

Transit-Centered Development—New Jersey Request for Proposals

Introduction

Enclosed is a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Transit-Centered Development (TCD) initiatives targeting New Jersey. The Tri-State Transportation Campaign (TSTC), a non-profit organization working towards a more balanced, transit-friendly and equitable transportation system, supported by The Fund for New Jersey, is soliciting interested municipalities to promote TCD throughout New Jersey. An offer of support will be based on criteria highlighted below, including, but not limited to, local commitment to 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, 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, sprawling land use patterns require automobiles for mobility; as gasoline prices rise dramatically, auto dependence becomes too expensive for many families, and prevents communities from addressing climate change.

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 21st 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 promoting sustainable economic development.

Purpose

In order to support this movement, Tri-State Transportation Campaign, working with The Fund for New Jersey, intends to award grants to support activities that promote TCD. With a goal of expanding this TCD initiative over time, TSTC will initially offer:

- Competitive matching grants of up to \$20,000 for two to five 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 practitioners. The targeted populations for this grant are local governmental agencies (municipal, village or town governments). 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, charrette 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 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 grow in population, mixed-income housing 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;

- Demonstrated willingness to pursue Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) certification;
- Demonstrated willingness to support local culture and the arts;
- 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.

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 'visioning' 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 October 25, 2008.*

TSTC will review the LOIs and invite full proposals. *Full proposals must be received by December 23, 2008.* 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 no later than January 31, 2009.

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 rlynch@tstc.org. The proposal should be between four (4) and six (6) pages in length, excluding resumes and budget.

1. Contact information
 - Name, address and phone number of the applicant, including contact person, and name of the person(s) who prepared the proposal.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Approach and Schedule
 - Provide a description of the approach for performing the work and accomplishing project objectives. Provide detailed timeline for implementation.
 5. Governmental/Organizational background
 - Description of governmental/organizational mission and structure. Attach resumes for key personnel and list project responsibilities for each.
 6. 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.
 7. Detailed budget for proposed project

Key Dates and Timeline

RFP Release Date- September 25, 2008

Letter of Interest due- October 25, 2008

Full proposals due- December 23, 2008

Recommendation and designation- approximately one (1) month after proposal deadline

Grant disbursal- January 31, 2009.

Follow up and implementation- July 1, 2009

Project evaluation-Final report on how grants were used and any challenges faced – January 1, 2010

Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals

When evaluating proposals, TSTC insist that basic criteria are met to identify ideal transit-centered development projects. Proposals should:

- Request no more than \$20,000;
- Focus on communities that give preference to potential developers who look to incorporate mixed-income housing and sustainable design into proposed developments.
- Focus on places that regional transit agencies consider priorities for TCD;
- 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 involved 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), brownfield cleanup and multi-modal transportation systems, as part of the TCD planning process.

The *Fund for New Jersey* is a philanthropic organization dedicated to supporting projects that enhance education, advocacy, public policy analysis and community problem-solving for the citizens of New Jersey.

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 more information, please contact:

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