

# ONE REGION FUNDERS' GROUP

## TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN

### Transit-Centered Development in Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey -- Request for Proposals

#### **Introduction**

Enclosed is a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Transit-Centered Development (TCD) initiatives targeting New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. On behalf of the One Region Funders' Group, the Tri-State Transportation Campaign (TSTC) is soliciting proposals from interested municipalities to facilitate TCD projects in Connecticut (with preference for Fairfield and New Haven Counties), northern New Jersey, Westchester County, New York City and Long Island. An offer of support will be based on criteria highlighted below, including, but not limited to, local commitment to equitable TCD, existing transit infrastructure to support TCD, and/or commitment to develop new transit infrastructure if none currently exists.

#### **Background**

Suburban sprawl, or development patterns that promote low-density development and foster an overreliance upon automobile use, is a relatively new creation. Historically, development was focused around main streets, transit centers and downtown areas. It was only after World War II that sprawling development patterns began to appear throughout the country, spurred forward by cheap oil, new highway infrastructure development and the increased availability of automobiles. Long Island, with the creation of the first Levittown, was a model for this development pattern, which quickly spread across the region and throughout the country.

Over the years, we have seen suburban sprawl cause severe environmental damage and hinder economic development by increasing traffic congestion, destroying open space, increasing social inequity and the cost of public services, contributing significantly to climate change and creating a car-dominant society that leaves no place for alternative transportation systems such as mass transit, bicycling and walking. More recently we have learned that suburban sprawl often causes the destruction of the historic centers of communities by encouraging growth further and further from preexisting downtowns, thereby drawing business and needed economic dollars away from main streets. Finally, because sprawling land use patterns require automobiles for mobility, they often "price out" many families, especially when gasoline prices rise or economic recessions occur.

However, over the past two decades, a burgeoning movement to reclaim community streets from auto-centric development has emerged. Incorporated into this movement is the desire to redevelop communities to better reflect pre-war development patterns. This new movement, labeled 'smart growth,' calls for a return to walkable and bike-friendly town centers. Although rooted in the past, it is not stuck there. Smart growth calls for focused development around

modern transit hubs that will be the important energy-efficient transportation infrastructure for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond.

This type of smart growth, known as transit-centered development, is defined as mixed-use developments of retail, mixed-income housing and open space that foster walkable, compact and vibrant communities centered within one-quarter to one-half mile of a transit stop. Smart growth development is an integral tool to combat suburban sprawl, stop the destruction of open space and combat climate change, while at the same time developing diverse neighborhoods that offer convenient access to jobs, stores, schools, and services for people regardless of their income, race, age, or ability.

## **Purpose**

In order to support this movement, Tri-State Transportation Campaign, working with the One Region Funders' Group, will invest in a second round of predevelopment grants for equitable transit centered development.

This grant initiative builds upon an initial set of investments made in the spring of 2009. A number of these projects have developed quite successfully. For example, Stratford, CT, one of the 2009 awardees, successfully leveraged its \$50,000 grant to win a \$250,000 state grant in 2011. Babylon, NY and Brookhaven, NY have both capitalized on the momentum from their grants; Babylon received a \$2 million federal transportation grant for its Wyandanch Rising project in 2011, while Brookhaven signed an unprecedented intermunicipal agreement with neighboring Islip to jointly seek state and federal funds. More information about the initial grant is available at <http://tstc.org/issues/tod>.

For this current round, the initiative will award up to ten grants for activities that facilitate equitable transit centered development projects. Competitive grants between \$10,000 and \$50,000 for up to ten communities to support initiatives to envision, plan, or design local transit-centered development projects.

## **Goals**

This grant program intends to generate support for transit-centered development initiatives and build support for smart growth demonstrations (or practices). The targeted populations for this grant are local governmental agencies (municipal, village or town governments) and nonprofit or private consultants retained by agencies to manage a TCD project. The goals of the project will be to:

- Provide officials and planners with necessary technical and/or financial resources to initiate or support existing, transit-centered development planning efforts in their communities;

- Build community support for TCD through visioning, charette planning and other participatory community driven development methods to ensure ‘buy-in’ from local citizenry and to mitigate opposition;
- Create conditions and development outcomes that lead to more walkable and bike friendly environments, ultimately fostering a reduction in vehicle miles traveled, a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and a reduction in energy usage;
- Support innovative TCD projects and plans that include mixed-income housing, that include affordable units and market rate units and energy efficient building design.

## **Applicant Criteria and Scope**

### *Eligibility*

TSTC and One Region seek **municipalities, villages or towns** that meet the following criteria to undertake activities that would promote TCD initiatives:

- Have existing transit infrastructure (i.e. train station and/or bus stop) or an existing master plan to create transit infrastructure no later than two years from the **grant awarding** date;
- Have made or have significantly addressed the requisite zoning changes that would allow and promote TCD or have a demonstrated willingness to make the requisite zoning changes within the target area (i.e. mixed use zoning, regulations and parking policies that encourage walking and cycling and discourage auto-dependency);
- Demonstrated willingness to pursue mixed-use, mixed-income development (i.e. inclusionary zoning, affirmative marketing policies,) and to grow in population and jobs (i.e. completed master plan or taken steps towards an updated plan);
- Willingness to work regionally (i.e. joint applications from neighboring municipalities) to encourage TCD;
- Willingness to pursue Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) certification or LEED ND equivalent status for development projects;
- Demonstrated willingness to contribute matching money, solicit additional partners, and/or allocate part-time staff to handle TCD projects;
- Demonstrated willingness to collaborate with community groups;
- Demonstrated willingness to incorporate local culture and the arts into TCD plans.

Grants can be awarded to municipalities, or directly to nonprofit or private consultants which the municipality has retained to conduct work on the project.

**Towns that received support in the initial round of grants should contact the Tri-State Transportation Campaign before applying.**

### *Project examples*

There are many different projects that can be considered, as long as they strive to attain the goals outlined above. Examples include:

- Community outreach processes that engage disparate stakeholders including elected officials, agency staff, residents, local business owners, private developers, community based organizations, etc., that lead to community support for a TCD project;
- Requests for expertise or technical support from trade associations such as the American Institute for Architects or the US Green Building Council, transit agencies, state housing finance agencies, etc., to move forward on existing TCD plans;
- Hiring particular transportation, housing or environmental experts to work with the applicant to plan and/or design key elements of TCD projects;
- Alternative transportation analysis study.

## **Process**

Interested applicants should first submit a letter of interest (LOI) no longer than one (1) page describing the project. *LOIs are due by December 16, 2011.*

TSTC and One Region will review the LOIs and invite full proposals. *Full proposals must be received by March 1, 2012.* Upon receipt of the proposal, each project will be reviewed by a geographically appropriate advisory panel reflecting the diverse array of criteria required above. Grants will be awarded through the Tri-State Transportation Campaign in April 2012.

## *Proposal Requirements*

If invited to submit a full application, proposers should submit one (1) Microsoft Word-formatted (.doc or .docx) copy of the proposal to Steven Higashide at [steven@tstc.org](mailto:steven@tstc.org). The proposal should be four (4) to six (6) pages in length, excluding application cover sheet, resolution of support, resumes and budget.

1. Executive Summary and Background
  - Provide a brief description of the proposed project and work, as well as relevant information about the community where the project will be implemented.
2. Narrative Description
  - Provide a needs statement that supplies a substantive description of the project's objectives, background and key partners for implementation. Include a brief discussion on the important issues (i.e. potential obstacles and/or opposition) involved in the implementation of this effort.
  - Also include a list of other non-municipal funding sources, if any, that have been secured for the project, such as private sector support and county, state, and federal grants.
3. Approach and Schedule

- Provide a description of the approach for performing the work and accomplishing project objectives. Provide detailed timeline for implementation.
4. Governmental/Organizational background
    - Description of governmental/organizational mission and structure. Attach resumes for key personnel and list project responsibilities for each.
  5. Relevant Historical Experience
    - If applicable, provide a list of relevant projects that required similar planning and implementation efforts as the proposed project that the government entity/organization has conducted over the past five (5) years.
  6. Detailed budget for proposed project
  7. Contact Information and Evidence of Municipal Support
    - Application Attachment with signatures of Chief Elected Official; head of agency managing the project; and project manager.
    - Name, address and phone number of the applicant, including contact person, and name of the person(s) who prepared the proposal.
    - If additional local legislative (municipal Town Board, City Council, etc.) approval is required to receive the grant, attach a local legislative resolution which expresses support for the proposal and allows the grant to be received. (Note that grants can be awarded directly to nonprofit or private consultants which the municipality has retained to work on the project.)

*Key Dates and Timeline*

**RFP Release Date-** November 15, 2011

**Letter of Interest due-** December 16, 2011

**Municipalities invited to submit full proposals-** February 1, 2012.

**Full proposals due-** March 1, 2012

**Grant decisions approved-** approximately one (1) month after proposal deadline.

**Grant disbursement-** April 2012.

**Project Reporting-**Final report on how grants were used and any challenges faced – April 2013

**Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals:**

TSTC and the One Region Funders' Group will use the following criteria for evaluating proposals for transit-centered development projects. Proposals should:

- Request between \$10,000 and \$50,000;
- Focus on communities that give preference to potential developers whose projects incorporate mixed-income housing and sustainable design.
- Focus on places that regional transit agencies consider priorities for TCD;

- Focus on projects which have advanced toward implementation (i.e. a project including a specific proposed concept is preferred over visioning sessions/charettes aimed at gauging whether a community has any interest in TCD at all).
- Demonstrate existing ‘buy-in’ from the transit agency for the project (willingness of the transit agency to invest in the area) as well as existing ‘buy-in’ from the municipality, village or towns. Examples of adequate local support include:
  - Willingness to develop vacant land or underutilized or deteriorated buildings into TCD projects;
  - Willingness to contribute matching money and/or allocate part-time staff to handle TCD projects;
  - Willingness to grow in population, mixed-income housing and jobs;
  - Support for local culture and the arts
- Involve at least one community- based organization and community residents in the planning, design and implementation aspects of the TCD;
- Focus on communities that are willing to consider and/or already considering issues such as mixed income housing, sustainable design (LEED approved), brownfields cleanup and multi-modal transportation systems, as part of the TCD planning process.

The *One Region Funders’ Group* is a partnership of private funders from Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey learning and working together to advance and support transportation planning and reform in the Tri-State region. Foundations contributing toward this initiative include Fairfield County Community Foundation, Ford Foundation, Fund for the Environment and Urban Life, Long Island Community Foundation, New York Community Trust, Rauch Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Surdna Foundation, Emily Hall Tremain Foundation, and Westchester Community Foundation.

The *Tri-State Transportation Campaign* is a non-profit advocacy and policy organization working for a more balanced, equitable, and environmentally friendly transportation system in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

For questions or additional information, please contact:

**Steven Higashide**

Tri-State Transportation Campaign

350 West 31<sup>st</sup> Street, Suite 802

New York, NY 10001

[steven@tstc.org](mailto:steven@tstc.org), 212-268-7474

## 2011-2012 APPLICATION ATTACHMENT

This grant is supported by the One Region Funders' Group and Tri-State Transportation Campaign.

On behalf of the community of \_\_\_\_\_, we the undersigned submit this application for funding from the One Region Funders' Group and Tri-State Transportation Campaign. We attest to the appropriateness and accuracy of the information contained herein, and certify that this application, if funded, will comply with all relevant requirements of the state and federal laws and regulations. Any funds received from the funding partners will be used solely to support the purpose, goals and objectives as stated herein. We agree to participate in the evaluation, documentation and specified technical assistance provided through this grant opportunity.

### Chief Elected Official

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

### Head of Agency Which Will Manage the Project (Planning, Transportation, Public Works, etc.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

### Project Manager/Applicant Contact Person

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_