesses, startups, and entrepreneurs. The region's ability to attract and retain skilled workers – as well as the availability of suitable sites – will be critical to the success of these strategies.

The region accommodated the unprecedented population growth over the last half of the 20th century by developing in a sprawling, low-density pattern. The costs of this pattern are evident: rapid conversion of open space to build more houses, loss of agricultural land, encroachment on sensitive environmental areas, significant increases in water and energy use, and overreliance on cars for transportation. Fewer than half of the region's residents lived within cities in 2007, a share that has declined since 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau).

In the past decades, the region's highway investments have not been able to keep pace with the growth in demand for moving people and freight. Vehicle-miles traveled more than doubled between 1990 and 2008, while total road mileage has increased about 25 percent (Federal Highway Administration). Over 90 percent of regional trips use automobiles, with public transit accounting for about 1.3 percent in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey). The result has been a continued degrading of travel time and safety. Nearly 80 percent of peak-period highway travel is in congested conditions, with average delay of 38 hours per commuter in 2010 (Texas Transportation Institute, Urban Mobility Report, 2011). The Orlando-Kissimmee metropolitan statistical area has been ranked as the nation's most dangerous area for pedestrians (Transportation for America, Dangerous by Design, 2011).

The public transportation alternative today usually means spending hours on a bus and making several connections to use the transit system. This is particularly true for low-income populations making trips

between affordable housing opportunities and lower-wage jobs. Over the past decades, the combination of higher home prices (until the crash), “drive until you qualify” housing searches, and long commutes has had a toll on household budgets, with the proportion of population paying more than 45 percent of income on housing and transportation increasing from 88 percent to 92 percent (Center for Neighborhood Technology, H&T Affordability Index).

In 2007, 20 percent of adults reported changing outdoor activities due to poor air quality in Central Florida (Florida Department of Health). Of primary concern is ozone, which is a main ingredient in urban smog that affects the region in many ways, from asthma rates to agricultural production. Regional emissions of air quality pollutants that produce ozone generally have been declining for the past 30 years due to improvements in vehicle technology – but if travel continues to grow, total emissions may begin to increase, and the region’s air quality could slip below Federal standards. Energy efficiency also is a regional concern because of its impacts on economic activity and future resource availability.

The gap in economic opportunity between socioeconomic groups remains significant. Three of the six counties (Orange, Osceola, and Volusia) recorded poverty rates in excess of 16 percent in 2010. Lower-income families often lack convenient access to jobs, public transportation, fresh food, health care, and other basic needs. More than 13 percent of low-income residents live more than one mile from a grocery store (U.S. Department of Agriculture). Orange County’s 2011 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice concluded that fair housing issues in Orange County are still present despite enforcement and outreach efforts in place. Based on the fair housing complaints filed, the primary complaints for housing discrimination are from the disabled population, followed by African Americans. There is a recent trend showing complaints from non-English speakers. Seminole County’s 2006 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice reported a small number of fair housing complaints covering similar issues.

The East Central Florida 2060 Plan has identified and documented these issues, as well as a vision for future development that has received widespread support from the public, businesses, and elected officials. This vision emphasizes focusing future growth in urban centers connected through multimodal transportation corridors. The commitment to build SunRail provides one of the first steps to reshape the direction of development in East Central Florida. SunRail provides an additional competitive choice for transportation, and the station areas along the line have the opportunity to attract compact, mixed-use development. The opportunity exists to coordinate plans and investments so that SunRail becomes the focal point for revitalizing existing communities, attracting skilled workers and innovation-oriented businesses, expanding safe and convenient travel options, helping improve energy efficiency and air quality, and providing minority and lower-income households with greater access to opportunity.

WORKPLAN OVERVIEW

The Consortium will use the grant to develop and prepare for implementation of sustainable and inclusive development plans around the future station locations for East Central Florida’s SunRail commuter rail system, anticipated to begin operation in 2014. With capital investment estimated at \$357 million in Federal, state, and local funding for its first phase, SunRail will catalyze a “Corridor of Commerce” to transform communities and encourage sustainable growth, particularly in minority and/or low-income neighborhoods adjacent to several of the committed stations. The grant will support detailed planning for 6 out of the 12 Phase I SunRail stations, affordable housing assessments for all 12 stations, and regional collaboration to identify and share best practices and to guide future planning in the region.

The grant will enable the Consortium to build on the initiation of SunRail service to plan for and incentivize sustainable and inclusive development decisions to support existing communities adjacent to the commuter rail stations. The Consortium seeks to:

- Attract high-quality, higher-paying jobs and provide residents the opportunity to access these jobs using public transit;
- Promote social equity and access to opportunity through community-building investments in minority and/or low-income neighborhoods near or adjacent to several SunRail stations;
- Provide more transportation choices, improve public health and safety, and reduce energy use by providing local transit, bicycle, and pedestrian connections to SunRail stations;
- Plan for affordable and energy efficient housing around the SunRail stations;
- Encourage sustainable, compact urban development surrounding the SunRail stations; and
- Integrate and leverage investments among state, regional, and local transportation, economic development, housing, community development, and other agencies, as well as the private and nonprofit sectors.

Below is an overview of how the Consortium's workplan will address the six livability principles.

Provide more transportation choices: The Regional Growth Compact commits the region's local governments and other partners to the guiding principle of providing more transportation choices. The East Central Florida 2060 Plan sets a goal to "develop a balanced multimodal transportation network that connects compact centers of development with mixed use transit-served corridors." SunRail will be the first step in this regional network and several bus rapid transit and light rail alternatives are under study to augment this new mode. The station area plans will guide land use and development plans to help build ridership for SunRail. The station area plans also will define connections to bus and other transit systems, including services for flexible routing, such as LYNX NeighborLink, and for transportation disadvantaged populations. They also will help plan for enhanced pedestrians and bicycle networks, including safe routes to schools. The sustainability practices and tools developed as part of this grant can be applied to the remaining SunRail stations as well as to future feeder transit services. Together, the grant activities will help expand cost-effective transportation choices to improve livability, air quality, and public health.

Promote equitable, affordable housing: The Regional Growth Compact commits the region's local governments and other partners to the guiding principle of creating a range of obtainable housing choices. The East Central Florida 2060 Plan sets a goal to "assure that an adequate supply of safe, sanitary, and affordable housing is equitably distributed throughout the region." The grant activities will build upon these policies by developing affordable housing strategies around the SunRail stations. The University of Florida's Shimberg Center for Housing Studies housing models and resulting benchmarks will be used to identify the potential location of housing near transit and to further direct incentives and investments. The approach will include a calculation of transportation costs associated with compact, mixed-use housing to measure the effects of location (proximity, density, connectivity, and land use mix) on the combined housing and transportation costs for households in the region. This approach is consistent with the HUD and U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) commitment to redefine housing affordability to include transportation costs. In addition, quantifying need will assist Consortium members in leveraging Federal and state funding sources, and implementing both mandatory and incentive-based programs.

Enhance economic competitiveness: The Regional Growth Compact includes a principle to encourage a diverse, globally competitive economy. The 2011 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) includes the following economic development goals:

- Further diversify the economy by attracting, retaining, and growing rising economic clusters and business incubation;
- Create an economically and environmentally sustainable region by implementing the Regional Growth Vision; and
- Improve global connectivity of all transportation systems.

The East Central Florida Regional Planning Council currently is updating the CEDS, in coordination with the state's 10 other economic development districts as well as the statewide economic development plan being led by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity. All of these plans are organized around a common framework of the "Six Pillars of Florida's Future Economy"TM created by the Florida Chamber Foundation. The Consortium's will coordinate with these plans throughout the project.

SunRail provides an important first step toward a balanced and efficient multimodal transportation system by linking existing and emerging economic assets. The SunRail system, supported by sustainable land use and economic development decisions, will improve access to jobs, attract highly skilled creative workers who often seek urban amenities, create economies of scale and greater integration among industry clusters, and encourage private investment along the corridor. The grant activities will support effective integration of economic development and business support strategies into station area plans to help maximize the potential economic value of SunRail.

Support existing communities: The Regional Growth Vision emphasizes the importance of focusing future growth in activity centers. The East Central Florida 2060 Plan encourages investment in existing urban and suburban centers, supports emerging economic centers, increases density to enhance mixed-use development, and promotes transit-oriented development. Urban centers and rail transit nodes with existing infrastructure provide opportunities for supporting existing communities and conserving natural resource areas. With proper planning and investment around the rail transit stations, these areas can offer accessibility and increased livability to all income levels. They also can provide for economic revitalization of existing nearby businesses as well as attract new businesses. The station area plans will develop strategies to support the specific communities surrounding the SunRail stations, including opportunities to help existing communities to become more energy efficient. The combination of station-specific plans with overarching regional guidelines and policies will create solutions that reflect the unique character of each community, while also supporting the overall goal of a more livable and sustainable region.

Coordinate policies and leverage investment: The Regional Growth Vision and Compact provide a common framework for two regional planning councils, five metropolitan planning organizations, seven counties, 86 cities, seven school boards, three water management districts, and numerous other state, regional, and local entities. The East Central Florida 2060 Plan identifies policies to implement this vision and was developed with input from the same set of partners.

The grant activities are designed to leverage the Federal, state, and local investment in SunRail by coordinating the transportation investment with supportive land use, economic development, housing, and community development policies and plans at each station as well as for the region as a whole. The Consortium has been established to facilitate ongoing coordination of policies, plans, and investments, including reviewing the station area plans and making recommendations to strengthen coordination and share best practices regionwide.

Some SunRail stations serve communities which have recently received or are committed to receive significant Federal, state, local, or private investment. For example, the City of Orlando's Creative Village initiative is leveraging the connectivity provided by SunRail and land made available through construction of the Orlando Magic's new arena to develop a center of excellence for digital media, while also revitalizing the existing Parramore and Callahan neighborhoods, both of which are Title VI communities. The improvements included as part of this grant request would augment improvements within the overall Creative Village project currently being funded by a \$10 million U.S. DOT TIGER II grant and \$2.5 million in local grant matching funds. The Parramore bus rapid transit (BRT) project will provide premium transit service to the Creative Village project, the Parramore and Callahan neighborhoods, downtown Orlando, the Amway Center, Florida A&M University Law School, the Federal courthouse, and other employment centers.

An additional example of leveraged investment is LYMMO's east/west expansion in downtown Orlando. Funded by the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts program, this project was recently approved for \$9.92 million and will provide an east-west transit connection through downtown Orlando, providing service to SunRail stations, the Downtown Performing Arts Center, Amway Center, Parramore BRT, and the Thornton Park neighborhood. Both the Parramore BRT and the East/West BRT are scheduled to begin operation in 2013, ahead of SunRail service.

Value communities and neighborhoods: The Regional Growth Compact includes principles to foster distinctive, attractive, and safe places to live; and to build communities with educational, health care, and cultural amenities. The East Central Florida 2060 Plan will focus investment into existing communities by promoting livable places to work, shop, and play. The plan was developed and is being implemented with focused outreach to distressed and marginalized communities, and identifies numerous opportunities for investment in these communities, with SunRail being at the forefront. These investments will be a catalyst for recovery from the economic recession which has impacted the region so profoundly, particularly lower-income and minority communities. The station area plans will accelerate planning for these neighborhoods, and ensure that the SunRail investment creates opportunities for all residents in these neighborhoods and communities.

The major activities, specific steps, task responsibilities, and anticipated outcomes are as follows:

Activity 1: Project Management

The objectives of this task are to:

- Develop and implement an effective work plan;
- Monitor progress toward accomplishing the goals of the work plan;
- Meet all project commitments made to HUD; and
- Coordinate with related activities at the regional, state, and national levels.

The project management task is focused on achieving a successful outcome for a complex planning and coordination effort, and will address HUD requirements including project schedule, administration, and finance.

The task will be led by key staff of East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, with oversight from the Consortium Steering Committee. The following key tasks are anticipated:

- Develop and maintain a detailed work plan, schedule, and budget for the entire process, with input from the grant sub-recipients and other Consortium members;
- Provide oversight for the grant elements led by the individual station area teams;
- Develop requests for proposals (RFPs) and retain consultants as needed;
- Coordinate with HUD on overall program activities and guidelines;
- Attend HUD gatherings of grant recipients and other events as requested;
- Monitor grant activities and provide regular reports to HUD;
- Coordinate with HUD capacity building intermediaries;
- Coordinate with other HUD regional planning grant recipients, including those in Florida (Central Florida Regional Planning Council and South Florida Regional Planning Council), as well as other grant recipients doing similar work nationwide;
- Coordinate with the Florida Department of Transportation on overall planning and implementation of SunRail, including related outreach and transit oriented development facilitation activities, to leverage resources with the grant activities;
- Coordinate with other federal grant recipients in the region engaged in related activities to leverage resources, including the TIGER and FTA discretionary grant recipients (the City of Orlando, LYNX, and Seminole County). The grants are described in the individual station area workplan sections.

The East Central Florida 2060 Plan, SunRail, and the activities outlined in this work plan reinforce strategic direction provided by Florida state agencies. This grant proposal is consistent with the goals and objectives of the recently adopted 2060 Florida Transportation Plan, and the participation of FDOT District 5 on the Consortium will ensure ongoing coordination with FDOT plans and programs. The Florida Governor and Legislature created the Department of Economic Opportunity in 2011 to coordinate statewide economic development activities, including the community development functions of the former Florida Department of Community Affairs. This new department is charged with creating Florida's Strategic Plan for Economic Development in 2012. The Consortium will participate in this process to determine how best to align activities and leverage resources. Ongoing coordination also will occur with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and other resource agencies, using the state's Efficient Transportation Decision-making (ETDM) process as a tool for early coordination and review on the potential community and environmental impacts of any infrastructure investments proposed in the station areas.

Products will include:

- Project work plan and schedule (updated quarterly);
- Regular progress meetings and status reports to HUD;
- Subgrantee contracts and Request for Proposal documents (as required);
- Summary of coordination efforts with other HUD grant recipient projects; and
- Summary of coordination efforts with state agency staff.

Activity 2: Consortium Management

The objectives of this task are to:

- Ensure an inclusive, collaborative station area planning process for each station area and for the region as a whole;

- Coordinate efforts between multiple public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders to build consensus around recommendations from this process;
- Address crosscutting issues among the six station area plans and resolve key issues from a regional perspective; and
- Build a structure for ongoing regional coordination and collaboration on sustainable development decisions.

As part of the grant, the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council will establish a Consortium management structure to effectively oversee and manage the grant activities. The Consortium will coordinate among the individual station area projects, encourage integrated planning decisions, ensure effective engagement of all segments of the community including those previously marginalized in planning processes, and strengthen relationships and partnerships to reinforce and implement the regional vision.

The Consortium members include:

- East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, as fiscal agent and overall grant manager;
- The region's six county governments: Brevard, Lake, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, and Volusia;
- Seven city governments, which together cover the six station areas and the region's principal cities: Daytona Beach, DeBary, Deltona, Longwood, Orlando, Palm Bay, and Sanford;
- Creative Village Development, LLC, which is working in partnership with the City of Orlando to develop a 68-acre transit-oriented master development in downtown Orlando;
- The four metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) in the region: the Lake-Sumter MPO, MetroPlan Orlando (Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties), the Space Coast Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) (Brevard County), and the Volusia TPO;
- The Florida Department of Transportation's District 5 office;
- The Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority (LYNX), the regional transit authority for Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties;
- The University of Florida's Shimberg Center for Housing Studies, which will develop and apply affordable housing needs and suitability models;
- The Nonprofit Housing Roundtable for Central Florida, which will serve as a sounding board on affordable housing issues;
- Two organizations – Orlando Health and the Health Council of East Central Florida – which will provide input on public health issues and strategies;
- The Urban Land Institute's Central Florida District Council, which will provide their expertise and networks for engaging key private sector leaders at appropriate points in the process ; and
- *myregion.org*, a public/private partnership affiliated with the Central Florida Partnership and engaged in research, education, and leadership development on regional issues.

Key elements of the Consortium organization are as follows:

- The **Consortium** will work collaboratively to review the overall progress of the grant activities and to identify and resolve key issues. The full membership of the Consortium will meet three to four times per year, and Consortium members will be actively engaged in specific work activities. The Consortium will strive for consensus on all decisions and take a formal vote of standing members when needed regarding grant administration or regional issues. The **Consortium** will provide guidelines for how the station area plans could address common issues such as equity, review station area plans and products, address crosscutting issues among the six station area plans, and develop recommendations to advance sustainable communities practices across the region.

- The **East Central Florida Regional Planning Council** will serve as the fiscal agent and project manager, and will provide facilitation and technical assistance to the Consortium throughout the process.
- A **Steering Committee** will guide day-to-day decisions, working with the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council project management team. The Steering Committee will include representatives of the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council; the lead entities for the six station area working groups; and any other committees created by the Consortium to support grant activities. The committee will recommend to the full Consortium a strategy for sharing lessons learned and for building regional capacity to support future initiatives. The Consortium and Steering Committee will provide regular progress briefings at the Planning Council's standing meetings.
- An **Outreach and Equity Advisory Group** will include representatives of minority or lower-income neighborhoods adjacent to the SunRail stations as well as other regional leaders with expertise in these areas. The Advisory Group will meet periodically to advise the Council and participating local governments on how to ensure the planning process provides opportunities for all population groups to participate in making decisions about the future, and creates equitable opportunities for all segments of the region.
- An **Affordable Housing Working Group** will work with the Shimberg Center and the Nonprofit Housing Roundtable for Central Florida on the affordable housing analysis for all 12 Phase I SunRail stations, potentially using the Roundtable structure for this purpose.
- Six **Station Area Working Groups** will individually establish and review the planning activities for their respective SunRail station(s) as identified in this grant application. They will be chaired by the lead local government for each station. Each Working Group's membership will include local governments and key partners specific to each station, including representatives of minority and low-income neighborhoods impacted by the station. These meetings will be open to participation by stakeholders that are not part of the Consortium.

The Working Groups will meet approximately quarterly, and will strive for consensus on all decisions. Where consensus cannot be accomplished, the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council can provide support to resolve issues that may impede grant performance.

The organizational structure and membership of the Consortium, Steering Committee, Outreach and Equity Advisory Group, Affordable Housing Working Group, the individual Station Area Working Groups will be developed during May 2012 with the Consortium Agreement completed by June 2012. The Consortium agreement will include procedures for adding new members and addressing changes in representation over time.

The Consortium management task will be led by key staff of East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, with oversight from the Steering Committee. The following key tasks are anticipated:

- Develop organizational structure;
- Develop Consortium agreement;
- Convene Consortium meetings; and
- Identify Steering Committee members and convene meetings

Products will include:

- Consortium agreement;

- Consortium meeting agenda and minutes;
- Steering Committee structure, membership record, and meeting records;
- Outreach and Equity Advisory Group structure, membership record, and meeting records;
- Affordable Housing Working Group structure, membership record, and meeting records; and
- Summary record of Consortium member participation in Station Area Working Group activities.

Activity 3: Outreach and Engagement

The objectives of this task are to:

- Provide effective outreach to the station area communities along the SunRail corridor to obtain their input in station area planning efforts;
- Ensure consistency in the outreach efforts between individual station area working groups; and
- Identify successful practices for inclusive community engagement that could be applied to future station area planning and other sustainable development planning in the region.

Effective engagement of local communities and the region at large will be critical to developing successful, sustainable, and inclusive station areas, and to the success of the investment in SunRail. The tiered structure of the grant effort will allow for the involvement of regional and local agencies at the appropriate level through the Station Area Working Groups, the Steering Committee, and the Consortium as a whole.

The Consortium will leverage existing regional organizations, including the Central Florida Congress of Regional Leaders, the Central Florida Commuter Rail Commission, and the Central Florida MPO Alliance to engage leadership of regional and local agencies. The Consortium will make recommendations for an ongoing process and schedule to brief these groups on the progress of the project.

The project will engage a broad cross section of residents, business leaders, elected officials, and stakeholders through a variety of methods that worked successfully as part of Regional Growth Vision and the East Central Florida 2060 Plan. Key elements of the approach include:

- The Consortium Steering Committee, with input from the Outreach and Equity Advisory Group, will recommend overall guidelines and best practices for community engagement across all aspects of this project. Techniques and targeted approaches for engaging underrepresented portions of the community in planning and visioning for their future have been developed and successfully implemented by Creative Village Development, *myregion.org*, Orlando Health, the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, the counties and the Metropolitan Planning Organizations. The Steering Committee and the Outreach and Equity Advisory Group will review the outcomes of these prior efforts to aid in developing recommended strategies. The Council may decide to hire a specialist or procure consultant services to support these outreach activities.
- Each Station Area Working Group will develop a specific outreach and engagement plan which will identify key groups and develop strategies to maximize the participation of each group, with emphasis on traditionally marginalized populations. Under the leadership of each lead local government, each Station Area Working Group will develop a Partner and Public Participation Plan that identifies key partners and stakeholders and outlines specific strategies for engaging these groups as well as the public in obtaining input and making decisions about the planning for each station area. These may include traditional techniques such as public workshops and media outreach as well as more innovative techniques such as telephone “town hall” meetings.

The Steering Committee and the Outreach and Equity Advisory Group will review and provide feedback on each of these plans.

- The Steering Committee, with input from Outreach and Equity Advisory Group, will develop common performance measures to assess the effectiveness of the partner and public involvement activities for each station area. The Station Area Working Groups will report progress on each measure to the Steering Committee at the conclusion of their grant activities.
- The Consortium will coordinate with extensive, ongoing outreach and transit oriented development facilitation activities being conducted by FDOT to support SunRail implementation, to leverage resources and avoid duplication of effort.
- The Regional Planning Council will develop outreach materials to explain the overall purpose of the grant and serve as resources for the station area planning activities.
- The Consortium also will define and track community engagement performance measures, building on measures adopted by FDOT and the MPOs. Example may include attendance and level of satisfaction with Consortium meetings and public meetings, and minority and low-income resident participation in project outreach through neighborhood and community meetings and Consortium meetings.

Key work steps in the task will include:

- Develop regional guidelines for outreach and equity, including performance measures, to provide consistency in approach for the station area working groups;
- Develop six station area partner and public participation plans;
- Review each station area partner and public participation plans;
- Implement station area partner and public participation plans;
- Engage regional leaders through briefings to the Central Florida Congress of Regional Leaders, Consortium member board meetings, and other regional groups;
- Document the progress of outreach for each station area, noting such elements as Title VI and Limited English Proficiency components;
- Evaluate the progress of individual station area outreach efforts utilizing consistent performance measures approved by the Steering Committee;
- Maintain coordination with State agencies, notably with Florida Department of Transportation's extensive SunRail outreach activities, and with private sector forums; and
- Share lessons learned among the Consortium.

Products will include:

- Documentation of regional guidelines for outreach and equity with performance measures;
- Partner and Public Participation Plans for six station areas; and
- Summary report evaluating individual station area outreach efforts including performance measures and lessons learned

Activity 4: Affordable Housing Study

The objectives of this task are to:

- Determine the need for affordable housing in the vicinity of the stations along SunRail; and
- Formulate appropriate strategies to provide sufficient inclusive and attainable housing and lessen the cost burden felt by households throughout the region.

The University of Florida's Shimberg Center for Housing Studies will analyze each of the 12 SunRail station stops that are committed to begin service in 2014. The Shimberg Center will use two GIS-based models to address affordable housing: the Affordable Housing Suitability (AHS) model and the Affordable Housing Needs Assessment (AHNA) model. The models can estimate and project demand and identify the spatial relationship between jobs and housing at both neighborhood and regional levels. The Consortium will use the results of the analysis to set benchmarks for fair housing and the location of affordable housing near transit.

The AHS model is designed to evaluate the suitability of sites for affordable housing development and preservation. The model takes a comprehensive approach to assess the suitability of land for affordable housing. It incorporates research on affordable housing outcomes, in particular how environmental characteristics, neighborhood socioeconomic conditions, accessibility to neighborhood services and facilities, housing demand, and transportation efficiency interact and contribute to sustainable communities. The model can be scaled to support neighborhood-level decisions in a regional framework, and offers a means to balance and integrate diverse planning goals, highlight the tension between potentially competing affordable housing goals, and visualize outcomes of policy alternatives within the context of developing and preserving affordable housing.

The AHNA is a hybrid model that couples population and employment data to generate estimates of affordable housing demand. The population-based portion of the model uses population projections from University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research as well as household characteristics from the Census to generate projections of households by tenure, housing cost burden, elderly status, and income as a percentage of area median income. The employment-driven portion of the model uses data from the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) and other Census datasets to estimate the affordable housing demand generated by concentrations of low-wage employment in the region.

The **Affordable Housing Working Group**, working with the Affordable Housing Roundtable, will review and assess the outcomes and recommendations from the affordable housing study analysis to develop coordinated and consistent affordable housing policies and plans for the SunRail station areas individually and collectively. The Working Group will recommend strategies and financing opportunities to encourage and incentivize the provision of any needed affordable housing.

The station area plans, with their emphasis on minority and/or lower-income neighborhoods and leveraging SunRail as a major public involvement, will follow HUD guidelines and develop many of the elements of a fair housing and equity assessment. The Shimberg Center will use HUD fair housing and equity data as appropriate as a source for or supplement to its housing models, and the six station area plans will address the principles of fair housing and equity at a local scale. The Consortium will recommend how the station area housing analyses can be extended to the regional scale.

Products will include:

- Affordable housing analysis for 12 station areas;
- Summary of identified needs for affordable housing for each station area;
- Meeting summaries for Affordable Housing Working Group; and
- Documentation of Regional Fair Housing and Equity Assessment.

Activity 5.0 Station Area Planning

The objectives of this task are to develop station area plans around six SunRail stations consistent with the livability principles, regional vision and compact, and the East Central Florida 2060 Plan.

The Steering Committee will:

- Define general guidance for the six individual station area plans and the associated working group;
- Monitor the progress of each station area working group, ensuring consistency with overall guidance and the public engagement goals;
- Review and comment on the findings and recommendations of each station area working group; and
- Identify key lessons learned from the process and recommendations of each station area working group and work with the Consortium to disseminate the lessons among Consortium members and throughout the East Central Florida region.

The subtask descriptions below are based on preliminary work plan information submitted by local governments leading individual station area planning tasks. They may be refined based on guidance from the Steering Committee and coordination with FDOT.

Task products to be produced for each station area will include:

- Documentation of how the plan addresses consistency with the federal livability principles, the East Central Florida 2060 Plan, the Regional Growth Vision and Compact, and other guidance developed by the Consortium; and
- Documentation of outreach and engagement activities and outcomes.

As part of the development of the final work plan, the project team is working to obtain refinements from the local governments leading the station area planning, including a list of products for each. The project team also is coordinating with FDOT and MetroPlan Orlando to coordinate and leverage related activities.

Activity 5.1: City of DeBary Station Area Plan

The City of DeBary's objective is to complete an infrastructure and feasibility study for the City's Transit Oriented Development (TOD) overlay area that will improve the range of transportation choices supporting the SunRail station by adding or improving pedestrian, transit, and bicycle facilities and by improving links between these facilities. The objective of the study is to identify what types of infrastructure improvements and/or regulations are needed and to provide an implementation plan including a preliminary pedestrian and bicycle master plan. In addition, the study will help to identify work force housing needs in conjunction with the Shimberg Center.

The City, located in southern Volusia County, recognizes that there is a link between pedestrian, bicycle, and traffic calming improvements and economic development. Improving the pedestrian environment can improve the competitiveness of retail and business districts and increase property values. In addition, pedestrian and transit connections near transit stops support and encourage high density housing and mixed use development as advocated by the City's TOD overlay and regulating plan. Mixed

use development and higher density housing adjacent to the SunRail station will help provide workforce housing.

The City established a TOD Overlay District in its Comprehensive Plan and adopted goals, objectives, and policies that relate to the future commuter rail station and the property within the Overlay. The City's TOD overlay encompasses approximately 261 acres within the City's Southeast Mixed Use Future Land Use Category. The City also created and adopted a TOD regulating plan to incorporate the TOD Overlay District into the City's Land Development Code (LDC). The TOD regulating plan encourages compact mixed-use development within a quarter to half mile of the SunRail station and promotes high density (in terms of dwelling units per acre) within the quarter mile then stepping down in density, intensity and height. The City's TOD overlay supports compact land use patterns that provide energy efficiency and multi-modal transportation options with minimum residential densities of 14 dwelling units per acre and maximum densities of 32 dwelling units per acre and a floor area ratio of 2.0.

The focus of the task will be to conduct an infrastructure and feasibility study and develop a guide to create transportation design for livable communities. The city will evaluate the multi-use trail and pedestrian and bicycle accommodations and operations plan along U.S. 17-92, and develop recommendations for a quality pedestrian environment. The task includes a Master Stormwater plan for the corridor to incentivize TOD at the SunRail station.

Activity 5.2: Sanford Station Area Plan

Seminole County and the City of Sanford will work together to develop a commuter rail station area plan that will facilitate the development of a corridor of commerce and sustainable compact urban development to increase economic competitiveness and to reduce environmental impacts. The plan will evaluate development opportunities in the station and surrounding area and incorporate TOD criteria including a mix of jobs and housing types in an area with an existing low income and minority population. The plan will evaluate the need for changes to the comprehensive plan or for overlay zoning to achieve the desired station area development patterns.

This plan will include outreach and inclusion of minority and underserved populations, an affordable housing assessment component in conjunction with the Shimberg Center, an economic analysis of the area, preparation of a list of complete street/safe street projects and policies, and a sidewalk plan. There will be an emphasis on major job potential in the station area.

The plan will be coordinated with work to be undertaken by Seminole County related to a \$1.425 million grant under the FTA's Section 5309 Bus and Bus Facility Program to provide partial funding for station enhancements to the future SunRail stations in East Altamonte, Lake Mary, Longwood, and Sanford. The enhancements are scheduled to be completed by 2013.

Activity 5.3: Longwood Station Area Plan

The goals of this station area plan are to improve access to jobs, increase economic competitiveness, promote sustainable and compact development, and reduce environmental impacts. The City of Longwood station area will be designed with pedestrian and bicycle friendly facilities to connect jobs

and neighborhoods within a half mile walk or three mile bicycle radius of the station. The plan will focus on County Road 427, Church Avenue, Oleander Street, Myrtle Street, and Longwood Street. The acquisition of right-of-way may be necessary depending on the development of the station area plan, and this will be determined after studies are conducted. These studies will identify market/redevelopment opportunities, create a strategy for niche development, and expand existing industrial and service industry to create new living-wage jobs in the walk/bike shed of the City's new transit station and the City's designated Brownfield areas.

The plan will evaluate the need for changes to the comprehensive plan or for overlay zoning to achieve the desired station area development patterns. In addition, the plan would identify the attributes of the local workforce to determine training needs in support of a job creation program, identify sources of needed training, and partner with public and private entities to identify or establish educational programs to better prepare the workforce.

The City of Longwood will hold public meetings with residents to seek input regarding street sections and to inform the public about the transportation options provided by this effort. The City of Longwood will prepare construction-ready drawings for a multi-use bicycle and pedestrian network connecting neighborhoods to jobs and transit while creating a crucial connection to existing regional trail networks.

In the final phase, the City will acquire the right-of-way (if required) to allow for the completion of the proposed project. There will also be an allowance for the revision of construction drawings should the land acquisition process necessitate any deviations to the final design plans. Should the City's consultant identify that no right-of-way acquisition is necessary, or should there be enough resources remaining to complete construction drawings for a section of Longwood Street, this activity will be included in a future phase.

Activity 5.4: Altamonte Springs Station Area Plan

Seminole County will partner with the predominantly African American East Altamonte neighborhood in unincorporated Seminole County to develop a station area and sidewalk plan. The objective of the task is to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to and from a low-income/minority community located to the northeast of the Altamonte Springs SunRail station.

The plan includes the design of bicycle and pedestrian connections along six streets between the station and the surrounding low income and minority neighborhood. The plan will evaluate the need for changes to the comprehensive plan or for overlay zoning to achieve the desired station area development patterns.

This plan will include outreach and inclusion of minority and underserved populations, an affordable housing component in conjunction with the Shimberg Center, an economic analysis of the area, and a sidewalk plan.

Activity 5.5: LYNX Central Station Area Plan

The City of Orlando has partnered with Creative Village Development, LLC (CVD) to improve community connectivity and provide attainable housing options with direct access to the adjacent LYNX (Central

Florida Regional Transportation Authority) Central Station as part of the City's vision for the Creative Village redevelopment project. Through lands owned by the City of Orlando and made available by the relocation of the NBA's Orlando Magic to a new location in the downtown, Creative Village offers the foundation for the rejuvenation of a 60-acre section of downtown Orlando that has become an area of disinvestment and disconnection from the downtown urban core by a major interstate (I-4) and the now demolished Amway Arena (former home of the Orlando Magic). Creative Village, the signature public/private downtown redevelopment project for Orlando, will reinvent this area as a live, work, learn, and play sustainable community built around a foundation of technology-based commerce and educational opportunities, mixed-income and attainable housing, neighborhood commercial space, public open spaces, and multimodal transportation options. Less than a ¼ mile from the LYNX Central Station, a multimodal transit center that currently offers bus, BRT, vanpool, paratransit, and community circulator services and future SunRail commuter rail service, Creative Village will offer all of the dynamics of true, transit oriented development.

The livability and mobility objectives associated with the LYNX Central Station Area Plan include:

- Offer attainable housing that has direct access to the LYNX Central Station and to the residents of the greater Parramore neighborhood - a low income, minority section of downtown Orlando designated as a Title VI community - through the planning, design, and permitting of the necessary roadways and public infrastructure improvements within the new transit-oriented, sustainable community;
- Reestablish the currently disjointed street grid to create opportunities for the residents of the Parramore neighborhood to access regional commerce opportunities through improved connectivity to LYNX Central Station and provide a mechanism for the construction of office and educational development that will establish Creative Village as a regional cluster of high-tech/digital commerce;
- Improve multimodal (bike, pedestrian, transit) transportation opportunities for the residents of the Parramore neighborhood and Creative Village; and
- Utilize public outreach meetings and design charrettes to continue to engage the public and community stakeholder on the plans for Creative Village.

These opportunities to provide affordable housing and improve connectivity to the LYNX Central Station and region will be initiated through the planning, design, and permitting of the necessary public infrastructure that will then allow for vertical construction. The HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant will provide the necessary funding to complete the following critical components:

1. The City of Orlando and CVD have for the past three years been engaged in a public outreach campaign centered on keeping the residents of the Parramore informed of and engaged in the planning and progression of the Creative Village project. As part of the workplan associated with the HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant, CVD is fully committed to continuing the public outreach and engagement plan to the community through the life of the grant and beyond.
2. CVD will assist in the dissemination of demographic and housing data already collected as part of the on-going assessment of the area for the Creative Village project for use as part of the Shimberg Center's Affordable Housing Study.

3. Master planning, pre-design meetings with permitting agencies, LEED certification analysis, survey, geotechnical engineering, and utility coordination services.
4. Master engineering and design services associated with specific areas in Creative Village to include roadways with BRT exclusive lanes where required, sidewalks, intersection improvements, water, sanitary sewer infrastructure, irrigation, drainage, soft utility (cable, telecommunication, etc.) infrastructure, street lights, landscape, streetscape (street furniture, trash receptacles, newspaper racks, etc.), hardscape, and street signage design components.
5. Submittal of plans and applications and payment of application fees to necessary permitting agencies of the associated improvements.
6. Administration and management of the grant activities and management of the overall project process including associated consultant activity.

Work will be coordinated with three significant grants awarded to cover planning in the same area:

- The City of Orlando received a \$10 million capital grant through the U.S. Department of Transportation's Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) II. The grant will support the Parramore bus rapid transit (BRT) project, which will provide premium transit service from the LYNX Central Station (a future SunRail station) in downtown Orlando to employment centers and other locations to the west of Interstate 4, including the Creative Village project, the Amway Center, Florida A&M University Law School, the Federal courthouse, and the low-income Parramore and Callahan neighborhoods. This project is expected to be operational in 2013, prior to the start of SunRail service.
- LYNX received \$9.92 million in funding under the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)'s New Starts funding to support east/west expansion of its LYMMO BRT system in downtown Orlando. The East/West BRT will provide a connection through downtown Orlando, providing service to the Church Street SunRail station, the Downtown Performing Arts Center, Amway Center, Parramore BRT, and the Thornton Park neighborhood. The East/West BRT will begin operation in 2014.
- LYNX also received a \$1.22 million Bus Livability Grant from FTA to develop the LYNX-Orlando Trail along a corridor known as Gertrude's Walk. This trail will provide a key link between downtown residential and business areas and downtown transit stations, including the LYNX Central Station and Church Street Station. The trail will be the backbone for a trail system into and through downtown Orlando. The initial phase of the project will be completed prior to 2014.

The planning, design, and permitting efforts afforded by the HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant will augment improvements within the overall Creative Village project currently being funded by a USDOT TIGER II grant to bring Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service into the project, thereby creating additional access opportunities for the residents of the Parramore and Callahan communities. The proposed work plan will assist in implementing improved housing, employment, and education opportunities and establish a model for urban and inclusive redevelopment in the region.

Activity 5.6: Sand Lake Station Area Plan

Orange County will complete a corridor planning study to evaluate the most appropriate use of Transportation Design for Livable Communities (TDLC) standards within the Florida Department of Transportation Plans Preparation Manual, initially for use on Orange Avenue in the vicinity of the Sand Lake SunRail station, where there is a large low income and minority population. These standards will ultimately be used throughout the County in transit-oriented applications. Study efforts will identify corridor needs, an alternatives evaluation, a management plan and schedule.

The scope is tailored to help transform the SunRail Station area transportation network into one that is multimodal, urban, context-sensitive, and supportive of planned transit-oriented development. User-friendly pedestrian facilities and amenities connecting the SunRail Station to other land uses will be a major focus of this study. In addition, a context sensitive design approach will be applied to a portion of Orange Avenue in the immediate area of the station location, thereby ensuring the full range of opportunities to integrate transportation and land uses in the area are considered and ultimately implemented.

The study will include stakeholder and public engagement.

Activity 5.7: Lessons Learned

The objectives of this task are to:

- Monitor local station area plan development;
- Identify best practices applicable to other station areas and to the region;
- Develop summary lessons learned; and
- Disseminate useful information for use in other SunRail station area plan development, and for implementation in the East Central Florida Region.

The Steering Committee and Consortium will identify best practices in terms of public involvement plans, activities, and products, and share these practices so the entire region continually improves its methods for engaging all aspects of the community in planning decisions. The Consortium will create and maintain a library demonstrating effective techniques for engaging all segments of the community, and also how to facilitate access to translation services when needed.

Key work tasks in this task include:

- Attend individual station area planning workshops and forums;
- Summarize experiences with best practices that are shown to achieve desirable results;
- Note techniques that do not achieve desired results with the communities ; and
- Assemble a common list of best practices to share with other local governments representing future SunRail stations, as well as transit-oriented developments throughout the region.

Products will include:

- A library demonstrating best practices and lessons learned in inclusive community engagement ;
- A summary document (memorandum and presentation materials) for use in disseminating lessons information to the Consortium and partnership;

ATTACHMENTS:

1: Workplan matrix

2: Gantt timeline

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