



SUSTAINABLE PLACES PROJECT PLANNING DEMONSTRATION SITES CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

A regional consortium of organizations and local governments from the Austin-Round Rock-San Marcos MSA have received a Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to work on integrating mobility, housing choices, and economic prosperity into planning efforts of communities represented as Activity Centers in the 2035 Plan adopted by the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO). The Capital Area Texas Sustainability (CATS) Consortium was awarded \$3.7 million through the Capital Area Council of Governments (CAPCOG) as the lead applicant. A cooperative agreement was officially executed with HUD on February 14, 2011. The project is referred to as the Sustainable Places Project.

The CATS Consortium has developed definitive goals for the Activity Centers in the CAMPO 2035 Plan. The host jurisdictions of these Activity Centers are being solicited through this **Call for Applications** to participate as planning demonstration (demo) sites and take on planning and implementation efforts that will address these goals.

The CATS Consortium will subsequently select a professional consultant team through a separate RFP process to provide planning services and guidance to the selected planning demonstration sites. It is the goal of the Consortium to choose a planning demo site in each county of the MSA (Travis, Williamson, Hays, Bastrop and Caldwell Counties) that will be selected through this competitive process, as described in detail below. Likewise, the objective is to choose a diverse group of Activity Centers as defined in the CAMPO 2035 Plan.

The grant is also funding the development of a sustainability software package (in cooperation with the University of Texas – Center for Sustainable Development, IBM, and the City of Austin) which will allow each selected planning demo site to evaluate the consequences of various land development and infrastructure investment scenarios from environmental quality, mobility, economic development, and social justice perspectives.

For more information and regular updates please access the CAPCOG web site at www.capcog.org.

ELIGIBLE PLANNING DEMONSTRATION SITES

The CAMPO 2035 Plan has designated 37 sites as Activity Centers. One (1) site is classified as large, thirteen (13) are shown as medium Centers, and twenty-three (23) sites are categorized as small Centers. Each site is eligible to be considered as a planning demonstration site.

ELIGIBLE PLANNING DEMONSTRATION SITE APPLICANTS

Any local government (city or county) located within the five county CAMPO area that has a designated Activity Center is eligible to apply. Multiple applications are permissible, e.g., if a city has three designated Activity Centers within their city limits they can submit three separate applications. Likewise, joint applications between a city and a county or two counties are also allowable, as long as one of the local governments is designated as the lead applicant and primary responsible party.

Please note that only one application is allowed for each of the thirteen (13) Medium Activity Centers and the twenty-three (23) Small Activity Centers as designated in the CAMPO 2035 Plan. Multiple applications are permissible for the one (1) Large Activity Center due to its geographical size. The following is a link to the CAMPO Centers location map:

<http://www.campotexas.org/pdfs/Map%20%20Centers%20Concept.pdf>

WHY SHOULD LOCAL GOVERNMENTS APPLY?

As previously stated, the CATS Consortium will select a team of professional consultants to provide technical planning assistance, including access to the new analytics software, to those communities with Activity Centers that have been selected as planning demonstration sites.

Please note that this Call for Applications does not offer grant funding, but does offer valuable consultant services in strategic areas of transportation, land use, housing and economic development that would empower a community to fully develop a designated Activity Center. The level and time frame of consultant support will vary for each planning demo site based on unique issues, local progress, and extent of support needed to complete the planning process.

SUSTAINABLE ACTIVITY CENTER GOALS

The following goals were established by the CATS Consortium that address the primary components of a successful and sustainable Activity Center. While different in some aspects, these goals build upon and complement CAMPO's adopted 2035 Regional Transportation Plan Goals.

Housing Choices:

- Opportunity for people with diverse household income levels to live a reasonable distance from employment, shopping, educational, recreational and transportation choices.
- Neighborhoods that provide diverse housing types with mixed densities that accommodate all age groups and stages of life.

Mobility Options:

- Transportation infrastructure and services that enhance the efficient movement of people, goods and services.
- Multi-modal options (rail, bus, pedestrian and bicycle) that support living and working within an activity center, as well as commuting to other centers.
- Connectivity between the different mobility systems.

Economic Prosperity:

- Commercial/business development to provide jobs and services for center residents.
- Effective linkages between residents and post secondary education opportunities/development of a workforce that can earn a livable wage and support free agents working within the center.
- Target the development and retention of competitive businesses and the jobs they create.
- Maximize the return on public investments in existing and new roads, utilities, transit systems, bridges, etc.

Healthy/Inclusive Community:

- Ample exercise and recreational opportunities and facilities.
- Access to products and services to support and enhance health, including proximity to medical facilities, daycare, and fresh produce/farmers markets.
- Cultural vitality and connection to local history.
- Community spaces for public gatherings and activities.
- Stable neighborhood schools as a focal point for all adults, children, civic groups, and businesses.
- Thoroughfare and pedestrian systems designed to provide walkability, bicycle pathways and public safety.

- Proximity to open space and nature.
- Emphasis on local food production and community gardening.

Concentrated/Balanced Growth:

- Mixed-use development that provides a variety of development options and land use types near transit service/transportation centers.
- Commitment to redevelopment, infill or adaptive reuse of areas with existing infrastructure.
- Maintain and enhance existing infrastructure.
- Orderly and efficient provision of new infrastructure in context with site optimization and compactness.
- Facilitate residential development in close proximity to daily needs, e.g., food/retail/personal services.
- Emphasis on street-level uses that maximize pedestrian activity.
- Focus on community identity or sense of place by utilizing compatible, quality architectural and landscape designs, and preservation of significant historic structures.

Preservation of Environment/Natural Resources:

- Minimal impact on the natural environment (air quality, water, watersheds, wetlands and climate).
- Sustainable building and site designs that use water, energy and material resources efficiently (green building design and conservation).
- Effective recycling and source reduction programs and services.
- Preservation and protection of natural areas, scenic corridors, agricultural uses, environmentally sensitive areas and open space.

REVIEW CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF PLANNING DEMONSTRATION SITES

- **Complete a Planning Demonstration Site Application Form**: Please refer to the attached application form and checklist.
- **Planning Demonstration Site Area**: Define the proposed planning demonstration site area and depict in map form (11"x 17" maximum – two copies) including scale and north arrow. The area should be clearly defined, focused, and of concise size/composition to be manageable. Also provide one parcel map (11"x17" maximum) of the site showing the primary land owners. (4 pages max; 3 maps, 1 narrative page). Please note that the proposed planning demonstration site area must be primarily located within a designated Activity Center as shown on the CAMPO Centers map.
- **Issue Statement**: Prepare an issue statement that addresses the following questions (2 pages maximum):
 - Why should your Activity Center be selected as a planning demonstration site?
 - What is the vision for your Activity Center?
 - How will having your Activity Center designated as a demonstration site impact your community's planning goals and vision?
 - How will the technical and professional assistance for developing detailed plans and implementation strategies make a difference in your community's efforts to establish a successful and sustainable Activity Center?
 - What aspects of the **Sustainable Activity Center Goals** are being considered or have been included in your community's planning efforts to date?
- **Local Resources**: Identify the applicant's primary point of contact and support staff that will be dedicated to this two (2) year process. Identify the applicant's planning information and infrastructure inventory databases. Identify the electronic media and media format on land use, zoning, parcel boundaries and infrastructure capacity/location. (2 pages maximum)
- **Local Commitment**: The applicant should include an appendix to the application displaying collective commitment/political will to implement local initiatives in support of their proposed planning demo site that reflects the **Sustainable Activity Center Goals**. Required local commitment activities to be submitted in the appendix include the following:
 - Provide an adopted and signed Sustainable Places Project resolution from the local government acknowledging long-term commitment to this endeavor. (refer to attached draft resolution)
 - Provide a list of specific stakeholders (bankers, developers, local business owners, realtors, large landowners, minority and faith based community representatives, etc.) that are dedicated to being involved throughout the entire process, and will serve as members of a Sustainable Places Stakeholders Committee.
 - Provide letters of support from local organizations, civic clubs and businesses.
 - Provide letters of support from primary land owners within the planning demo site area.

Capacity to Implement (2 pages maximum): Describe substantive activities that show local ability to undertake the proposed planning demo site process, and the ability to support and implement the desired outcomes. Examples of local activities include:

- Describe a project or elements of a plan that your community has implemented including staffing, funding, development of regulations, community support, and formal actions by the governing body.
 - Describe the community's past efforts in using financing tools, capital improvement projects, bond issues, other programs (grants, pass-through tolling, loans, etc) to implement projects supporting transportation, housing, and economic development.
- **Discretionary Factors**: Additional consideration may be given through the evaluation process to planning demonstration site applications that exhibit the following discretionary factors:
 - Innovative concept/approach to the project.
 - Proposed or pending private and/or public development projects within the demo site area that will complement and support the **Sustainable Activity Center Goals**.
 - Identification of additional funding sources that could be effectively applied to the planning demo site.
 - Comprehensive coordination with other organizations and non-profits to address a full range of needs.
 - Contribution of In-kind services to the project.
 - Applicability and transferability of the potential planning demo site outcomes locally and regionally.

APPLICATION FORMAT AND SUBMITAL PROCESS

You may obtain a copy of the Sustainable Places Planning Demonstration Sites application requirements by:

- Contacting **Chad Coburn by telephone at 512-916-6012 or email at ccoburn@capcog.org**.
- Downloading the application form and checklist with this Call for Applications announcement; or
- Downloading the application form and checklist from the CAPCOG website at www.capcog.org.

Submit one (1) signed, unbound original and two (2) copies of the complete planning demonstration sites application along with one (1) complete PDF version on disk or USB device to CAPCOG. Applications must be received by **5:00 pm on Wednesday, August 31, 2011**.

Applications must be mailed or delivered to:

Chad Coburn, Sustainable Places Project Manager
Capital Area Council of Governments
6800 Burleson Road
Building 310, Suite 165
Austin, TX 78744

Faxed or electronically transmitted applications will not be accepted.

Upon receipt, an application will be stamped indicating the time and date it was received at CAPCOG. Confirmation of receipt of each application will be posted on the CAPCOG website.

Preliminary Review of Submitted Applications

Based on the elements of the attached application checklist, the CAPCOG staff will review each planning demo site application for completeness and will notify the applicant in a timely manner via email if a required item is missing. Each applicant will have an opportunity to amend their respective application based on the schedule shown below. If an applicant does not provide the identified missing components by the required deadline, the applicant will forfeit further consideration of their application. No adjustments will be allowed outside of the established time frame.

Please note that all informational and scheduling updates will be posted on a regular basis on the CAPCOG website (www.capcog.org) for your convenience. If you have any questions concerning the application and evaluation process, please contact Chad Coburn at (512) 916-6012 or email at ccoburn@capcog.org.

APPLICATION EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

The Sustainable Places Project Planning Demonstration Sites application is a competitive selection process. Only applications received on or before the deadline will be reviewed competitively.

The CATS Steering Committee has appointed a CATS Review Committee to evaluate the planning demo sites applications. The Committee will determine which applications best meet the selection criteria based on the strength and completeness of the responses.

At the discretion of the individual committee members, additional consideration may be given to the **Discretionary Factors**, as outlined above, in assessing the level of response from the applicants.

Upon completion of the non-numerical scoring phase, the CATS Review Committee will compare and discuss the results of the process in order to come to a consensus on which planning demo sites to recommend to the CATS Steering Committee. **If deemed necessary, before making their final recommendations, the Review Committee may request formal presentations at a later date, as shown in the schedule below, from those applicants that exhibit the greatest level of applicability. Therefore, all applicants should be prepared to have an elected official from their respective jurisdiction give a ten (10) minute power point presentation and be available to answer questions from the Review Committee.**

The CATS Review Committee will subsequently submit their selection recommendations to the CATS Steering Committee, who will then officially choose the planning demonstration sites. Written notification of the results will be provided to each applicant and will be posted on the CAPCOG website.

In summary, the goal of the CATS Consortium is to select a planning demo site in each county of the MSA (Travis, Williamson, Hays, Bastrop and Caldwell Counties) that is primarily located within the boundaries of a designated CAMPO Activity Center. Likewise, the objective is to choose a diverse group of Activity Centers as defined in the CAMPO 2035 Plan.

SCHEDULE OF IMPORTANT DATES

June 24, 2011	Planning Demonstration Sites Application Forum Thompson Conference Center – UT Austin 9:30 am – 11:00 am
July 1, 2011	Applications Available on CAPCOG website
August 31, 2011	Applications Due at CAPCOG by 5:00 pm
September 1 – 8, 2011	Preliminary Review of Submitted Applications
September 9, 2011	Notification of Application Status Sent to Applicants
September 26, 2011	Application Adjustments Due at CAPCOG by 5:00 pm
September 27, 2011	Complete Applications Sent to CATS Review Committee
October 13, 2011	CATS Review Committee Evaluation Meeting at CAPCOG
October 20, 2011	Applicant Presentations to CATS Review Committee (if requested) and Final Recommendations at CAPCOG
October 28, 2011	CATS Steering Committee Planning Demo Sites Selection Meeting at CAPCOG