

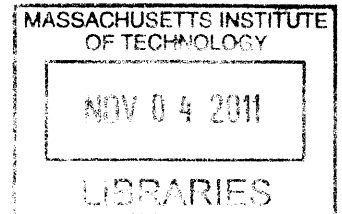
**A Policy Story of Continuity and Change:
Reflections on the Obama Administration's Metropolitan Agenda**

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Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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By Athena Jade Ullah

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Abstract

President Obama was sworn into office on January 20, 2009 and within the first month of his presidency, against a backdrop of staggering concerns about financial reform, energy efficiency, and the need to allocate \$787 billion dollars of stimulus funds, he began to focus the form and function of metropolitan America as an engine of sustainable economic growth. The early blueprint of this project took on modest proportions, reflecting both his professional beginnings as a community organizer in the south side of Chicago and contemporary planning debates of equitable sustainable development. The scope of this project morphed into a large-scale agenda on metropolitan development.

Over the past two years, the goals of the President's metropolitan agenda have held wide consensus within the federal government, which in turn has led to institutional changes in the grant-in-aid system. From the Congressional floor to foundations and prominent think tanks, the support it garnered collectively inspired several organizations to begin thinking across traditional divisions to find their role in sparking the engines of equitable and sustainable economic growth. Notably, The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) re-organized its entire strategic plan for FY2010-2015 along the lines of three core themes, namely economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability, and equity. Despite the widespread support behind the president's project and the timely response to concerns of the American people, it is not clear how distinct this agenda really was. This thesis is an exploration of policy history and transformation purposed to address the following question: where did the Obama Metropolitan Agenda come from and how is this effort different from past ones that aimed to achieve similar goals?

By understanding the evolution and comparative history of Obama's metropolitan agenda, I explore how the core concepts of comprehensive planning evolved into sustainability; this is accomplished through a policy analysis of the reference document, the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant (SCRPG) program, followed by a comparative historical analysis of federal policy and metropolitan planning from 1949-2010.

Thesis Supervisor: Langley Keyes
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Thesis Reader: Lawrence Susskind
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This thesis would not have been possible without the patience and guidance of my thesis adviser, Langley Keyes and reader, Larry Susskind. I am grateful for the experience at MIT-DUSP, PolicyLink and the unique chance to work through this thesis. Given my involvement in helping to implement a small aspect of the legislation discussed in this paper, I make no claim to complete scholarly detachment. This work evolved from a curiosity in equity and sustainability as well as from my own commitment to the social goals of the Sustainable Communities Initiative. But reflecting on my practice and trying to gain better a understanding on the policy issues in which I was enmeshed has given me an opportunity to explore analytically the legislative history of Obama's Metropolitan Agenda and how this history is intimately tied to the stories of the past and those I once heard about growth and opportunity from many of the Latina women I spent many days working alongside. I hope to explore these ideas beyond this document's last page and work to incorporate the input of low-income residents and people of color to shape the future investments and development of their regions.

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Preface

Questions regarding the distribution of power and resources were central to my own experience growing up in the East Los Angeles area and the countless hours I spent working alongside my mother as a domestic service worker. The contrast between my neighborhood and the opulence of those areas where we worked initially nurtured a political curiosity about race, regionalism, and environmental justice.

The commute to work was always a prolonged vehicular affair, rushing along the highway, witnessing in rapid flashes a widening wealth gap with every mile traveled west. The experience of working as a nanny in the wealthy neighborhoods of West Los Angeles allowed me not only to pay for college but also provided me with a perspective on the inequities in the region and gave me a background from which to imagine alternatives for the countless, mostly Latina women who represented the majority of the domestic service work force. The differences in access to resources, education, quality food, and healthcare were all too stark. In my own transition from a wide-eyed community college student to a budding explorer of theories of change at UC Berkeley to entering graduate school—my concern for these disparities still holds true.

PolicyLink is a national research and action institute based in Oakland, CA. Since 1999, the PolicyLink team has been committed to advancing federal and local policies that support economic and social equity by “lifting up what works”. To the organization, Lifting Up What Works is their way of focusing attention on how people are working successfully to use local, state, and federal policy to create conditions that benefit everyone, especially people in low-income communities and communities of color. Their practice and experience led them to partner with the Obama Administration’s Office of Urban Affairs and the Office of Housing and Urban Development to support policies that connect the work of people on the ground to the creation of sustainable communities of opportunity. In their ten years of practice, PolicyLink has stuck to the belief that those closest to the nation’s challenges are central to finding solutions. This belief guided the purpose of my summer work in late May 2010 where I served as a graduate intern for three months with their team of committed regional equity advocates. While on the team, I was given a unique opportunity to work on issues related to the types of regional disparities that parallel the concerns of regional inequity that I had come to understand

all too well.

My first week on the job was ripe with excitement and challenge. I found myself thrown into the middle of the President Obama's Metropolitan Agenda, one which had risen rapidly soon after his election and which, while not highly visible, was taken most seriously at the local level where I was working. The atmosphere in the office seemed to be buzzing in anticipation of the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant (SCRPG) Notice of Funding Announcement (NOFA). Three months beyond the scheduled release date, the 68-page SCRPG NOFA was made public on June 14, 2010. Everyone from potential applicants and equity advocates to the skeptical politicians were amazed with the NOFA's complexity and ever-expanding criteria, required outcomes, and goals. The NOFA expected all applicants to address—in 25 pages or less—topics and issues ranging from climate change to affordable housing plans, six principles of livability, and furthering HUD's new FY2010 strategic goals (knowledge sharing, capacity building, and expanding cross-cutting policy knowledge). My primary task was to break down the complexity of the SCRPG NOFA and HUD's Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 NOFA *Policy Requirements and General Section* for discretionary programs that entail a new set of policy priorities for the department.

To understand the context and material of the SCRPG NOFA, I attended local talks at UC Berkeley, met with other community organizations, set up a technical assistance portal for grant applicants and poured into the PolicyLink's reservoir of reports on a variety of topics that included everything from transportation equity to ways the grocery store gap could be closed. I was asked to offer an understanding of the requirements, interpretation of how equity could be implemented, and advice to prospective applicants by creating a step-by-step guide to the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant NOFA that spelled out threshold requirements, best practices from the field, and resources on planning regionally for sustainable development.

The assignment was complex, and simply digesting the policies and program outcomes was demanding. As many in the field struggled to make sense of the direction of the administration's new agenda, I heard from even more groups and community members who were struggling to respond to the whirlwind of the agenda's program demands, grants, and solicitations for public comment. By the end of the summer, one challenge remained

unanswered: so, what's next? How could a set of broad-reaching principles laid out by the agenda and followed by one grant program overcome traditional political challenges and broker coordination across agencies and jurisdictions and adopt a regional plan for sustainable development? Before this experience, I was able to envision alternatives for those lives deeply affected by inequitable distributions of wealth but lacked a clear understanding of how policy could evoke such a change while avoiding common pitfalls commonly linked to red-tape and silos. My time at PolicyLink plus my personal journey convinced me that I wanted to understand more about the evolution of Obama's Metropolitan Agenda.

INTRODUCTION: Obama's Metropolitan Project

President Obama was sworn into office on January 20, 2009 and within the first month of his presidency, against a backdrop of staggering concerns about financial reform, energy efficiency, and allocating \$787 billion dollars of stimulus funds; he began to focus on the role and function of Metropolitan America as an engine of sustainable economic growth. The early blueprint of this project took on modest proportions, reflecting both his professional beginnings as a community organizer in the south side of Chicago and contemporary planning debates of equitable sustainable development. The scope of this project morphed into a large-scale agenda on metropolitan development.

From 2009–2011, the Obama Administration supported a series of progressive legislative proposals aimed at reinvigorating America's Metropolitan communities along lines of sustainable development, cross-agency collaboration, and equitable engagement. This wide scale effort grew out of a search for ways to make Washington more efficient and effective partner to cities in need and in the process, attempted to re-frame how key players in metropolitan regions think about place, location, and collaborative planning. However, this quest for building collaborative mechanisms at the metropolitan scale for the sake of comprehensive planning or sustainable development is not new, rather it is rooted in a distinctive vein of American planning history that dates back to the early 1960s. This thesis is an exploration of policy history and transformation purposed to address the following question: where did the Obama Metropolitan Agenda come from and how is this effort different from past ones that aimed to achieve similar goals? My objective is to understand the origins of these concepts and the major pieces of legislation that emerged from the political and policy processes that led up to creation of the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant (SCRPG) program.

Over the two-year period the goals of the President's metropolitan agenda held wide consensus from within the federal government and allied public-private partnerships. From the Congressional floor to foundations and prominent think tanks, the support it garnered collectively inspired several organizations to begin thinking across traditional divisions to find their role in sparking the engines of equitable and sustainable economic growth. Notably, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) re-organized their entire strategic

plan for FY2010-2015 along themes that paralleled the president's agenda. In May 2010, the Ford Foundation launched a new \$200 million "Metropolitan Opportunity Initiative." Its director, George McCarthy, was tasked to helping achieve "equitable access to safe, affordable housing, efficient transportation, and good jobs"—elements the foundation sees as fundamental to "building prosperous metropolitan areas". The nation's oldest and most respected research institutes formed the "What Works Collaborative"—a partnership between Brookings Institution, Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies, New York University's Furman Center, and the Urban Institute's Center for Metropolitan Housing and Communities. Its powerhouse researchers—including Bruce Katz, Margery Turner, and Vicki Been—pledged that together they would build knowledge and share solutions with policy makers at HUD and other federal agencies to inform the implementation of an Obama's urban policy agenda. The supportive alliance all led up to a burst of legislative and administrative productivity. The first two years of the Obama presidency will be a period that will be poured over by historians for years, as it was the first administration since the Johnson Administration to carefully articulate a set of principles for federal policy and metropolitan affairs.

Reflecting on the evolution, framework, and historical precedent to Obama's agenda will offer lessons to the challenges that lay ahead and how Metropolitan development can be repurposed to meet the needs of current social and political realities. To test whether this agenda can provide solutions to the problems of today, it is important to first explore the historical viability of the concepts evoked. Today, the Obama administration has called for regional planning for building sustainable communities, which is akin to comprehensive planning for metropolitan development that defined much of the 1960s. This historical comparison can offer evidence on the extent to which these the concepts evoked can cope with the current realities of lop-sided growth that has, for too long, produced an inequitable distribution of opportunity. The following three sections provide a framework of how Obama's metropolitan project evolved into an agenda that parallels the "Great Society" legislation of the 1960s.

Thesis Organization

This thesis is organized in four major parts:

Part One | The Origins and Components of the Metropolitan Agenda

Part One begins with how the Obama administration deployed the two most powerful methods at its disposal: direct executive action and support for specific legislation to cement an urban policy framework. This analysis will investigate the underlying assumptions, objectives, and strategies that went into a “legislative funnel” that led up to the creation of one policy outcome, the Livable Communities Act.

Part Two | The Outcome to Obama’s Metropolitan Agenda

Part Two explains the goals and mechanics of the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant—a program seen as exemplifying the Obama’s Metropolitan Agenda and the Office of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) associated commitment to place-based policy reform. Although not officially adopted, the proposed Livable Communities Act of 2010 had presented this grant program to Congress, but was later adopted and administered by HUD.

Part Three | Comparing the Outcome to Past History

Part Three looks at three central themes of the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant program—sustainable communities free from discrimination, silo-busting collaboration, and equitable citizen engagement—and explores the ways in which they are similar and dissimilar to previous federal initiatives focused on issues of intergovernmental coordination, comprehensive planning, and citizen participation. This chapter seeks to answer the following question: How and when do the pieces build up that result in the term “Sustainable Communities” become the umbrella under which substantive elements of a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD) reside?

Part Four | Conclusions

Part Four provides a summary of major findings from the analysis and presents implications for future metropolitan and urban policy frameworks.

Part One | The Origins and Components of the Metropolitan Agenda

Throughout his campaign and early days as president, Barack Obama made a repeated declaration that his greatest education was on Chicago's South Side, working at the local level to bring change within communities. His messaging garnered attention from journalists and academics, who noted that he would run the nation's first "Metro Presidency." Bruce Katz, vice president and founding director of the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institute writes about how, Obama's professional coming of age as a community organizer marked him as a rare national politician with an "intimate awareness that the greatest challenges, changes, and opportunities exist not just in our cities, but expand into suburban, rural, and exurban communities" (Katz, 2010). This branding of Obama's campaign platform was timely. Metropolitan areas emerged as the places hardest hit by the foreclosure crisis. As the recession peaked, frustrated Americans and their local officials were beginning to demand that the White House become a reliable resource for solutions.

In addition to the financial crisis, Obama inherited a federal system that was replete with legacy programs, lacking in capacity, and without any coherent federalist philosophy (Katz, 2010). At the end of President Bush's eight-year tenure in 2008, these realities, filled with disillusionment and cynicism, came front and center. The decade between 1998 and 2008 had been marked by atrocious deficits, and the chronic failure to confront difficult decisions regarding our economic and social welfare systems—two factors that put the American economy on an unsustainable course. Trillions of dollars in household wealth disappeared, and with over 8 million jobs cut, the income gap between rich and poor widened significantly. The foreclosure crisis and its resulting skew in the distribution of resources revealed the need to monitor the effects of economic growth and determine who reaps its benefit.

How did Obama's "metro" platform translate into executive action and congressional attention once he was elected? How did he garner the appropriate consensus? Obama crafted a Metropolitan Agenda by opening up the political process to include a wide range of interest groups. As a result, his urban policy priorities contained an impressive set of themes and recommendations. Of the elements integrated into the president's vision, I argue that those that are essential include the following: sustainability, cross-agency collaboration, and equitable citizen engagement. Despite various messaging by the Obama administration, these

three themes gained good currency in their urban policy proposals that were all aimed toward building more inclusive sustainable communities. Subsequently, these three themes motivated the formation of the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant (SCRPG) program—a key piece of legislation that defined the Obama administration’s Metropolitan Agenda.

This chapter describes the evolution of the federal government’s government urban policy priorities under the Obama administration, which resulted in the focus of the SCRPG program.

Toward a “Metro” Presidency

A Call for a National Mayor

*“Washington has lost its values, lost its principles, lost its sense of purpose.
It no longer invests in our cities. It no longer invests in our people
...Plain and simple, Washington has abandoned us”*

-Miami Mayor Manny Diaz,
66th President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM)¹

On May 19, 2008, five months before the election that would put Obama in the White House, the nation’s most prominent mayors jointly released a statement urging the next presidential administration to “invest in solutions to the growing problems that threaten America’s cities and metropolitan areas” (USCM, 2008). The impetus and urgency of the mayors’ statement came from a concern that the incoming administration would first continue to neglect urban issues as an important federal policy priority and second, overlook their need for a federal partner in the White House. From Los Angeles to Boston, mayors pointed out that the “economic crisis could have been avoided if Washington listened to their cries for help.” (Diaz, 2008) For the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM), cities are not the problem, but the solution. “As Washington sleeps, mayors are working 24/7 to keep this country going” (Diaz, 2008) —i.e., cities run the national economy and thus, failure to invest in America’s cities is a failure to invest in America’s people, and ultimately, a failure to invest in America’s future. The coalition, called for more than just a new presidency for the United States, but for a National Mayor who understood that local problems are inherently national problems.

¹ National Press Club, Urban Issues Speech, August 4, 2008.

To ensure that their voices would be understood by the presidential candidates and Congress, the U.S. Conference of Mayors launched, the “Mayors ’08 Action Forum” to discuss five priorities for the new administration (urban poverty, crime, infrastructure, arts and tourism, and the environment). The forum visited five cities² in sixty days and within the five priorities, revealed some of the following concerns: the foreclosure crisis, global warming, violent crimes, high school dropout rates and public education, ex-offender re-entry, and the effects of the upcoming 2010 Census. After the tour, the USCM put together reports for each of the five topics discussed.

The concerns that the forum revealed became the basis for a national urban agenda that the conference urged the incoming administration to enact within the first 100 days of taking office. The mayoral coalition backed their concerns and recommendations by presenting an additional series of reports collectively entitled, the “Metro Economies Index.” These reports revealed that roughly 85% of people in the United States live in cities and metros, accounting for 89.9%, or \$12.4 trillion, of the nation’s gross domestic product; 90.1% of wage income (\$5.7 trillion); and 85.9% (\$117.9 million) of the nation’s jobs in 2007. In summary, the nation’s primary economic engine is a metropolitan region.

The USCM presented their findings to both the 2008 Democratic and Republican National Convention—one recommendation remained consistent. A national metropolitan agenda was needed that partnered the nation’s mayors to the White House. A month later in Miami, Florida, presidential candidate, Senator Barack Obama presented a response to the mayors’ concerns by unveiling his “A Metropolitan Strategy for America’s Future” at the 76th Annual United States Conference of Mayors.³ All of the major presidential candidates were invited to speak at the conference but Senator Obama provided the only direct response to the mayors’ joint statement. Obama commented that if elected, the nation’s mayors would have “[for the first time in years] a partner in the White House; who knows that the old ways of looking at our cities just won’t do; who knows that our nation and our cities are undergoing a

² The forum was hosted by the following mayors: Mayor Michael Nutter, Philadelphia, PA; Mayor Michael Bloomberg, New York, NY; Mayor Antonia Villaraigosa, Los Angeles, CA; Mayor Manuel Diaz, Palm Beach and Miami, FL.

³ Held on June 21, 2008 in Miami Florida—this was the USCM’s first “green” conference.

historic transformation” (Obama, 2008) and that the solution entails seeing urban issues as inherently metropolitan issues. At the end of the conference, it was clear that Obama was the first to recognize that the “urban issues” the mayors discussed are inherently about cities and how each is interlinked and a part of a larger economic system. From this premise, Obama called for not an urban agenda but one focused on the metropolitan area as it encompasses the inner city, suburbs, and rural areas.

This acknowledgment was conveyed as the Senator began his conference speech with a personal appeal to his own understanding of the hardships local governments face. He recounted, that his experience of working at the local level taught him a “fundamental truth that in this country, change comes not from the top-down, but from the bottom-up” (Obama, 2008a) and with these lessons, the Senator moved on to acknowledge that “the change that’s taking place today is as great as any we’ve seen in more than a century, since the time when cities grew upward and outward with immigrants escaping poverty, and tyranny, and misery abroad. Our population has grown by tens of millions in the past few decades, and it’s projected to grow nearly 50% more in the decades to come. And this growth isn’t just confined to our cities, it’s happening in our suburbs, exurbs, and throughout our metropolitan areas” (CSPAN, Obama USCM opening speech, 2008).

He continued to build off of major findings from the USCM *Metro Economics Index* to report that “it’s not just our cities that are hotbeds of innovation anymore, it’s those growing metro areas. It’s not just Palo Alto, it’s cities up and down Silicon Valley” (Obama, 2008a). Other facts presented include that the top 100 metro areas generate two-thirds of the nation’s jobs, nearly 80% of patents, and handle 75% of all seaport tonnage. Obama called for the recognition of “the new metropolitan reality”—i.e., it is no longer just the big cities of the last century that drive economic growth, but rather new centers such as Charlotte, Atlanta, Austin, and Denver have emerged as significant contributors. In sum, Obama stressed that the entire metropolitan area needs to be considered in the definition of the “city.” In this sense, Obama was the first in recent presidential administrations to posit a new way of thinking about the “traditional city.” As his agenda evolved, this premise remained central to formulating a new urban policy framework.

To build upon the “new metropolitan reality” and expand policy that nurtures these new

centers of economic growth, Senator Obama argued “we need to promote strong cities as the backbone of regional growth. Yet, in his view Washington remains trapped in an earlier era, wedded to an outdated “urban” agenda that focuses exclusively on the problems in our cities, and ignores our growing metro areas; an agenda that confuses anti-poverty policy with a metropolitan strategy, and ends up hurting both” (Obama, 2008a). While he does not explain which policies are outmoded, he closed his speech with the image of the “new metropolitan reality” [or in my opinion an ideal] that “strong cities are the building blocks of strong regions, and strong regions are essential for a strong America” (Obama, 2008a). In essence, the Senator vocalized a discovery of the “metro problem.” To achieve this new ideal of resilient regions, the then Senator Obama assured the conference audience that, if elected, he would not only collaborate with cities on the ground but also “appoint the first White House Director of Urban Policy to help make it a reality” (Obama, 2008a). However, there was activity brewing elsewhere in Washington that focused on aspects of the metropolitan challenge.

While city mayors and presidential candidate Barack Obama were debating the role the White House would play in response to the foreclosure crisis, the U.S. House Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies began to think further afield. Chairman of the Subcommittee, John Olver took on the twin challenge of coordinating housing and transportation investments and energy efficiency so that future federal allocations would better serve and protect communities⁴. During the congressional hearings for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Pub. L. 110-161) the chairman requested the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to produce a joint report [to] develop a best practices manual on new ways FTA and HUD can better coordinate transportation and housing programs to promote affordable housing near transit.⁵ The chairman’s request was based on the rationale that better planning and coordination on the federal, state, and local levels can ensure that affordable housing is located closer to public transportation and employment

⁴ House Report 110-238 to the “Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2008,” July 18, 2007.

⁵ Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008, Publ. L. 110-161, Joint Explanatory Statement, December 26, 2007.

centers⁶. The Chairman on behalf of the entire subcommittee stated that “transportation, housing, and energy can no longer be viewed as completely separate spheres with little or no coordination throughout the different levels of government [and] the preservation of affordable housing must become an integral part of transit-oriented development policies” (U.S. DOT and HUD, 2008). Now housing and transportation were being linked in the dialogue of the emerging community of actors focused on the “metropolitan problem.”

On September 9, 2008 then HUD Secretary Steve Preston and FTA Administrator James Simpson released their response to the subcommittee’s directive in a report of proposed actions entitled, *Better Coordination of Transportation and Affordable Housing Programs to Promote Housing Near Transit*. The manual outlined strategies to coordinate housing and transportation planning and investment decision-making over three years (FY 2008–FY 2010). The report was written to both to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations and stressed the need for FTA/HUD working groups and joint regional/metropolitan planning. Specifically, the report called for improved coordination of housing and transportation planning through HUD’s Consolidated Plan and DOT’s Transportation Planning requirements [e.g. DOT’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP); a Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan and four-year Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)]. Since both HUD and FTA require local communities to prepare long- and short-range plans as a requirement to receive Federal housing and transportation funds, it was the obvious starting point to stimulate comprehensive and regional planning at the local level. During the final years of the Bush administration, little amounted from the congressional initiative and corresponding report. However, it would become a crucial aspect to the adoption and implementation of Obama’s Metropolitan Agenda.

⁶ Congressman noted that his rationale came from a June 2003 roundtable hosted by the National Academy of Sciences. It had focused on possible data sharing and development of geographical information systems (GIS) by HUD and the FTA. Following the roundtable, HUD and FTA entered into a June 2005 Interagency Agreement (IAA) to help communities realize the potential demand for transit-oriented housing. The IAA was aimed at closing the gap between the projected demand for housing near transit in particular metropolitan regions, and realizing the development of that housing in proximity to new or existing transit corridors in these regions. Since 2003 little policy that coordinated the two agencies had evolved. However, the IAA provided support for a study completed in April 2007 entitled *Realizing the Potential: Expanding Housing Opportunities Near Transit* - conducted by Reconnecting America’s Center for Transit Oriented Development.

An “Urban” Executive Order

Before Obama took office, he vowed that his administration would do more than just help individual cities weather the deep and destructive recession, but also would work collaboratively to figure out ways to “rebuild these areas on a firmer, stronger foundation for the future. Inherent to this strategy was the recognition of the decentralization of the population and employment, and the suburbanization of poverty and immigration” (Obama, 2008a).

On January 20, 2009, Barack Obama was inaugurated as the 44th President of the United States and within a month of his presidency, he gained Congressional approval⁷ to sign the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 into a law (Pub.L.111-5). The act commonly referred to as the “stimulus bill” allocated \$787 billion dollars in aid for three immediate goals: (1) Create new jobs and save existing ones; (2) Spur economic activity and invest in long-term growth; and (3) Foster unprecedented levels of accountability and transparency in government spending. (Recovery Act, 2009)

On February 19, 2009, just two days after the Stimulus Bill was passed into law, Obama signed Executive Order (EO) 13503 (the Urban Executive Order) establishing the first White House Office of Urban Affairs to take a coordinated and comprehensive approach to developing and implementing an effective strategy concerning urban America (The White House, 2009a). The order signaled an important first step in making his *Metropolitan Strategy for America’s Future*, which was first presented to the USCM into a federal agenda (The White House, 2009a).

The signing of the executive order was a direct follow-through from the promises Obama had made during his campaign speech at the USCM convening in May of 2008. During that speech, Obama had vowed that if he was elected, the city mayors across the country would have a “partner in the White House.” That partner was established, when Obama appointed Adolfo Carrión, Jr. to lead the newly created Office of Urban Affairs. (The White House, 2009b) Carrión immediately accepted the appointment, bringing his six-year term as

⁷ On January 28, 2009, the House passed the bill by a 244-188 vote. The Senate voted, 61-36 (with 2 not voting) on February 9 to end debate on the bill and advance it to the Senate floor to vote on the bill itself. On February 10, the Senate voted 61-37.

Borough President of the Bronx to an end. The swiftness with which the executive order and subsequent appointment were completed cemented the perception that the Obama administration was indeed one that took cities and metropolitan issues seriously in the eyes of many proponents. Most importantly, it underscored the makings of a new urban agenda and the need to overhaul policies that affect metropolitan areas (Katz, 2010).

The policy statement accompanying the urban executive order indicated that in the past, insufficient attention had been paid to the problems faced by urban areas and to coordinating the many Federal programs that affect our cities. The wording not only hinted at the Bush administration's failures and misplaced priorities, but also presented the strategy as a new approach rooted in the realities that face cities and regions today. The Obama administration saw itself caught in a new reality that was explicitly dual. On the one hand, the pressing issues of the Great Recession warranted immediate relief to which the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act was allocated to provide economic and employment growth. And on the other hand, creating a new federal framework to resolve the institutional and regulatory failures of the Bush Administration and of the past five decades of federal urban policy. To re-direct the course of federal policy, the President unveiled his FY 2010 Budget—*A New Era of Responsibility: Renewing America's Promise*⁸ just a few days after the White House Office of Urban Affairs was established. While the budget set a hearty list of priorities ranging from economic growth to health care, the document's opening section entitled, "Inheriting a Legacy of Misplaced Priorities," pointed directly to the magnitude of problems that had unfolded after decades of neglect.

The Budget had two central themes: (1) Change of the way Washington does business; and (2) Create an ethical and transparent government to improve oversight. The argument in support of these themes was built off an illustration of where the components of the failed regulatory and governance system were still in existence and illustrated their effects through a sequence of snapshot statistics. The "legacy" that Obama discusses was explained to have been drawn out in several ways that include these factors: (1) the balkanized organization of congressional committees and process, (2) the compartmentalized nature of the administrative state, (3) the prevailing dominance of corporate interests in metro areas, and (4) the erosion of

⁸ Released on February 26, 2009.

trust and accountability from within the federal government.

These issues all comprise the bulk of the challenges that face the Obama Administration but also reflect deeper problems of federal engagement in American civic life. The message relayed by the budget furthered the federal government's commitment to interagency coordination and transparency—themes also inherent in the directives of the White House Office of Urban Affairs. Simply, the President's message and backing from Peter Orszag, Director of the Office of Management and Budget stressed that collaboration is the fundamental precondition to enabling an effective metropolitan strategy. If followed, the collaboration across agencies and engaging in multi-level regional planning are strategies the administration contends will aid in creating inclusive sustainable communities.

White House Office of Urban Affairs: Context and Structure

The President's Urban Executive Order called for a more comprehensive approach aimed both to develop an effective strategy for urban America and to coordinate the actions of the many executive departments and agencies whose actions impact urban life. Under Section 3 of the Executive Order, the Office's principal functions are: (a) to provide leadership and coordinate the development of the policy agenda for urban America across executive departments and agencies; (b) to coordinate all aspects of urban policy; (c) to work with executive departments and agencies to ensure that appropriate consideration is given by such departments and agencies to the potential impact of their actions on urban areas; (d) to work with executive departments and agencies, including the Office of Management and Budget, to ensure that Federal Government dollars targeted to urban areas are effectively spent on the highest-impact programs; and (e) to engage in outreach and work closely with state and local officials, with nonprofit organizations, and with the private sector, both in seeking input regarding the development of a comprehensive urban policy and in ensuring that the implementation of Federal programs advances the objectives of that policy (The White House, 2009a).

In particular, the President directed the Office to "work closely with all relevant executive departments and agencies, and offices and councils within the Executive Office of the President, including but not limited to:"

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| (a) Department of the Treasury; | Development; |
| (b) Department of Justice; | (g) Department of Transportation; |
| (c) Department of Commerce; | (h) Department of Energy; |
| (d) Department of Labor; | (i) Department of Education; and |
| (e) Department of Health and Human Services; | (j) Environmental Protection Agency. |
| (f) Department of Housing and Urban | (The White House, 2009). |

On the outset, it is evident that this executive order summoned a massive initiative. To begin fulfilling functions a-e of Section 3 of the Executive Order, Adolfo Carrión, Jr. and Derek Douglas⁹, Special Assistant to the President for Urban Affairs, the only staff at that time, were instructed to report and collaborate with Valerie Jarrett¹⁰, Senior Advisor and Assistant to the President (who also oversees the Offices of Public Engagement and Intergovernmental Affairs) and Melody Barnes, Director of the Domestic Policy Council (DPC).¹¹ Shortly after the office was established, the urban affairs team reported that they would tackle the spectrum of issues relating to “human geography”—from the problem of truancy among homeless youth to urban air quality and public health. “We’re looking at a results-driven and data-driven approach,” said Douglas. “It doesn’t make sense if you’re doing transportation policy in a separate department from housing policy, because where you do the transit lines, for example, you need to make sure that there’s housing that has access to the transportation, and when you do the housing you need to make sure it’s affordable housing, so that you don’t have these pockets of concentrated poverty.”

⁹ Former special advisor to New York Governor Patterson but was appointed to the Domestic Policy Council (DPC).

¹⁰ Prior to her position as senior advisor, Jarrett was the co-chairperson for the Obama-Biden Transition Project, a transition team convened during the height of the campaign, well before the outcome could be known, to begin making preparations for a potential administration. Melody Barnes was also a member of the transition team.

¹¹ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary. "Establishment of the White House Office of Urban Affairs". Press release. Retrieved 5-30-2010. The DPC was established on August 16, 1993 by Executive Order 12859 – purposed to be the principal forum used by the President of the United States for considering domestic policy matters, excluding economic matters which are the handled by the National Economic Council.

But underlying the executive order, and subsequent agency directives, was recognition that state and local governments are important to the creation and implementation of national policy. Furthermore, the President's actions were publicized widely as a diplomatic victory, sending a message to America's citizens and elected officials that they now have a government that works effectively for them and with them and cares about the issues that affect them in their everyday lives. Most importantly, the Office of Urban Affairs together with the Stimulus Bill were indications that the Obama Administration was following through with candidate Obama's campaign pledge to "stop seeing cities as the problem and start seeing them as a solution" (Olopade, 2009).

When the White House Office of Urban Affairs was officially formed, urbanists rejoiced: "It's past time," said Elnora Watson, president of the Urban League in Jersey City, N.J., as she walked the halls of Congress. "Way past time," added Ella Teal, another Urban League president from the neighboring city of Elizabeth. "Cities will lead America," Newark Mayor Cory Booker said at an April speech on city government in Washington. "When it comes to industry, innovation, education and the arts ... cities are where it's at."¹² The appointments of Adolfo Carrión and Valerie Jarrett certainly marked this change, but by April 2009 popular media began to doubt the potential effect of the President's new office, questioning how it's "skeletal staff" could influence urban policy with relatively weak regulatory authority.

Another source of doubt, some suspect, was attributed to the experience level of Adolfo Carrión—who was still essentially a local politician, now tasked with a massive nationwide renovation of all agencies that affect urban policy. "[He] doesn't have a lot of experience in dealing with federal policy," says Lind. "How could you give somebody like Adolfo Carrión control over, say the transportation laws in Milwaukee? It's a hard leap to make" (Olopade, 2009) Despite the campaign funding allegations (the White House declined to comment on the controversy, and requests to interview Carrión on these allegations were denied), Carrión beat out other, higher-profile officials whose names were floated for the position, including Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin; L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa; and Brookings Institution scholar Bruce Katz, who is now working as a senior adviser to HUD.

¹² Quoted from *the Root*, staff writer, Dayo Olopade.

Dayo Olopade, staff writer for *The ROOT* states, that “picking a ‘celebrity’ to run the office might have inspired more confidence that it will make a difference to urban America” (Olopade, 2009). While it is important to provide a readily accessible method of direct communication for local officials to discuss and raise awareness of local concerns, it was not clear how this office would incorporate feedback to help guide policies enacted by the order’s partnered agencies listed above.

However, there were others with a more positive response. Prominent urban scholar, Margery Turner wrote contemporaneously that the White House Office of Urban Affairs, “can be the ‘bully pulpit’ for the significance of urban regions, its staff can listen and learn from city and metropolitan leaders about what they’re doing, what seems to be working, and what they need from federal agencies.” Furthermore, she wrote, “Effective White House leadership can produce and support Cabinet Secretaries to overcome interdepartmental coordination challenges and craft joint initiatives” (Turner, 2010).

Despite the journalistic concern that the White House Office of Urban Affairs could become a meaningless figurehead, other key events (campaign speeches, nominations, the president’s budget, and congressional actions) also occurred, which suggested the thematic direction and deliberateness of Obama’s Metropolitan Agenda and provided a solid institutional base for his recommendations. For example, the presidential nominations of Shaun Donovan, Lisa P. Jackson, and Ray LaHood to Obama’s cabinet,¹³ respectively, for the Office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Department of Transportation (DOT), signaled that a deep level of competence was being interjected into those agencies, which were key for any serious analysis of urban or metropolitan policy.

Together Donovan, LaHood, and Jackson coordinated their efforts to implement Obama’s agenda. The ideas each brought to their posts strengthened the theme of Obama’s

¹³

http://change.gov/newsroom/entry/secretary_of_housing_and_urban_development_announced_in_weekly_address/; Retrieved: June 5, 2011

Kate Philips, “More Obama Cabinet Nominees Confirms”

<http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/01/22/more-obama-cabinet-nominees-confirmed/>

Metropolitan Agenda and gave the White House of Urban Affairs impetus to engage with cities across the nation.

To understand how the federal metropolitan approach moved from rhetoric within an executive order and a new Cabinet line-up to funded legislative action requires examining the pieces that came together to formulate the thematic direction and legislative strategy. The next section will distill the main themes, philosophy, and recommendations of the Obama Administration's Metropolitan Agenda. It examines how the partnership among HUD, EPA, and DOT created the Sustainable Communities Initiative, carving out new roles for each agency involved. It analyzes Obama's first and only public attempt to implement his urban agenda through a comprehensive interagency review.

The Federal "Metropolitan" Approach

Margery Turner of the Urban Institute wrote, "three big themes intimately interconnected, animate the [Obama] Administration's urban policy framework that culminated in the president's metropolitan agenda: *economic competitiveness, equity of opportunity, and environmental sustainability.*" In the three "E's", Turner highlights what the administration had already emphasized: policy themes that are "place conscious – recognizing that location matters economically, socially, and environmentally and that urban places need serious attention and investment. But they are also people oriented, recognizing that the well being of places is ultimately a function of the resources, opportunities, and actions of the families and firms that live and work within them" (Turner, 2010). People and place-based policies¹⁴ joined the "big themes" to encompass a broad strategy to which the administration, effectively called for greater interagency collaboration to fully develop these policy priorities. Since HUD had historically played a strong role in advocating for interagency collaboration since the late 1950s, the agency became the obvious and appropriate venue to bring all these elements together.

Shaun Donovan's approval as HUD secretary by unanimous consent in the Senate gave a signal that the metropolitan agenda would be taken seriously. Congressional Democrats,

¹⁴ Place and people based policy would later be grouped together and renamed as "performance based" policies.

former HUD Secretary Steven Preston under the Bush administration, and numerous affordable housing advocates lauded his appointment. The President remarked, “HUD’s role has never been more important. Since its founding HUD has been dedicated to tearing down barriers in access to affordable housing in an effort to make America more equal and more just.” “That is why we cannot keep doing things the old Washington way ... we need to approach the old challenge of affordable housing with new energy, new ideas, and a new, efficient style of leadership.” (Obama, 2008b) Shaun will bring to this “important post fresh thinking, unencumbered by old ideology and outdated ideas” (Obama, 2008b). It was clear, that Donovan had been designated as the central player in not only the metropolitan agenda but also in alleviating the foreclosure crisis. The President’s remarks for Donovan’s nomination were indicative of the Obama’s administration’s emphasis on a new direction and leadership that was to replace the old ways.

To ensure that families would be protected in the future, Donovan quickly began crafting a Strategic Plan for HUD based on the “new” Washington way—one marked by creating “strong, inclusive communities and quality, affordable homes for all.”¹⁵ Donovan, noting that ensuring access to affordable housing “can only be achieved in context of the housing, transportation, and energy costs and choices that American families experience each day” (USDOT, 2009a), immediately took his vision to Congress, specifically to Congressman John Olver (D-MA), ranking member of the U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation and Housing and Urban Development (THUD) and Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs¹⁶. On March 18, 2009 Donovan, accompanied by LaHood, participated in a two-part hearing held by Olver and Tom Latham, chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee. During the hearing Donovan presented his plan, entitled *Livable Communities, Transit Oriented Development, and Incorporating Green Building Practices into Federal Housing and Transportation Policy*. Within this plan, Donovan and LaHood unveiled their interagency partnership and that together they would establish a Sustainable Communities Initiative to address the critical issues that their departments jointly face. Most importantly, he began by redefining the housing-transportation dilemma, which both secretaries saw as having

¹⁵ Policy Requirements and General Section to HUD’s FY2010-2015 NOFAs for Discretionary Programs. (Docket No. FR-5415-N-01) See Appendix A.

¹⁶ Held position from January 4, 2007-January 3, 2011.

destructive effects that extend to metropolitan regions—“the engines of America’s growth.” Thus, coordination and collaboration was the preferred approach to enabling equitable development.

Defining the Metropolitan Problem: The Housing-Transportation Nexus

The partnership between Donovan and LaHood was formed by a central concern that homeowners and renters have been forced into trading relatively high housing costs for high transportation costs in their search of affordable housing. This concern hinders economic growth, reduces access to opportunity (employment, healthcare, green space, education), and depletes energy and environmental resources. At the March 19th hearing, Donovan stated, “affordable housing was only affordable when gas prices were low and the broader economy was strong” (Donovan, 2009). To illustrate the pressing connections between housing and transportation, Donovan’s written testimony highlighted that the average American household now spends 34 percent of its annual budget on housing and 18 percent on transportation—the combined total of 52 percent of their budgets wrapped up in these two largest expenses. For low-income working families, the impact is more serious, with transportation representing almost a third of their costs. For these families, the expense of transportation poses a particular burden, inhibiting wealth creation, hindering home ownership, and pushing family budgets closer to the brink. According to LaHood, the recent housing downturn has shown that auto-dependent houses are more vulnerable to price devaluation, as homes in distant neighborhoods declined in value more than regional averages, while some centrally-located homes held or increased their value. For lower-income households who hold much of their savings in their home equity, these declines can seriously undermine or eliminate their tenuous financial security. While housing costs in distant suburban locations may be lower, transportation costs are higher, and the combination of housing and transportation costs now averages 57 percent of income for working families in metropolitan areas.

The two secretaries began to build a comprehensive narrative focused on the “mismatch” of jobs and housing. For many in Washington this was old news. But the fact that the two secretaries were describing it in such impassioned terms gave hope that the issues would be seriously addressed.

The secretaries' argument went as follows: As decentralization and its accompanying sprawl have increased, the spatial mismatch between the location of affordable housing and employment and educational opportunities in metropolitan areas has worsened, hurting metropolitan economies. Fewer low-wage families can find housing near their work, as affordable housing remains disproportionately located in urban and older suburban areas. And businesses located in those areas must find workers who can commute, thus incurring higher transportation and energy costs. As the USCM and the President had previously mentioned, Donovan and LaHood supported the idea that metropolitan regions are the "engines of America's growth." All eyes were now turning to those metropolitan regions and how their future was determined by a focus on the three "E's"—economic development, environment, and equity—that called for people and place-based policies and greater interagency collaboration.

The Critique of Federal "Metropolitan" Engagement

In the March 2009 hearing, Donovan and LaHood pointed to three distinct defects in past federal policies that developed the groundwork for the "new" Washington way. The first stressed that transportation costs now approach or exceed those of housing for many working families, yet federal definitions of housing affordability fail to recognize their interdependence. Donovan encouraged the house subcommittee that a housing and transportation affordability index was critical. As the foreclosure crisis demonstrated, there was a need to make transparent the costs of living in a given location, and inform consumers and businesses about their choices. The goal of the index would help families make intelligent decisions about how to combine transportation and housing choices to lower their cost burdens.

The second focused on the neglect of any type of expansive federal review of programs to ascertain how to support the marriage of housing and transportation, and to emphasize the three major themes of the President's metro agenda—economic competitiveness, equity of opportunity, and sustainability. Without a rigorous review that determines how federal agencies can orient their work in support of integrated planning, the status quo would continue to fester. As the President's agenda evolved, coordinated housing and transportation policy became the primary avenue to advance the president's major themes listed above. In short, the three E's advanced to become more focused on coordination across federal agencies.

Finally, Donovan and LaHood presented the need to establish a jointly administered research and evaluation effort that will “aggressively” engage joint data development, information platforms, analytic tools, and research to better track housing and transportation expenditures by location. This type of effort had not been done in the past and would work to establish standardized and effective performance measures; engage in rigorous analysis of the transit-oriented development projects already in existence, to identify best practices; and evaluate “location efficient and energy efficient mortgages.”¹⁷ The secretary continued to stress that data collection, knowledge sharing, capacity building, research, and evaluation will not just serve federal programs, but will be shared to move information into the marketplace and inform private investment decisions. However, both secretaries saw the need to include the EPA within the partnership to strengthen the environmental sustainability component of their proposed plan. Coordination now required the third “E”—environment.

HUD’S New Strategic Plan Fiscal Year (FY) 2010-2015

Casting a critical eye on those who had gone before

Following suit with the administration’s need to distinguish itself from the past, HUD’s new strategic plan argued that all of its past policies had a “one size fits all” approach to governing when it came to issues of poverty alleviation, affordable housing policies, and transit investments where decisions are often made in silos and through a top-down hierarchy that neglects to leverage local partnerships. Political power imbalances, centralized controls, and ubiquitous rules dominate the status quo in many areas of local and federal government. According to HUD’s Plan, this outlook has affected program evaluation at every level. Typically, the agency has measured its performance less by results than by dollars spent and adherence to rules. Furthermore, the quality of programs tended to be defined more by its compliance structure and less on whether or not communities were satisfied. Thus, the department in addition to advancing ideas for place- and people-based metrics (referred to as “performance-

¹⁷ FHA’s Energy Efficient Mortgage program (EEM) helps homebuyers or homeowners save money on utility bills by enabling them to finance the cost of adding energy efficiency features to new or existing housing as part of their FHA insured home purchase or refinancing mortgage.

based” evaluation in the strategic plan), requested the following three components of all applicants seeking to receive funds from the SCRPG program:

- I. Engage residents and stakeholders early, substantively, and meaningfully in the decision-making process, the development of a shared vision, and in program implementation throughout; also include communities that have been traditionally marginalized from the planning process, while accommodating limited English speakers, persons with disabilities, and the elderly.
- II. Utilize geo-coded data sets and other metrics in developing, implementing, monitoring, and assessing the performance goals of various reinvestment scenarios.
- III. Show how the proposed plan will establish consistency with HUD, DOT, and EPA policies.

(HUD Docket No. FR-5396-N-03, 2010)

Deciding On a Solution

Infrastructure and transportation

Both HUD and DOT recognized the need to build on the inherent value of the existing infrastructure. Thus, investing in transportation and infrastructure grew to be their solution to strengthening the (metropolitan) growth engines and to mitigating the spatial mismatch between housing and transportation. Donovan remarked, “careful data collection in the cities and suburbs has demonstrated that the cost savings associated with living near transit are significant” (Donovan, 2009). He moved forward with this plan by presenting the results from a study of four neighborhoods in Minneapolis-St Paul that found that the combined costs of transportation and housing are most affordable in areas best-served by public transit. The study entitled, “The Center for Transit Oriented Development and Center for Neighborhood Technology”, found that “the average two-person household spent 40% of its income on housing and transportation, while a similar household in a centrally-located neighborhood with access to mass transit only spent 34% of their income on the same costs. This difference resulted in a savings of \$3,000 annually” (Donovan, 2009) This kind of potential savings became a focus of their partnership.

Coordinating an Interagency Partnership

Donovan and LaHood laid out the following plan for an interagency partnership: HUD and DOT would jointly administer a fund to encourage metropolitan regions, via competition, to develop integrated housing, land use, and transportation plans—and to use those integrated plans to drive the planning and decision-making of localities, which will help reduce traffic congestion and increase transportation mobility. For Donovan, the “goal of this initiative is not just to develop plans—it is to set a vision for growth that is tailored to discrete metropolitan markets, and then apply federal housing, transportation, and other investments in an integrated manner that supports that broader vision” (Donovan, 2009). His testimony continued, revealing a series of statistics and reports to illustrate the complexity and interconnectedness of metropolitan America. For example, estimates from the 2007 American Housing Survey show that nearly 50 percent of people who live in rural places live within the boundaries of metropolitan statistical areas. The two secretaries stressed that these trends require a level of integrated planning that spans jurisdictional boundaries. Funding to these metropolitan regions would be used to support the development of integrated, regional development plans. Furthermore, the partnership was justified by its potential effect on the nation’s energy needs. Donovan states that “coordination of resources to plan sustainable communities that give Americans choices for affordable housing and choices for affordable transportation is a fundamentally green practice” (Donovan, 2009) The energy component would eventually evolve into an additional program but gets tacked onto the three E’s Turner has mentioned.¹⁸

Transportation accounts for about one third of America’s carbon dioxide emissions. Providing affordable housing choices that shorten travel distances to work is cost-effective for working families and beneficial to long-term goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Longer travel from home to work and lack of access to public transit increases congestion, which increases both costs and damage to the environment. The cost of energy—at home, and in transportation—is significant and growing more significant, particularly for those low-wage workers who pay a larger share of their income towards lighting, heating, and cooling their home, and for their vehicles.

¹⁸ Location Efficient Mortgage program and the Energy Innovation Fund—both supported by HUD.

As a presidential candidate, Barack Obama explicitly endorsed a metropolitan approach—or regional solutions to urban problems. During his campaign, Obama had pledged to “re-evaluate the transportation and [housing] funding process to ensure that smart growth considerations are taken into account . . . to ensure that more Metropolitan Planning Organizations create policies to incentivize greater bicycle and pedestrian usage of roads and sidewalks, and [to] re-commit federal resources to public mass transportation projects across the country” (Obama for America, 2008). Donovan supported the President’s strategy, highlighting that regional planning efforts will benefit urban, suburban, and rural communities by refining the definition of affordability in America that respects the needs of energy conservation and efficiency.

The President responded to Donovan and LaHood’s plan by publically announcing a Sustainable Communities Working Group within the Office of Urban Affairs in August 2009. While little was published on the group’s activities, HUD simultaneously began to work with Senate Banking Committee Chairman Chris Dodd (D-CT) on legislation to create an Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities at HUD to root the new role within the department’s operations. From this point onward, sustainability became the umbrella concept for “the four E’s” and the administration’s call for people- and place-based policies.

Coordinating the Federal Effort: HUD-DOT-EPA

The Sustainable Communities Initiative

Given previous conversations between Donovan and Congressman Olver, Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and Chairman of the Senate Banking Committee on Housing and Urban Affairs was the first in the Senate to follow up on the March hearing. The Congressman had initially been inspired by the President’s agenda, but had reservations about the scope of the newly created White House Office of Urban Affairs. In February of 2009, Dodd sent Obama a letter urging him to establish [instead] a White House Office of Sustainable Development to focus federal efforts on coordinating housing, transportation, energy, and environmental policies (S. Hrg. 111-235, 2009). To follow-up on this letter and the President’s Agenda, Senator Dodd held a hearing before his banking committee titled, “Greener Communities, Greater Opportunities: New Ideas for Sustainable Development and Economic Growth.” The

hearing on March 18, 2009, explained by Dodd was “historic” in that the three witnesses (HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan; DOT Secretary Ray LaHood; and EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson) had never jointly appeared before the committee that was tasked to examine the ways housing and transportation policy can work in common to meet the future, housing, transportation, and environmental needs of America’s communities.

The hearing was as groundbreaking as much as it was perplexing. Rather than looking at the issue of sustainable growth as an integrated and complex problem, Senator Dodd advanced an agenda that seemed more about congestion alleviation through transportation and housing policy. However, in a press statement following the hearing, Senator Dodd stated that each of the agency heads, “brought with them a pledge that the administration would work across agency lines to take a holistic look at development policy and a firm commitment to livability principles that would serve as the foundation for that policy going forward” (Dodd, 2009). At the close of the Senate hearing, the federal partnership was cemented with the EPA as full fledge partner and the Sustainable Communities Initiative was created. The Partnership for Sustainable Communities established six livability principles that would act as a foundation for interagency coordination (this is the first time the partnership used sustainability and livability interchangeably):

1. *Provide more transportation choices*

Develop safe, reliable and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce the nation’s dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.

2. *Promote equitable, affordable housing*

Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.

3. *Enhance economic competitiveness*

Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services, and other basic needs by workers as well as expanded business access to markets.

4. *Support existing communities*

Target federal funding toward existing communities—through such strategies as transit-oriented, mixed-use development and land recycling—to increase community revitalization, improve the efficiency of public works investments, and safeguard rural landscapes.

5. *Coordinate policies and leverage investment*

Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy.

6. *Value communities and neighborhoods*

Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.

A month later, this partnership brought distinct legislation, “The Livable Communities Act” to the Congressional floor and led President Obama to present the next phase of his urban agenda. The president’s act started “a national conversation to engage cities and metropolitan areas and a call for an interagency review of how federal policies are impacting local communities” (The White House, 2009c). The dialogue exemplified Obama’s objective to signal that the change that he had proposed during his campaign was indeed happening in the White House.

“Changing the Way the Feds Do Business”¹⁹

“Instead of waiting for Washington, many of our cities have already become their own laboratories for change, some leading the world in coming up with innovative new ways to solve the problems of our time.”

- *President Barack Obama, July 13, 2009*

On July 13, 2009 the White House Office of Urban Affairs and the Domestic Policy Council hosted a roundtable about the future of America’s urban and metropolitan areas. Administration officials participating in the day’s events included Secretary Hilda Solis of the Department of Labor, Secretary Shaun Donovan of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Secretary Ray LaHood of the Department of Transportation, Administrator Lisa

¹⁹ Similar statements have been made by President(s), Roosevelt, Kennedy, Johnson, and Clinton.

Jackson of the Environmental Protection Agency and Administrator Karen Mills of the Small Business Administration. Elected leaders from several of the nation's associations for state and local elected officials joined the conversation including Governor Edward Rendell of Pennsylvania for the National Governors Association, Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, DeKalb County Georgia CEO Burrell Ellis of the National Association of Counties; and Northglenn, Colorado Mayor Kathleen Novak of the National League of Cities (The White House, 2009c).

The conference capitalized on the work already underway by Donovan and LaHood. At the roundtable discussion, Obama committed his administration to working with local policymakers and practitioners to support and expand innovative strategies and locally tailored solutions. Notably, the President requested during his speech at the roundtable that the Office of Management and Budget, the Domestic Policy Council, the National Economic Council, and the Office of Urban Affairs to conduct a comprehensive interagency review of "how the federal government approaches and funds metropolitan areas" (Turner, 2010). This action was among the most important of early efforts to articulate the administration's urban policy priorities, which are coordinating housing, transportation, and environmental investments that entail collaboration across federal agencies to break down traditional programmatic silos.

The roundtable discussion and, corresponding policy evoked by HUD and DOT, opened a distinct policy window across Washington. After the conference policy reports from the Brookings and Urban Land Institute(s) on the state of Metropolitan America and the recession, new Metropolitan and Regional initiatives were launched from the Ford and MacArthur Foundations, and public comments and academic analyses were released. To follow-up on these responses and to ensure that communities had input into the government's new urban strategy, the White House Office of Urban Affairs launched its first initiative, *The Urban Tour*. Ten days after the President's roundtable adjourned, the White House Office Urban Affairs ventured outside the beltway to visit nine cities for two reasons:

1. Communicate the President's vision and priorities for Urban and Metropolitan America;
2. Identify best practices and innovative policy reforms for the Administration.

The national conversation inspired by the White House of Urban Affairs' *Urban Tour* was an important illustration of the Administration's commitment to Urban and Metropolitan America, and reflects the Administration's bottom-up approach to reshaping the Federal-urban partnership. The tour approaches urban-metro regions as assets rather than as bureaucratic obstacles, and highlighted the interdisciplinary innovations that have been bringing benefits to entire regions. The cities referenced are as follows: (The White House, 2008)

- July 23, 2009 - Philadelphia, PA
- September 1, 2009 - Kansas City, MO
- September 17, 2009 - Chicago, IL
- September 18, 2009 - Denver, CO
- October 1, 2009 - Flagstaff, AZ
- October 23, 2009 - Seattle, WA
- October 29, 2009 - Chicago, IL
- November 24, 2009 - Los Angeles, CA
- December 14, 2009 - Atlanta, GA

From Affordable Housing to Closing the Grocery Gap

The Tour expands the scope of the President's Metro Agenda

Each stop on the urban tour focused on a theme or set of themes that individual cities feel have impacted Urban and Metropolitan America. For example, the tour's first visit to Philadelphia, highlighted Pennsylvania's Fresh Food Financing Initiative (FFFI), an effort that brings fresh food to underserved communities, both rural and urban—also known as “food deserts.” The FFFI is a public-private partnership between the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, The Reinvestment Fund, The Food Trust, and the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition that provides a statewide grant and loan program for grocery store development. Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, and Deputy HUD Secretary Ron Sims were also part of the tour to learn more about the FFFI and its impact on communities across Pennsylvania.

Secretary Locke noted the importance and personal significance of this effort. As a kid who grew up in public housing and whose parents owned a grocery store, he knows that something as simple as a clean and welcoming place to purchase nutritious food for a reasonable price can change lives and transform a community. The team visited the ShopRite supermarket in the Park West Town Center, where they witnessed the success of the FFFI in providing jobs, healthy food, economic benefit, and uplifting the morale of this community. In a

corresponding blog, Adolfo Carrión stated that ShopRite, “has not only provided that physical space, but has engendered business investment and affordable housing development in the surrounding Parkside community” (Carrión, 2009) Parkside Community Association President Lucinda Hudson asserted that before efforts like the FFFI, her neighborhood had been overlooked for far too long.

The stories continued, with each stop adding to the inventory of projects that are working at the community level. In Seattle the Urban Tour, explored a "place based initiative" called the Green Impact Zone—an ambitious plan to invest in a specific area to address a variety of challenges. Since 2009, a public-private partnership led by Congressman Emanuel Cleaver, that included neighborhood leaders—the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), Kansas City Power & Light, and the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority—designed an innovative plan to weatherize every home in a 150-block area, train local residents in green jobs, deploy a "smart" electricity grid in the Zone, and develop a green bus-rapid-transit system to connect this community to opportunities in the city and region.

In Seattle, Washington the Urban Tour team saw the city’s marriage of economic development and livability in South Lake Union neighborhood. From 2004–2009, over 2.7 million square feet of space had been constructed at South Lake Union for the biotech and life science industry, which placed Seattle at the forefront of medical innovation. This neighborhood, combined with mixed-use and affordable-housing development and public transportation solutions, illustrated how regional economic development initiatives can include and foster smart growth.

From affordable housing measures to accessing healthy food, the Urban Tour team culled strategic information from communities across America. To the president, these stories revealed innovative, crosscutting solutions that can strengthen neighborhoods by connecting marginalized communities to opportunities. Ultimately, the tour’s findings were added into the final organization and scope of Obama’s [forward looking] metropolitan agenda. However, the President’s staff focused solely on new strategies at the behest of not correcting for the often bottom-line issues of land use control impeding upon local decision-making, restrictive zoning, tax differentials, or shortcomings of HUD’s Consolidated Plan or DOT’s Long Range Transportation Plan requirements.

Forgotten Elements

The end of the Urban Tour's exploration gave the President and his Urban Affairs staff the means to repurpose the direction of metropolitan development to a broader set of livability goals. Given the complexity of our society today, each issue included in the agenda has its substantive place in attaining livable communities. However, Obama neglected to simultaneously develop the conditions that would allow these new ideas and policy priorities to penetrate the daily bureaucratic functions. This oversight was evident as little attention was devoted to previous intra-agency efforts (particularly those that coordinate housing and transportation investments), regulatory barriers, and federally recognized joint regional/metropolitan planning arrangements. All of which had been suggested in the August 2008 FTA-HUD joint report, "Better Coordination of Transportation and Housing Programs to Promote Affordable Housing Near Transit."

Some of the regulatory barriers explored in the report include zoning codes that are overly restrictive, restrictions on density allowances, burdensome permitting requirements, complex or duplicative planning processes, or outdated rules covering real property disposition (USDOT and HUD, 2008). Moreover, both HUD and FTA require local communities to prepare long- and short-range plans as a requirement for receiving Federal housing and Transportation funds (USDOT and HUD, 2008). Yet, no mention of these barriers or coordinating and improving these plans were discussed in congressional hearings and public meetings associated with the President's Agenda.

Given that HUD and DOT emerged as the primary federal players poised to implement the President's Agenda (and the 2008 report provided the basis of the federal partnership's livability framework) it is unclear why these elements were placed on the backburner. This begs the question, if the federal partnership fails to consider pre-existing political realities and bureaucratic lags within their own system, how can the new livability framework successfully operate?

Bringing the Metropolitan Agenda Together

Obama's Comprehensive Interagency Review

By the end of the summer 2009 the contours of the President's Metropolitan Agenda were finalized. To organize the work that was already underway, the President categorized his agenda into four initiatives and assigned each a working group with associated staff outside the Office of Urban Affairs. Each of the initiatives was proposed to orient potential future legislation.

Four Initiatives

*Initiative One: Place-Based Policy Review*²⁰

The Obama Administration promoted that for the first time in decades the federal government would take a comprehensive look at how its policies impact the way urban and rural areas develop and how well those places support the people who live there. During the July 2009 Roundtable at the Brookings Institute, Obama had tasked Peter Orszag (Office of Management and Budget), Melody Barnes (Domestic Policy Council), Derek Douglas (Office of Urban Affairs), and Lawrence Summers (National Economic Council) to develop effective place-based policies for the FY 2011 Budget. The review reinforced the central themes that Turner summarized, but went further and presented the following findings:

- Place-based policies target the prosperity, equity, sustainability, and livability of places—how well or how poorly they function as places and how they change over time. Place-based policy leverages investments by focusing resources in targeted places and drawing on the compounding effect of cooperative arrangements.
- By definition, all domestic policies affect people who live or work in particular places. But many domestic policies are not place-based or place-driven. This is not to say that place-based approaches are always the most effective way to achieve particular policy goals. However, the Administration's work should be guided by a clear understanding

²⁰ Peter R. Orszag, Office of Management and Budget; Melody Barnes, Domestic Policy Council; Adolfo Carrion, Office of Urban Affairs; and Lawrence Summers, National Economic Council all contributed to this initiative.

of the useful role that place-based policy can play and how to make it most effective.

The review found that federal programs could function more effectively if they include well-focused, place-based strategies. Evaluations of Federal programs commonly underscore the importance of encouraging local networks of referral, support, and coordination—whether to make disparate Federal programs more effective in generating employment and other benefits at the local level, that tax benefits get to the economically disadvantaged families who need them, or that other important policy objectives are advanced. To implement place-based policy criteria across federal agencies, the review requested specific actions from all agencies mentioned in Obama’s Executive Order 13503 (questions are included in the appendix). Lastly, the working group summarized the following principles of Obama’s place-based mandate:

I. Federal investment and regulation would be guided by clear, measurable, and carefully evaluated goals. The review pushed agencies to incorporate concrete measures by which comprehensive effectiveness of Federal action can be evaluated over time. Effectually, the review requested that all programmatic goals and results should be transparent and widely shared. By the time the Urban Tour had come to a close, the interagency review formulated that the following themes be integrated in the “new” place-based approach the Obama administration had suggested federal agencies use as a guide for future policy.

- *Economic Competitiveness.* Comparative advantages and needs of varying economies across the Nation must be taken into account with every policy. The review instructed every federal agency to study which communities have attained an economic advantage, what policies underlie community successes, and what non-policy factors contribute to those successes.
- *Environmental Sustainability.* Defined as the protection of a community’s environment, conservation of natural resources, and reduction of pollution and greenhouse gas emissions—the “carbon footprint” of urban and rural communities.
- *Community Health and Access to Opportunity.* Defined as access to healthcare

and quality education. The review suggested that these components of opportunity could occur through coordinated local and regional approaches, expansion of access to healthy food, and the support of environmental health—including clean air, water, and soil—and healthy homes. Thus, future policy should be crafted to generate opportunity for all and reduce discrimination and other barriers to opportunity, for example, through equitable development within towns, cities, and regions.

- *Safety and Security*. Defined as protection of communities from external threats and reduce insecurity, violence, and crime within communities, particularly in disadvantaged areas.

II. To address the above themes, the review urged that change comes from the community level and often through partnership, requiring flexible, and integrated solutions. To begin uncovering community-based solutions, the review requested the entire Presidential Administration to break down Federal “silos” and create investments that encourage similar coordination at the local level. To make the Federal government a more effective and nimble partner, the review encouraged agencies to pursue opportunities to engage state, local, and tribal governments, faith institutions, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and community members at-large as collaborators.

III. As the Nation is increasingly a conglomeration of regional economies and ecosystems, the review emphasized the President’s call for a regional approach to metropolitan problems. “Federal investments should promote planning and collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries” (Orszag et al., 2009). The review moves on to state, “given the forces reshaping smaller communities, it is particularly important that rural development programs be coordinated with broader regional initiatives.” Thus, programs in neighboring zones and within larger regions—some of which connect rural communities to metropolitan regions—should complement each other (Orszag et al., 2009). In the end, meaningful place-based programs are reflective of economic and social diversity, both in rural and metropolitan areas that also allow for communities to identify distinct needs and address them in appropriate, strategic ways.

Initiative Two: Sustainable Communities Initiative

The Sustainable Communities Initiative is the plan that Donovan, LaHood, and Jackson advanced in the June 16th hearing to “coordinate Federal policies, programs and resources to encourage and fully assist cities, metros and rural areas to build sustainable communities” (S. Hearing 111-235). According to Donovan this initiative required an alignment of Federal transportation, housing, water, and other environmental infrastructure, economic and environmental policies, programs and funding. The objective of this initiative is to create a series of regional planning grants to metropolitan regions in an effort to create sustainable development plans.

Initiative Three: Regional Innovation Clusters Initiative

The purpose of the regional innovation cluster initiative is to spur the growth of quality, innovative jobs in key industry clusters in our metro areas. The White House Office of Urban Affairs reports “It does this by building on the strongest industries, skills, and assets of a particular region, pursuant to an integrated plan developed by a regional consortium of leaders.” Of the four initiatives, this one is the least developed.

Initiative Four: Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative

The goal of the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative, an interagency collaborative between HUD, DOT, and the Department of Labor (DOL) is to create “neighborhoods of opportunity” throughout cities and metropolitan areas by coordinating Federal policies and programs to maximize life outcomes for low-income children from inner-city neighborhoods to the struggling parts of older suburbs. This initiative was purposed to serve and align Federal housing programs (e.g., Choice Neighborhoods) with Federal education programs, health services, and public safety initiatives. Through connections to the DOL, this initiative also works to promote adult education and training with the DOT to connect to metropolitan-wide job and retail opportunities or maximize neighborhood benefits to transit-oriented development.

Assumptions of the Agenda

Building upon the urban policy priorities, this agenda asserted three key assumptions that (1) metropolitan areas are the new center of innovation and growth presenting unprecedented challenges and opportunities. (2) The problems facing metropolitan and rural areas today are interdependent, that no longer fit neatly within neighborhood or jurisdictional borders. Thus, (3) overcoming these problems will require coordinated and proactive federal urban policy that will be flexible enough to adapt to (and strengthen the connection between) the multiple geographic scales—neighborhood, city, and metropolitan—at which leaders act to address increasingly complex challenges (The White House, 2010).

To align and increase the impact of future governmental investments, Obama called the heads of major executive offices and agencies to move forward by working collaboratively with the following statement, “we need to do more than help our cities weather the economic storm. We need to rebuild them on a new, firmer, stronger foundation for the future. That requires a new [integrated] strategy for our cities and metropolitan areas that focuses on advancing opportunity through competitive, sustainable, and inclusive growth” (Obama, 2009).²¹

From Urban Policy Working Groups to Legislation

The Livable Communities Act (S.1619)

“...Our communities are growing and changing. And too often, our approach to community development policy has been like one of those cars on the Merritt Parkway—trapped in gridlock, never moving. It’s time to re-think the way we plan the futures of the places we live, work, and raise our kids.”

– *The Honorable Christopher Dodd, Chairman, Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, June 16, 2009*

On August 6, 2009 Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) introduced the Livable Communities Act (S. 1619) (H.R. 4690)—the key piece of legislation that advanced Obama’s Metropolitan Agenda’s Sustainable Communities Initiative. Within this legislation, the interagency partnership that had been established by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Environmental Protection

²¹ July 13, 2009, White House Office of Urban Affairs Urban Policy Roundtable.

Agency (EPA) had been allocated funds. Subsequently, HUD took the commitment further by pledging \$50 million from its own budget to form and fund HUD's new Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities. Following the directives of Obama's Metropolitan Agenda, the Office produced and will manage two transformative interagency grant programs: The Transportation Investments Geared for Economic Recovery (TIGER) [Docket No. FR-5415-N-12] and The Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant (SCRPG) [Docket No. FR-5396-N-03]. Extending Obama's agenda, the grants are guided by the six livability principles, jointly created by the partnership.²²

These principles attempt to explicitly increase the impact of government dollars through leveraging place-conscious planning, evaluating existing place-based policies, and identifying potential reforms in areas of interagency coordination.²³ Lastly, the both grant programs were proposed grants to Metropolitan Planning Organizations and consortia of local recipients to propel regional planning.

Obama, the EPA, HUD, and DOT have made a move to do more than improve federal coordination and attempt to "redistribute resources and hence power," (Frieden and Kaplan, 1975) away from the suburbs to lower income communities by supporting metropolitan and multi-jurisdictional planning efforts that integrates housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments. The goals of coordination are broad and are meant to empower jurisdictions to consider the interdependent challenges of "(1) economic competitiveness and revitalization; (2) social equity, inclusion, and access to opportunity; (3) energy use and climate change; and (4) public health and environmental impact" (HUD Docket No. FR-5396-N-03, 2010).

Given the scope of their objectives, the process of writing legislation that achieved all

²² The Six Livability Principles: provide more transportation choices, promote equitable, affordable housing, enhance economic competitiveness, support existing communities, coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment, and value communities and neighborhoods.

<http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/partnership/#livabilityprinciples>

²³Place based policies direct investments toward targeted places. If effective, it can influence how rural and metropolitan areas develop, how well they function as places to live, work, operate a business, preserve heritage, etc. Such policies can also streamline otherwise redundant and disconnected programs.

four of these elements would require nothing short of complete consensus from all congressional and administrative actors. However, deducing these programmatic goals into procedural directives would prove to be a far more difficult exercise. By the end of 2010, a full inventory of legislation and coordinated federal grants between the DOT, HUD, and the EPA contributed to a comprehensive attack on the pressing issues at hand—recovering from the recession and moving toward a more inclusive and sustainable future for the country’s communities, specifically those most in need.

Again, the major actions undertaken by the Obama administration has been brokering the “Sustainable Communities” partnership agreement between HUD, the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This partnership was signed into agreement on June 16, 2009 by the EPA Administrator and the Secretaries of HUD and DOT, the Sustainable Communities agreement is intended to promote interagency cooperation and community engagement “to help American families in all communities—rural, suburban and urban—gain better access to affordable housing, more transportation options, and lower transportation costs” (U.S. Department of Transportation, 2009a).

The interagency alliance would collaborate through a newly established Office of Sustainable Communities, located in HUD, and initially funded with \$150 million through the FY 2010 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 111-117, Dec. 16, 2009, 123 Stat. 3034, 3084). This office is disbursing up to \$100 million in planning grants during the current fiscal year, and it appears that such grants may be allocated primarily to MPOs and Councils of Governments (HUD Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities, 2010). Much of the Office’s current activity seems designed to facilitate implementation of the planning grants that would flow to regions under the Livable Communities Act, described in the following section. The second component of executive action promoting regional coordination is the creation of the White House Office of Urban Affairs.

With authorized appropriations of \$3.75 billion over three years, the Livable Communities Act (S.1619, 2009; H.R. 4690, 2010) would establish in the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) an Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities (OSHC). The OSHC would establish a program to make comprehensive planning grants and sustainability challenge grants to eligible entities (partnerships between a consortium of units

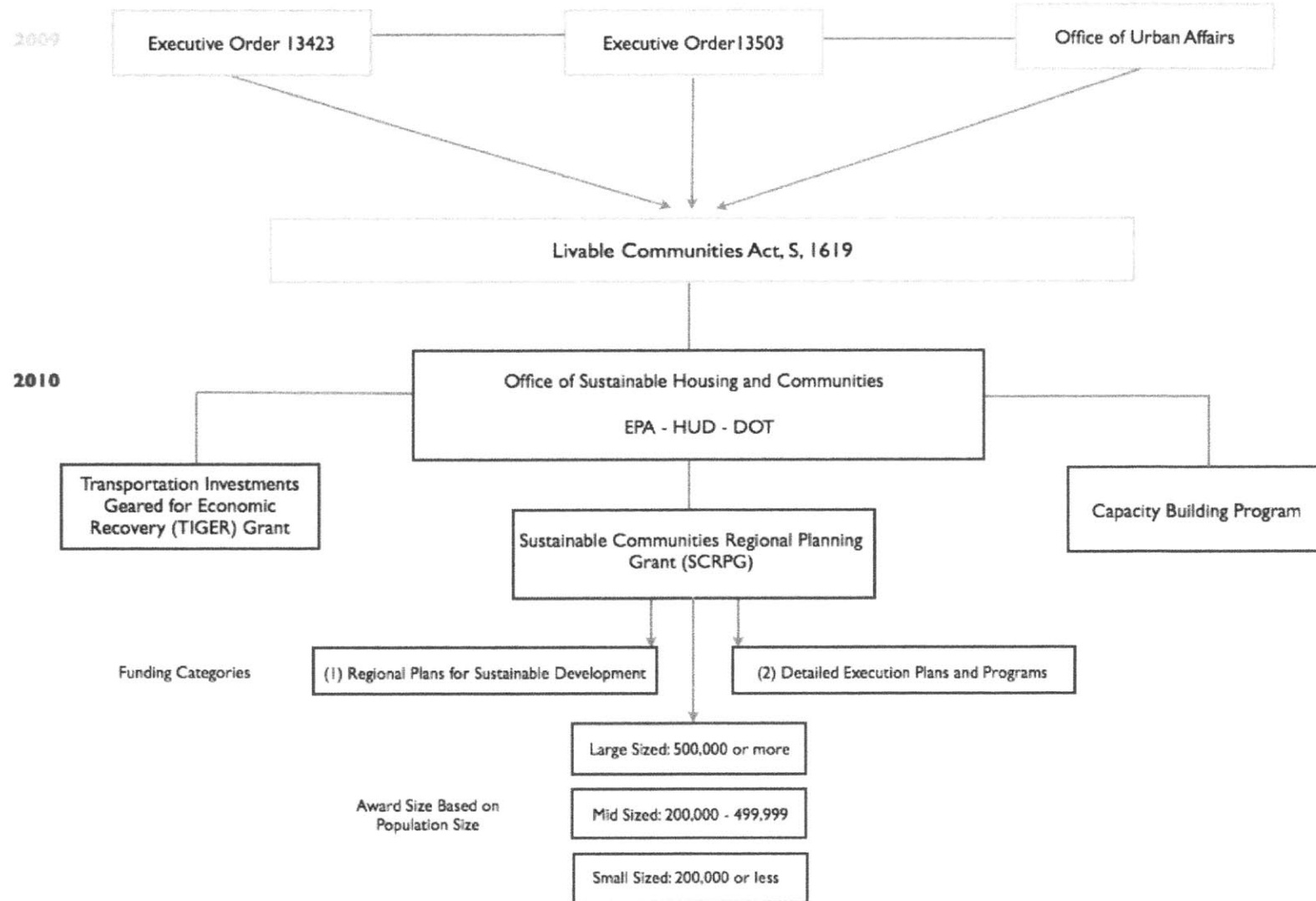
of general local government and an eligible partner, which may be a metropolitan planning organization, a rural planning organization, a regional council, or a state). The office would also coordinate relevant federal policies and initiatives, conduct research, and provide technical assistance. Its research activities would include the generation of major reports on incentives for energy-efficient mortgages and location-efficient mortgages. This Office would be overseen by the Interagency Council, an independent entity in the executive branch, including the EPA Administrator and the Secretaries of HUD and DOT. As of June 24, 2010, two programs have currently been implemented:

- A. **Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program** to provide: (1) coordinate land use, housing, transportation, and infrastructure planning processes across jurisdictions and agencies; (2) identify potential regional partnerships for developing and implementing a comprehensive regional plan; (3) conduct or update housing, infrastructure, transportation, energy, and environmental assessments to determine regional needs and promote sustainable development; (4) develop or update a comprehensive regional plan or goals and strategies to implement an existing comprehensive regional plan; and (5) implement local zoning and other code changes necessary to implement a comprehensive regional plan and promote sustainable development.

- B. The **Sustainability Challenge Grant** intended to (1) promote integrated transportation, housing, energy, and economic development activities carried out across policy and governmental jurisdictions; (2) promote sustainable and location-efficient development; and (3) implement projects identified in a comprehensive regional plan. Directs the OSHC Director to study and report to specified congressional committees on incentives for encouraging lenders to make, and homebuyers and homeowners to participate in, energy-efficient mortgages and location-efficient mortgages. Program would provide funding to implement the plans generated under the Comprehensive Planning Grant Program.²⁴

²⁴ S. 1619--111th Congress: Livable Communities Act of 2009. (2009). In *GovTrack.us (database of federal legislation)*. Retrieved July 16, 2011, from <http://www.govtrack.us/congress/bill.xpd?bill=s111-1619&tab=summary>

IMPLEMENTING OBAMA'S METROPOLITAN AGENDA



Concluding Thoughts

With the exception of relevant portions of the FY2010 Consolidated Appropriations Act²⁵ and FY2011 Full Year Continuing Appropriations Act,²⁶ none of the Administration's legislation intended to promote metropolitan [or regional] planning has been enacted into law. As of August 30, 2010, the Livable Communities Act had attracted forty-five co-sponsors in the House (sponsored by Ed Perlmutter) and twenty-two in the Senate (sponsored by Christopher Dodd). With the exception of Senator Joseph Lieberman, an independent, all co-sponsors are Democrats. By August 3, 2010, the proposed Livable Communities bill and resolutions were not passed, effectually blocking the bill from becoming law.

In addition to the Livable Communities Act, the Obama administration made a second and earlier attempt at germinating the President's Metropolitan Agenda into law. The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 (H.R. 2454) ("Waxman-Markey") Section 222 proposed to cut greenhouse gas emissions through transportation efficiency was consistent with Obama's campaign promise to "require governors and local leaders in our metropolitan areas to make 'energy conservation' a required part of the planning for the expenditure of federal transportation funds" (Obama for America, 2008). This vision was carried further by October 5, 2009 when the President signed Executive Order 13514 *Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance*, to establish an integrated strategy towards sustainability in the Federal Government and to make reduction of greenhouse gas emissions a priority for Federal agencies (Executive Order 13514, 2009). The proposed bill did not make it through the Senate, but if it had, Lisa Jackson, EPA Administrator and DOT Secretary, Ray LaHood would have been required to establish national transportation-related greenhouse gas reduction goals and develop best practices for states and municipalities to incorporate into their long range transportation plans. The proposed bill would have strengthened the energy component of the Six Livability principles by requiring states and MPOs to develop strategies that would lower its greenhouse gas emissions to the threshold specified under the federal order. The proposed bill

²⁵ Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010; Transportation-HUD Budget (H13631-14080, H14081-14369). Sponsored in the House by Rep John Oliver (D-MA).

²⁶ The Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (Public Law 112-10, enacted April 15, 2011) (Appropriations Act), provided a total of \$100,000,000 to HUD for a Sustainable Communities Initiative to improve regional planning efforts that integrate housing and transportation decisions, and increase the capacity of communities to modernize land use and zoning plans.

held strict standards, as failure for any state or MPO to develop or submit a greenhouse gas reduction strategy would have resulted in a 20% withholding of federal highway funds to that region.

Both the Waxman-Markey and the Livable Communities Act would have expanded the function and scope of responsibility for MPOs or other federally recognized regional agencies. Neither bill addressed the functional shortcomings of these organizations or its mandated policy outputs. Although this short legislative retrospective points to a grim future for the President's Agenda, Obama's initial "Metropolitan" campaign promise held true.

During the USCM conference before Obama was elected to office, the country's most prominent mayors demanded that they have a partner in the White House, who understood the problems that face metropolitan America. Obama established a national venue, a partnership to take place in which Donovan's testimony clarified how and why the problems that cities face are inherently interconnected. Underlying Obama's agenda was the recognition that "change comes from the community level and often through partnership; complex problems require flexible integrated solutions"(Orszag, et al., 2009). The omnibus legislation and executive order that the Obama administration proposed are game changers. Regardless of how the policies are played out, it is important to revisit the principles embedded the legislation that could possibly leave an indelible mark on institutional reform. It has been argued in this chapter that a tremendous amount support for Obama's Agenda came from within the federal government around nurturing three policy themes: sustainability, which requires multi-level regional planning; cross-agency collaboration; and equitable citizen engagement, which led the federal partnership between DOT-EPA-HUD to create the SCRPG program. The next chapter will explore the components of the SCRPG—a program seen as exemplifying Obama's Metropolitan Agenda and HUD's associated commitment to place based policy reform.

Part Two | The Outcome of Obama’s Metropolitan Agenda

*“When you choose a home, you do not just choose a home—
You also choose transportation to work, schools for your children, and public safety.
You choose a community—and the choices available in that community.”*

-HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan

In less than one year from President Obama’s inauguration, a reservoir of newly minted ideas on metropolitan development and federal coordination had been created. By June 2010, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) brought pushed the bulk of these ideas into action by using its departmental funds²⁷ to create the Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities²⁸ that would administer the SCRPG which was part of its Sustainable Communities Initiative guided by the federal partnership between HUD, DOT, and EPA.

The Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant (SCRPG)

The Sustainable Communities Initiative emphasized encouraging a consortium of communities to create a plan for sustainable development by empowering jurisdictions to consider the interdependent challenges of (1) economic competitiveness and revitalization; (2) social equity, inclusion, and access to opportunity; (3) energy use and climate change; and (4) public health and environmental impact. In the end, the SCRPG program was a noteworthy example of a federal solution to the problems cities are facing today. This solution laid out a new plan for comprehensive “sustainable” planning reliant on renewed engagement processes and data sharing.

The SCRPG program was created by the federal partnership to “support metropolitan and multi-jurisdictional planning efforts that integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, and transportation and infrastructure investments” (HUD, Docket No. FR-5396-N-03, 2010). To understand the scale and scope of the program’s requests, the concept of sustainable development and administrative change will be delineated in the proceeding sections.

²⁷ \$100,000,000 awarded under the Transportation, Housing and by the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010 (Public Law 111-117, approved December 16, 2009).

²⁸ Shelley Poticha, former President and CEO of Reconnecting America was appointed the director of the Office on July 24, 2010.

The “NEW” Path Toward Regional Sustainable Development

Breaking Down the SCRPG NOFA

During the President’s kick-off roundtable speech in July 2009, he asserted that cities rather than Washington had become the laboratories for change, inventing innovative solutions. For the federal partnership, regional sustainable development can only happen when cities and allied nonprofit and private intermediaries work together, as HUD wrote in its Strategic Plan that “non-governmental organizations rather than HUD have become key civic institutions at the neighborhood scale.”

Thus, the baseline goal for the SCRPG program was focused on building inter-jurisdictional partnerships that have the capacity to conduct inclusive regional planning for the sustainability of the region. The message was translated clearly in the SCRPG NOFA, which required a “nonprofit organization, foundation, or educational institution within any given region to engage a diverse representation of the general population, and work in partnership with the units of general local government and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)²⁹ or MPOs comprising a consortium to advance the program objectives of the Sustainable Communities Planning Grant.” The MPOs, or local governments (in cases where MPOs did not exist in a region), were responsible for handling all financial arrangements, signing cooperative agreements with HUD, delineating their consortium’s organizational capacity, assessing the qualifications of key personnel and their partners, and illustrating how they have the capacity to effectively implement the proposed activities. Once communities compiled their consortium members, funding for SCRPG program primarily supported the development and/or implementation of Regional Plans for Sustainable Development (RPSD) configured under the

²⁹ MPOs in Census-designated urban areas with at least 200,000 residents must include “local elected officials; officials of public agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation in the metropolitan area; and appropriate state officials” (23 U.S.C. §134(d)(2) (2008)) the structure of MPOs varies among regions. Typically, the governor and the constituent general purpose local governments will agree on the geographic designation of the MPO and the organizational structure, including allocation of voting rights. Staff sizes vary significantly, from one or two to over 100 (United States Government Accountability Office 2009).

newly designated regional consortium.³⁰

While the themes of the Sustainable Communities Initiative spawned a variety of topics, the SCRPG or more specifically, the program's requirement for a RPSD, provides a clear distillation of the federal partnership's concept of regional sustainable development, which can be argued is the new term for comprehensive planning. The concept as defined in the NOFA is nuanced and varied, but can be broadly broken into the three categories of the President's Metro Agenda: sustainability, which requires multi-level regional planning; cross-agency collaboration; and equitable citizen engagement.

Enabling Economic Competitiveness

The President's Metropolitan Agenda, along with HUD's Strategic Plan, put the spotlight on metropolitan regions as the country's new locus of economic growth. A fundamental idea of the Sustainable Communities Initiative is that the distended growth patterns of the past fifty years cannot go on unchecked; otherwise, the gains to any economic growth strategy will be compromised. Thus, remaining economically competitive requires thoughtful planning on growth management through reforms to existing physical development practices. This requirement is essentially an adaptive take on comprehensive planning. Within the Strategic Plan, HUD wrote explicitly on their concerns over the changing nature of America's cities and broader metropolitan areas. The Plan states, "the lines between cities and suburbs are blurring, because the challenges previously associated with cities—homelessness, joblessness, and traffic congestion—have bled deep into the suburbs." For HUD, the most important area of concern today is no longer the central city, but the metropolitan area, which has grown to encompass, central cities, suburbs, and surrounding rural areas.

Although the lines have blurred between cities and the suburbs, the local bureaucratic mindset in many locales only recognize the older divisions. The grant program nurtured the idea of the "new" metropolitan area by requiring applicant consortiums to create an integrated plan for regional development that addresses potential population growth and decline over a

³⁰ Program eligibility based on consortium representation, which according to the federal partnership, includes; principal city, MPO, additional cities and a non-profit organization that has the capacity to engage with the represented population.

20-year time frame, set appropriate 3- to 5-year benchmark performance targets, and delineate strategies to meet established performance goals. The purpose of creating an integrated plan is to help communities and regions plan for future [population] growth to ensure that resources, laws, and plans were oriented towards financial efficiency. For the SCRPG NOFA, economic effectiveness and efficiency comes from careful identification of affordable housing, transportation investment, water infrastructure, economic development and use planning, environmental conservation, energy system, open space, and other infrastructure priorities for the entire region.

Under the Sustainable Communities Initiative (a part of both the Livable Communities Act and the President's Metropolitan Agenda) sustainable development enables economic competitiveness. Primary to both are a full understanding of a region's demography. Thus, once a region has identified their needs and priorities, then true comprehensive planning toward sustainable development can occur. The data requirements for defining these priorities were crucial and most problematic for several applicants. The NOFA required a description of existing social, economic, and environmental conditions that demonstrate why the region would benefit from comprehensive planning. Applicants were then instructed to use their data findings to substantiate the direction of their plan. All applicants were required to provide data on the first seven "need" categories:

(1) Housing Costs

- a. Median Regional Housing Prices Relative to Household Income
- b. Proportion of Regional Population Paying More than 45% of Income to Combined Housing and Transportation Costs

(2) Environmental Quality

- a. Urbanized Land per Capita by Decade (1990-2000)
- b. Total Miles of Distribution of Water Infrastructure per Population Served by Decade (1990-2000)

(3) Transportation Access

- a. Vehicle Miles Traveled per Capita
- b. Portion of Regional Trips: Automobile, Transit, Walking, and Bicycling

(4) Socioeconomic Inequality

- a. Segregation by County
- b. School Lunch Eligibility

(5) Economic Opportunity

- a. Availability of Subsidized Affordable Housing near the Region's Five Largest Employment Centers

(6) Fresh Food Access

- a. Proximity of Full-Service Grocery Stores for Low-Income and Auto-Dependent Households

(7) Healthy Communities

- a. Prevalence of Preventable Disease³¹

(8) Severe Economic Distress³²

- a. Poverty Rate Exceeding 20 percent
- b. Median Household Income at 70 percent or Less of the National Average
- c. Featuring an Unemployment Rate at 1.2 times the National Average Rate

Environmental Sustainability

The concept of sustainability has grown to take on a variety of definitions over the past two decades that include supportive smart³³ growth policies. Commonly, it is described as development that meets the present needs without compromising the potential of future generations to meet their needs. For the federal partnership, achieving sustainability meant correcting the effects from the past fifty years of housing and transportation policies and

³¹ Asthma hospitalization, childhood obesity, diabetes, heart disease, lead poisoning, and low birth weight.

³² HUD reserved additional rating points for areas experiencing characteristics a-c.

³³ Often associated with the New Urbanism movement, it is the promotion of livable communities through changes to the physical form of a place such as mixed use, pedestrian scaled open space, and mixed income development.

guiding future development by performance goals and measures that are consistent with the Sustainability Partnership's Livability Principles.³⁴ The partnership illustrated that the housing and transportation policies of the past half century—which supported the development of highways and single-family, large-lot homes in suburban communities—created more than sprawl and land-consumptive development patterns but have produced a mismatch between where people live and where they work that has, over the years, posed threats to the environment, quality of life, and chances for opportunity.

This mismatch has driven up commuting costs for workers, while reducing economic efficiency and competitiveness for businesses. To build an adequate policy apparatus to correct for the land use decisions of past policies, the SCPRG asked applicants to first *identify immediate and long-term policies*, including local land use, zoning, building, and energy codes, tax policy, administrative procedures, and legislative proposals that influence where growth and development take place. Development includes the type, intensity, and timing of economic development and housing development, environmental protection, and investment in transportation and water facilities and services (SCRPG, NOFA, pg 26). Second, applicants were requested to *align infrastructure investment to ensure equitable land use* planning consistent with the RPSD. Where all relevant planning agencies had to identify the appropriate programming of capital improvements, financing plans, and other major expenditures for public facilities, including utilities, open spaces, recreational areas, and transportation, energy management, and water infrastructure.

Regional and Neighborhood Equity

Communities and regions have vastly different needs; the need differentials are clear when one considers a composite placement of housing and healthcare, education, and energy use. The federal partnership recognized that the prototypical definition of sustainable development often sidesteps the question of whose present needs, and which future generations are to benefit from any proposed development (Bullard, 2007).

Regional and neighborhood equity for the Sustainable Communities Initiative is about

³⁴ Refer to page 9 of this thesis.

social justice, access, and who gets what across the metropolitan scale. Secretary Donovan's quote at the opening of this chapter illustrates the interconnectedness of attaining opportunity for all neighborhoods. And it follows that "opportunity" is helping low-income, rural, and communities of color gain full participation in decisions that affect their quality of life. To this extent, the SCRPG picked up much to the twin challenges the regional equity movement has confronted. Carl Anthony writes, "First, is that the larger patterns of metropolitan development have undermined past neighborhood-based efforts to remedy concentrated urban poverty, the socioeconomic issues, and racial isolation." Second, is to find systematic ways to link poverty alleviation to the larger, society-wide patterns of social, economic, and environmental development" (Anthony, 2007). The Federal Partnership advanced one clear way to overcome these challenges, through provoking administrative change at the federal and local level, but did not prescribe any changes at the state level.

Bringing it All Together

The Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD)

How were SCRPG applicants evaluated? The RPSD and its corresponding narrative were the most important aspect of the entire application. To score well, applicants had to account for all the required elements specified by HUD and ensure that the proper entities, interests, and values of the community were fully represented in the proposed development of their RPSD. The capacity to enable an inclusive and comprehensive planning process must have been reflected in the proposed budget as the NOFA emphasized cost effectiveness. Finally, applicants' had to devise a plan on knowledge sharing and capacity building amongst members within the consortium and across its broader region.

Process to Develop or Improve a RPSD

Specified under the NOFA, the objective of the required multi-level regional planning process was to integrate community input and a consolidate a set of deliverables from community and municipal-levels into a unified region-wide plan that encompasses all districts and neighborhoods and that focuses and coordinates infrastructure investment. The NOFA asked that the following components be addressed in the body of each applicant's narrative:

- Existing Conditions and Trends of Potential and Existing Planning Areas
- Subject or Process Gaps: Identify subject areas that were not previously considered
- Management and Role of Data Collection: How will data generated through various agencies and participatory processes be managed? Who will the data partners be? How will data be shared?
- Redevelopment without Displacement: Consideration of preservation before demolition
- Internal Engagement: What is the consortium’s decision-making structure?
- Steps Before Implementation: What are the barriers to working regionally? What process will address solutions?
- Establish and Track Metrics: What planning benchmarks will mark the planning, evaluation, and finalizing of plan?

Governance and Management

Applicants must have been prepared to offer a credible, detailed plan for expanding the partnership after a grant is awarded in ways that deepen the diversity at the table, with specific roles and forms of accountability established. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was required of all partners in the consortium to explain potential roles and validate the proposed partnership. For the review of these MOUs, HUD had stressed transparency, fairness, and inclusion within all governance and management processes. Lastly, applicants had to address their preferred avenue for public feedback.

An Overview of the Required Elements



The data gathered in the needs assessment portion of the NOFA was structured to inform the proposed outcomes of the RPSD, which needed to also align to the Six Livability Principles and HUD’s Strategic Goals. In addition to this sequence of requirements, HUD requested that all of the following mandatory outcomes be included within a RPSD. The figure above illustrates the required overlays within the grant program.

Mandatory Outcomes

Within the RPSD, each applicant was requested to address the following mandatory outcomes:

1. Creation of shared elements in regional transportation, housing, water, and air quality plans tied to local comprehensive land use and capital investment plans.
2. Aligned federal planning and investment resources that mirror the local and regional strategies for achieving sustainable communities.
3. Increased participation and decision-making in developing and implementing a long-range vision for the region by populations traditionally marginalized in public planning processes.
4. Reduced social and economic disparities for the low-income and communities of color within the target region.
5. Decrease in per capita Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and transportation-related emissions for the region.
6. Decrease in overall combined housing and transportation costs per household.
7. Increase in the share of residential and commercial construction on underutilized infill development sites that encourage revitalization, while minimizing displacement in neighborhoods with significant disadvantaged populations.
8. Increased proportion of low and very low-income households within a 30-minute transit commute of major employment centers in urban, suburban, and rural settings.

Suggested Elements of the RPSD:

- ✓ Adoption of a Housing Plan
- ✓ Incorporation of Equity and Fair Housing Priorities
- ✓ Advance Regional Transportation Planning
- ✓ Advance Water Infrastructure Planning

- ✓ Plan for Equitable Economic Development
- ✓ Conduct Scenario Planning Exercises
- ✓ Conduct Comprehensive
- ✓ Climate Change Impact Assessments

Addressing HUD's Departmental Priorities

Applicants were required to demonstrate compliance with the following two HUD policy priorities applicable to the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant Program:

1. *Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing*
2. *Expand Cross Cutting Policy Knowledge*

To receive points under the first priority, applicants must have demonstrated how: (a) the skills and technical expertise of partner organizations will increase; and (b) knowledge will be shared among partners within the consortium. To receive points under the second priority, applicants must have worked to expand the use of successful models to other communities through data-sharing agreements. This requires knowledge sharing, capacity building, data collection, and analysis.

For household level data, HUD has specified that the types of data-sharing agreements can be with a university or other policy research group. For parcel-related data, the agreement may be with a nonprofit or governmental agency. It was stressed in the NOFA that indication of what data they and/or partner organizations will collect on outcomes for the defined target area and how they intend to disseminate policy lessons learned during the planning process was necessary. To demonstrate progress within this section, HUD encouraged applicants to establish and provide anticipated outputs of the planning process (e.g., publications, research studies, etc.).

Results and Program Evaluation

Pursuant to HUD's FY 2010–2015 Strategic Plan, the SCRPG did not identify evaluation metrics for applicants. Rather each was rated on the feasibility of their proposed benchmarks. A matrix was provided for applicants to fill out on their own with the only requirements being a written expression that both the livability principles and the department's priorities (knowledge sharing and expansion of policy knowledge) would be furthered. In summary, the SCRPG invariably attempted to promote an incremental approach of both place- and people-based strategies for enhancing livability and building sustainable communities. Lastly, the benchmark standards specified had to be in accordance to HUD's definition of livability and sustainable communities:

- “*Livability*: a measure of integration of housing, transportation, environmental, and employment amenities accessible to residents. A livability community is one with multiple modes of transportation, different types of housing, destinations located within an easy distance (20 minutes by transit, 15 minutes by bike or foot, and 10 minutes by car) of homes.”
- “*Sustainable Communities*: Urban, suburban, and rural places that successfully integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development transportation, and infrastructure investments in a manner that empowers jurisdictions to consider the interdependent challenges of (1) economic competitiveness and revitalization; (2) social equity, inclusion and access to opportunity; (3) energy use and climate change; and (4) public health and environmental impact.”

How Did the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) Get So Big?

The “New” Federal Business Model in Action

The 68-page SCRPG NOFA contained a gargantuan set of interconnected requirements. The range of requests is certainly impressive if not unprecedented that an entire Presidential Agenda and a Federal Partnership's vision got rolled out into a single grant program. How did this happen? The answer is straightforward. For the first time in years, the

president's administration made urban policy its priority and both DOT and HUD were readily equipped with a "metropolitan" plan. This prioritization coupled with distinctive support from both the House and Senate Banking Committees made for a swift transition between ideas into legislative action. Given the recession and declining morale of American citizens, there was a great need to legitimate that administrative change was indeed underway. With a relatively strong voice vote from the congressional appropriation committees in 2009, there was a small opportunity window to form and fund the change the president had advanced throughout of his "metro" campaign to the White House and his subsequent "urban" cabinet³⁵ had envisioned.

In pursuing the Obama administration's goals³⁶ of creating a transparent, inclusive policymaking process that values bottom-up solutions, the federal partnership released an Advance Notice and Request for Comments on the SCRPG program (HUD Docket No. FR-5396-N-01, 2010) soliciting the expertise of the broader public. From February 16–March 1, 2010 HUD went on a regional listening tour, scheduling webcasts and meetings around the country. The purpose of the listening tour was to invite local, regional, and federal experts to chime in on the priorities and structure of the program. In the end, the solicitations invited a plethora of feedback pushing the SCRPG to grow from 15 to 68 pages over a two-and-a-half week period.

Comment on HUD's Perception of Regional Difference

The proposed tasks far-reaching and nuanced, calling upon a wide variety of skill sets. HUD attempted to recognize that regions are in different states of readiness with differing capacities to engage in planning or implementation of a RPSD. The Advance Notice stated, "HUD and its partner agencies recognize that regions are at different states of readiness and capacity to engage in efforts to plan for a sustainable future." To account for regional difference, the Advance NOFA designated three funding categories: (1) Regional Plans for Sustainable Development for regions without any type of sustainability plan, (2) Detailed Execution Plans and Programs for regions who demonstrate regional readiness but have not

³⁵ Secretaries Shaun Donovan, LaHood, and Jackson as well as OMB Director Jacob Lew, Melody Barnes, etc.

³⁶ These goals were articulated in the President's first FY2010 Budget.

have the capacity to implement its plans, and (3) Implementation Incentives for regions that have already fully embraced sustainable regional planning. For reasons, not defined by the partnership, the SCRPG NOFA only contained the first two categories.

Results

Despite the relatively small pot of awards, nearly 67% of all metropolitan areas applied for SCRPG funding (HUD Reports, 2010). For several municipalities, nonprofit organizations, and MPOs, the grant was thematically refreshing, encapsulating all of values central to both the Sustainable Communities Partnership and HUD's strategic vision. Furthermore, those within the HUD-EPA-DOT partnership believed that the criterion of SCRPG grant was emblematic of the "new [metropolitan] geography" and corresponding strategies (e.g., place- and people-based) HUD envisioned would alter the way discretionary grants are distributed—effectively catalyzing the administrative change they believed was important.

On October 14, 2010, forty-five winning proposals for the SCRPG were announced that provided a total of \$98 million in funds across two categories (1) Regional Planning for Sustainable Development and (2) Detailed Execution of Plans and Programs. HUD did not maintain rigid classifications when awarding funds but the categorical distinctions offer perspective on plausible grant alignment and its purported objectives. However, applicants were able to self-select which categories they felt their proposals best exemplified. Award amounts are divided into three intervals based on population. The grant program in addition to awarding funds, awarded a "preferred sustainability status," for those applications that showed alignment and capability to collaborate, but lacked capacity (political, economic, etc.). These designations were released on January 27, 2011 to twenty-nine applicants.

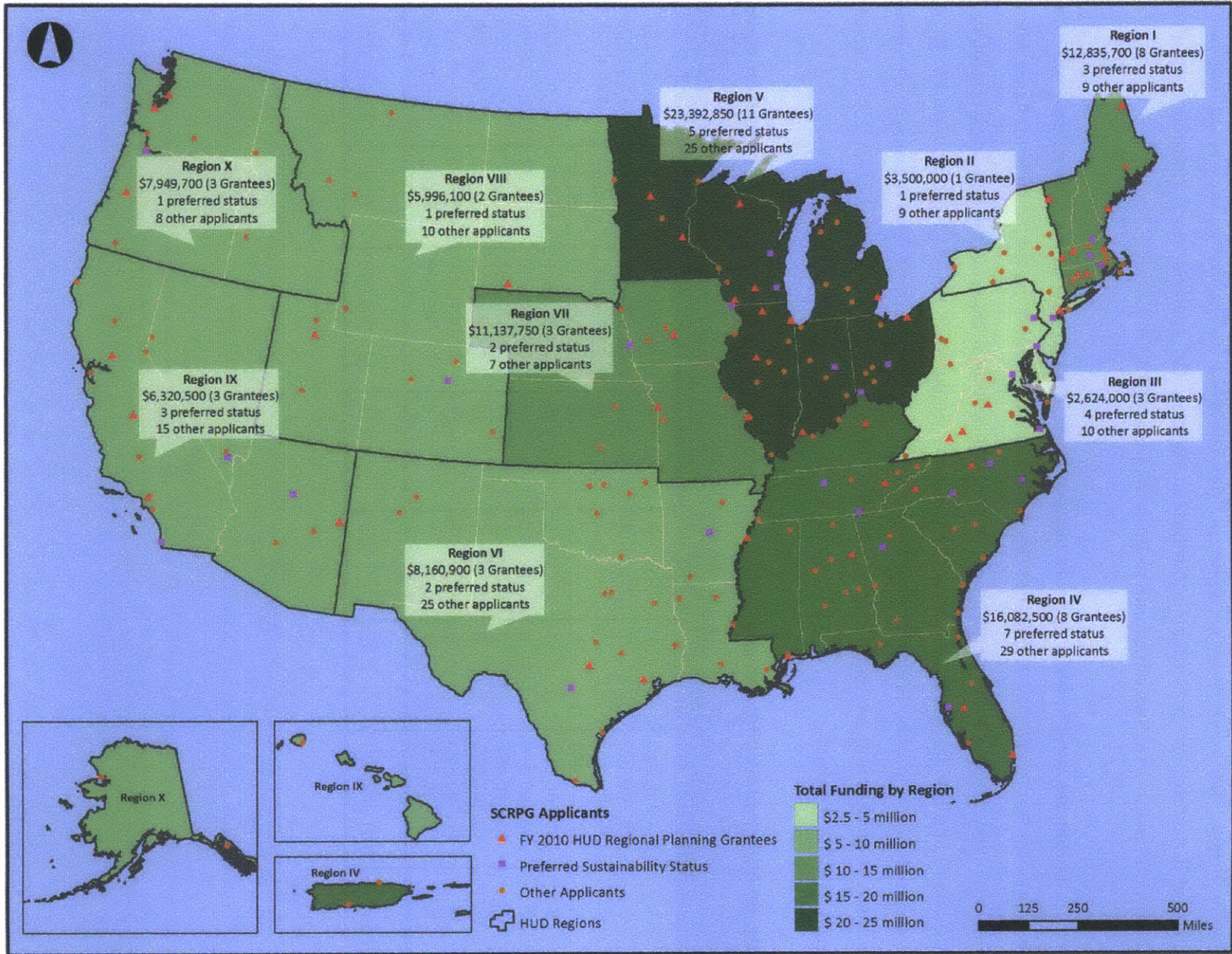
Spatial Distribution of Funding and Grantees

The largest total amount of funding given out by HUD through the SCRPG program was to Region V (Midwest), which is also where the highest number of grants were awarded (11), and which had the second-most total applications and has the second-largest population of the regions. Regions I (New England), IV (Southeast), and VII (Central) all also received over \$10 million in funding across 8, 8, and 3 grantees, respectively. Region I (New England), stood out in that it has a relatively small population (14.4 million), giving it by far the highest funding per

capita of any region. Conversely, Region III (Mid-Atlantic) had the lowest funding per capita in spite of it containing some major metropolitan regions. On average, each grantee here also received considerably less compared to other regions (\$874,667).

In general, total funding appears to have been focused east of the Mississippi, with the exception of Regions II (NY-NJ) and III (Mid-Atlantic), which received relatively little. Aside from Region I (New England), per capita funding was concentrated especially in the Central, Rocky-Mountain, and Pacific Northwest parts of the nation (Regions VII, VIII, and X) due in part to their low population numbers. Further research into the urban/rural, income, and racial split of these sums of money would be useful in understanding the spatial and equitable distribution of funds from SCRPG program.

<i>Region</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Grantees</i>	<i>Preferred Status</i>	<i>Other Applicants</i>	<i>Total Funding</i>	<i>Funding Per Capita</i>	<i>Average Funding Per Grantee</i>
I	14,429,720	8	3	9	\$12,835,700	\$0.89	\$1,604,463
II	28,249,192	1	1	9	\$3,500,000	\$0.12	\$3,500,000
III	29,491,391	3	4	10	\$2,624,000	\$0.09	\$874,667
IV	64,547,665	8	7	29	\$16,082,500	\$0.25	\$2,010,313
V	51,766,882	11	5	25	\$23,392,850	\$0.45	\$2,126,623
VI	37,860,549	3	2	25	\$8,160,900	\$0.22	\$2,720,300
VII	13,610,802	3	2	7	\$11,137,750	\$0.82	\$3,712,583
VIII	10,787,806	2	1	10	\$5,996,100	\$0.56	\$2,998,050
IX	47,495,705	3	3	15	\$6,320,500	\$0.13	\$2,106,833
X	12,734,126	3	1	8	\$7,949,700	\$0.62	\$2,649,900
Totals	310,973,838	45	29	147	\$98,000,000	\$0.32	\$2,177,778



Part Three | Reflecting On History

Since 2008, the Obama administration has been working on a comprehensive regional sustainable development³⁷ plan for metropolitan America. The plan has evolved to include a series of initiatives, executive orders, and, most notably, the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant (SCRPG). For all the pieces of the plan, the central motivation for the administration has remained the same: to create more sustainable communities. To the Obama administration, following through with this motivation has required a major revision of the federal urban policy framework to amend the accumulated policy failures that enabled diffuse development patterns, uncontrollable automobile reliance, and inequitable distribution of opportunity. In short, the administration has been working to stimulate a series of institutional changes to resolve these long-standing metropolitan problems.

To move these hopes into an implementable strategy, the HUD Secretary, Shaun Donovan, and others on President Obama's "metro" team went back fifty years into governmental history. From this evaluation, they found that today's landscape has been marked by (1) *new partnerships* between state and local governments that have become the major drivers of the production and preservation of affordable housing; (2) *new geographies* that have emerged where cities are no longer the sites of crisis but have become attractive places to live, and where the lines between cities and suburbs have blurred—revealing the "metropolitan" scale as the appropriate frame of place. The two "new" realities lead into the (3) *new business models* that have become widely implemented commonplace. These models build off recent innovation, technology, and data that the administration views as containing the framework to achieve better evidence-based policies.

The final product of their diagnostic conveys a "now" versus "then" story of policy deficits and differences in relation to the past fifty years. Despite the best efforts of city planners in the past, many of the metropolitan problems of the past still exist today. The Obama administration, specifically HUD, concluded that the policies of yesterday had a "one size fits all approach" to governing when it came to issues of poverty alleviation, affordable housing policies, and transportation investments. From the administration's point of view,

³⁷ Phrase is an excerpt from the HUD Strategic Plan for FY 2010-2015.

decisions were made in silos and through a top-down hierarchy that neglected to leverage local partnerships. With this evaluation of the past, the administration became hopeful that their plan, ripe with a set of new policy prescriptions, could permeate and transform the current urban policy apparatus into one distinctly different from the past.

The Metropolitan Approach in Context

Certainly the assumptions that guided metropolitan development in the 1960s corresponded to an older political economy, demography, and regulatory environment; they are not an ideal fit to address today's challenges (Chart 1). Fifty years ago, the focus was almost exclusively on the expansion of new housing through private enterprise and by clearing cities of blighted neighborhoods. These problems were just as complex and interdependent as the problems today, but were assumed to have tractable solutions. From this philosophy and perception of the "metro" problem, the federal government created institutions that infused metropolitan planning instruments across several layers of government. From 1949 until 1972, Congress supported a series of positive legislative and procedural actions at the federal level that created important metropolitan mechanisms in several program areas related to comprehensive planning for metropolitan development (Beckman, 1974) (Chart 2). This period stretched from the 81st to 92nd Congresses (1949-1973), during which these areas took on similar objectives, but effectively reflected different sets of assumptions about what metropolitan development must achieve. In short, it took over 25 years of congressional tinkering, practice, and local knowledge to define the process and products associated with the metropolitan development ideas of the past. This history has culminated in a set of institutions or norms of planning practice that have not only shifted but also left an indelible mark on the relationships, responsibilities, resources, and thereby power between state and local governments.

Today the Obama administration has been working to achieve similar shifts in order to guide metropolitan development along more environmentally and economically sustainable lines and towards more equitable outcomes. The issues that face metropolitan areas (e.g., poverty, homelessness, access to healthy food, etc.) have become even more integrated and complex than the issues that existed fifty years ago and qualify the Obama administration's "new" approach. Yet, the policies and congressional enactments of the past are still

responsible for the institutions that guide metropolitan development today. Not recognizing the history of existing institutional arrangements on which any new urban policy recommendations would rest could compromise the prospect of achieving the intended goals of the Obama administration.

The administration's "metro" plan is still in its infancy, anchored only by an executive order and inter-agency effort. It is too early to say what the administration can and cannot accomplish on advancing sustainable communities. So far, these hopes have been translated into a series of grant programs (including the SCRPG) administered by the Federal Interagency Partnership, but have not been granted legal mandate. Without this mandate, the Obama administration still has a long path to blaze if it is going to implement its concept of sustainable communities into daily governmental functions. Thus, it is important to follow through and re-examine the past fifty years to see what did and did not work. This sub-section will explore the ways in which Obama's Metropolitan Plan is similar and dissimilar from the past and offer reflections upon what might hinder or support the president's "metro" agenda. This analysis does not suggest historical equivalency, but simply advances a comparison in search for policy continuity and change.

Overview of the Argument

The central elements of the Obama administration's "metro" plan (sustainable communities, inter-agency collaboration, and equitable engagement) have effectively revived or transformed several historic tenets of past regional planning practices and metropolitan policies. Collectively, these policies have evolved from a unique vein of American planning history where metropolitan development by the late 1960s had been defined in terms of comprehensive planning, intergovernmental coordination, and individual citizen participation. The assumptions of each of these elements are further described in chart 1, which illustrates the differences between the assumptions of metropolitan development of the 1960s and those of today. It is useful to reflect upon the legislative history that brought comprehensive or metropolitan planning from an idealized "hope" to an implementable product that, in turn, has affected every facet of government. This will help us to better understand the reality of how long it may take to create the necessary institutional changes and collaborative arrangements for the concepts of sustainable development to be implemented and integrated into all areas of

government. This analysis will be structured by the following comparison of concepts between the two eras of planning history:

- (1) Comprehensive Planning of the 1960s versus the Obama Administration’s aspiration of creating Sustainable Communities
- (2) Intergovernmental Coordination versus Silo-Busting Collaboration; and
- (3) Individual Citizen Participation versus Equitable Engagement

Chart 1: “Old” and “New” Assumptions to Metropolitan Development

Assumptions Then	Assumptions Now
<p>Comprehensive planning</p> <p>Plans should address economic growth, physical development, and the associated social impacts. Under this concept, the primary assumption was that plans should follow a strict linear association and thus, usually inflexible project-based plan that provides a 'blueprint' for the intended end-state of physical development. Faludi (2000) further elaborated that the evaluation of a project plan must follow the logic of ends and means and conformance of outcomes to intentions as problems are assumed to stem from a direct cause and effect relationship (Brody, 2006; Wildavsky, 1973).</p>	<p>Sustainable Development</p> <p>Plans should address human development and physical growth along environmentally and economically sustainable ways. Under this concept, the primary assumption is that plans are strategic—open, integrated, and flexible to account for the complexities of the decision-making process. It assumes that deviation is expected and policy prescriptions will undergo modifications in response to uncertain political and socioeconomic conditions (Brody, 2006; Faludi, 1989). These plans were conditioned to respond to complexity and uncertainty.</p>
<p>Intergovernmental Coordination</p> <p>Horizontal intergovernmental coordination would enable increased service provision among states and their political subdivisions. A subsidiary assumption is that this type of horizontal coordination would increase efficiency in the federal grants-in-aid system and strengthens the comprehensive planning power of state governors (Public Law 90-577).</p>	<p>Interagency Collaboration</p> <p>Interagency (silo-busting) collaboration would break down programmatic silos that traditionally exist and prevent integrated policies that address housing, transportation, and environmental policies from successful formulation and implementation. The assumption here is that federal inter-agency collaboration would lead to collaboration at the local level.</p>
<p>Individual Citizen Participation</p> <p>Focus on individual participation to assess community needs.</p>	<p>Equitable Engagement</p> <p>Focus on groups or organizations that represent disenfranchised communities.</p>

Chart 2: Supportive Congressional Actions

Then	83rd Congress: (1953-1955) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Act, 1954 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, 1965 • Demonstration and Model Cities Act, 1966
	87th – 92nd Congress: (1961-1973) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Federal Aid Highway Act, 1962 • Economic Opportunity Act, 1964 • Urban Mass Transit Act, 1964 • Housing Act, 1965 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Act, 1968 • Civil Rights Act, 1968 • Intergovernmental Act, 1968 • National Environmental Policy Act, 1970 • Clean Water Act, 1972
Now	111th Congress: (2009-2011) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Clean Energy & Security Act, 2009 (<i>proposed, not enacted into law</i>) • Livable Communities Act, 2009 (<i>proposed, not enacted into law</i>) 	

Why Focus on Historical Continuity and Change in Metropolitan Planning?

The drive for metropolitan development has long been, and continues to be, the preferred strategy for achieving more livable communities and promoting a more effective government. The three approaches that are central to this analysis are comprehensive planning, intergovernmental coordination, and citizen participation, which have been defined as the fundamental precepts of metropolitan planning in the 1960s. Since America's golden age of post-war prosperity, these approaches have been defined variously as strategies to resolve fragmented physical infrastructure provision, lags in local economic development, inefficient service provision, or economic disparities.

Regional planning, the core functional concept behind the SCRPG program, has come to encompass these core starting points as well as a number of different institutionally targeted strategies and interventions. Many of the attempts to implement these core concepts, however, have never quite added up to a coherent, comprehensive, and sustained strategy. The historical evolution of federal regional policy has been disjointed and episodic, starting from ideas that first emerged under Roosevelt's National Resources Planning Board during the late 1930s, moving through an extended period of federal experimentation under Johnson's Great Society programs in the 1960s, and devolving into metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) that were solely conditioned by a transportation agenda from the 1980s to the present.

But the push for federal regional policy continues today, as it has for the better part of the past seventy-five years. Why have these themes endured and why do they continue to perpetuate in contemporary urban policies? The answer is straightforward—intergovernmental coordination is a fundamental precondition for effective comprehensive planning, where citizen participation is the key link to creating workable solutions.

The Ideals Behind Metropolitan Development

Whether it is called comprehensive planning, metropolitan development, or sustainable “regional” planning, this procession of ideas is part of a larger normative vision of achieving the “good society.” There is no litmus test for achieving the “good society;” this vision changes with time, but asks of the federal government, city planners, and civil society: What makes for a livable community? From a power and politics perspective, the responses to this ideal have differed vastly since the turn of the 20th Century. In the 1950s, this vision began with an emphasis on physical growth and spatial arrangement of major centers such as transportation networks, land use patterns, and housing construction. Planning during this time promoted expansion and efficiency for the sake of achieving a “well-balanced city³⁸.” Today, the question of what comprises the “livable community” has evolved into a multi-layered definition of metropolitan development aimed to promote “sustainable communities” through an awareness of the limits of growth that encompasses the elements described in Chapter Two, including equitable food access, climate change mitigation, and energy efficiency. While the support for the various types of metropolitan development policies has waxed and waned over the last sixty years, the continued appeal of these programs is not simply a matter of political expediency or theoretical musings. Rather, the programs are seen as a necessary vehicle through which the struggle for political power can be exercised in order to potentially improve the general social and economic welfare of communities.

If anything is certain, we know that the idea of metropolitan development continues to be a prominent part of planning and policy discourse. The practice has been established as a legitimate governmental endeavor, and federal policy continues to be the primary institutional

³⁸ The “well-balanced city” is one, which provides the full range of services and opportunities which any citizen can expect as a part of city living (Senate Report S. 3708, Model Cities, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1966) pg. 11.

factor in broadening its definition through administrative rules, regulations, opinions, and decisions issued from time to time by agencies of the executive branch. From an almost exclusive concern for physical development during the 1950s to a realization of the importance of non-physical aspects of development during the 1960s—comprehensive planning moved from a focus on the city to attempts to plan for metropolitan areas. And it advanced from almost open antagonism to politics to an understanding of the importance of being an integral part of the political process across both the vertical (between local municipalities) and horizontal (between federal agencies) dimension. To explore how metropolitan planning has evolved to contain sets of similar and dissimilar relationships and objectives, the following study of these three themes conveys a story of both policy continuity and change on this vital topic. While the topics will be presented sequentially, their order does not intend to suggest a particular hierarchy within the concept; rather, the topics are organized to reveal the three central (albeit, intertwined) thematic shifts in metropolitan development.

I. Comprehensive Planning versus Sustainable Communities

War, Emergency, and Postwar Housing³⁹

On August 15, 1945, World War II had come to an end and the United States emerged much richer than any other nation. The wartime industrial effort resuscitated the domestic economy far above the Great Depression's financial trough. By the early 1950s, the American gross domestic product per person was showing a promising upward swing—America had entered its golden era of postwar prosperity. Economic growth was well underway and feelings of optimism settled across the country. Hundreds of thousands of war veterans returned home to the passage of the G.I. Bill⁴⁰, which brought an unprecedented level of educational support, unemployment compensation, and loan guarantees to purchase homes and start small businesses.

As a result of the economic momentum, Americans were eager to turn their attention away from foreign affairs and focus on life at home. So too, did the federal government, as it began to endorse legislation that would result in widespread metropolitan expansion. The adoption of policies, coupled with the economic boom, ignited an explosive rise in suburban housing and interstate highway construction. Together, they would test the integrity of the planning implementation process to “broaden (or deepen) its comprehensiveness in mobilizing resources to achieve desired social and [I would argue, environmental] goals” (Webber, 1963).

City Planning is Stretched to Include the Metropolis

The post-war *zeitgeist* did more than alter American life: it also ushered in substantive changes that have had long-lasting implications for the American city planning movement. The Housing Act of 1949 marked a clarifying moment for the profession and its focus on metropolitan expansion during the 1950s. Subsequent legislation paved the way for planning to become a firmly recognized governmental function for addressing the decade's rapid citizen

³⁹ Titling of the major housing legislation passed during the 1940s. (Congressional Research Service, Committee Print 103-2, 1992).

⁴⁰ Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, P.L. 78-346, 58 Stat. 284m. Over the life of the act, 7.8 million World War II veterans had participated in an education or training program and 2.4 million veterans had home loans backed by the Veterans' Administration (VA).

interest and action concerning urban living, decay of the central city, and problems associated with population growth at the metropolitan scale. This section will explore the transformation of comprehensive planning in the 1950s and 1960s and then compare that analysis with the Obama administration’s goal of creating “sustainable communities.”

Defining the Terms: The “Well-Balanced City” versus “Sustainable Communities”

	The Well Balanced City	Sustainable Communities
Definitions	<p>A well-balanced city (1950s-1970s) is one that contains a mixture of facilities and services needed to serve diverse groups of people living and working in the city. It also implies adequate job opportunities and a transportation system to permit movement between residence, shopping, working areas, parks, and other recreational facilities (Public Law 89-174; S. Rept. 1439; 1966).</p> <p>Sustainable communities (2000s) are a collection of interlinked cities that exist in a metropolitan landscape and are inclusive and free from discrimination. First, these communities catalyze economic development and job creation, while enhancing and preserving community assets. Second, they promote energy efficient buildings and location-efficient communities that are healthy, affordable, and diverse. Third, they facilitate disaster preparedness, recovery, and resiliency. Fourth, they seek to build the capacity of local, state, and regional public and private organizations.</p>	
Process and Products	<p>Comprehensive Planning According to prominent planning theorists over the past three decades, that this process’ objective is to produce a comprehensive plan is a long-range plan for the whole city; it covers the city geographically; it recognizes the interrelationships between traditional planning concerns with the physical environment and the social and economic consequences of physical development; it addresses each function that makes the city work as a physical entity and that affects its physical form; it is a statement of policy rather than a program of specific actions; and its is intended to guide city officials in future actions (Kent, 1965; Webber, 1963; Altshuler, 1965, Black, 1968; So and Gertzels, 1988; Innes, 1996).</p> <p>Products The Urban General Plan A Comprehensive Plan for a city or region</p>	<p>Multi-Level Regional Planning Specified under the SCRPG NOFA, the objective of the required multi-level regional planning process was to integrate community input and create a set of deliverables from the community and municipal-levels into a unified region-wide plan that encompasses all districts and neighborhoods and that focuses and coordinates infrastructure investment. The process seeks to coordinate federal housing and transportation investments with local land use decisions in order to reduce transportation costs for families, improve housing affordability, save energy, and increase access to housing and employment opportunities.</p> <p>Products Regional Plan for Sustainable Development</p>

<i>Enabling Enactments</i>	<p>The Housing Act of 1954</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Title VII §701 (c) and (d) “Comprehensive Planning Grant Program” 	<p>Sustainable Communities Initiative, 2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant (SCRPG) - Transportation Investments Geared for Economic Recovery (TIGER)
	<p>Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Title I Comprehensive City Demonstration Programs - Title II Planned Metropolitan Development 	
	<p>Clean Water Act of 1972, §208</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water Quality Management Planning 	

The two paradigms span the past fifty years and exist in a vastly different cultural and political context. First, both paradigms expand the idea of the “city” beyond its traditional jurisdiction so that any plan for the city inherently necessitated a “coordinated” metropolitan approach—understanding the relationships between the central city and outlining jurisdictions. Second, each notion articulated specific (although different) conditions for how metropolitan development should take place. In the 1950s through 1970s, the idea of the well-balanced city emerged at the zenith of comprehensive planning for metropolitan development as it incorporated the full evolution of the practice in that the concept accounted for the need to integrate physical, social, and economic planning. On the other hand, the idea of sustainable communities took this thematic integration several steps further and deepened the field’s consciousness on equity, energy efficiency, access to opportunity (e.g., healthy food, jobs, and education), and the need to reduce programmatic silos between housing, transportation, and the environment that are often caused by ill-coordinated land-use decisions. Aside from lessons from practice or societal norms, how did these paradigms become entrenched and adopted by practitioners? If both essentially support a larger vision for a more livable environment, what’s to account for the difference in these paradigms?

Implementing metropolitan development has always been intricately linked to the intergovernmental federal grants-in-aid system. Many of the laws that authorize federal grants require that state and local governments adopt plans or engage in the planning process in order to be eligible for federal funds. Thus, much of the underlying premises of the two development philosophies mentioned have been legitimized through federal legislative or

programmatic enactments. These enactments hold important historical material for explaining the difference between the two time intervals. The next section will explore how federal policy shaped the field of metropolitan governance and development.

The Beginning of Federal Policy and Metropolitan Planning (1949-1954)

In the beginning of the post-war period, one of the first orders of business for the federal government was to focus on settling the ongoing “battle [between state and local governments] to bring attention and dollars to bear on several of the nation’s most pressing problems: substandard housing, slums and blight and, by implication, center-city decentralization” (Birch, 1999 *citing* The New York Times, November 27, 1949). The ongoing housing battle compelled President Truman to declare a national housing policy and goal asserting that the “general welfare and security of the Nation required that every American family [should] have a decent home and suitable living environment” (Public Law 81-171, July 15, 1949). The president’s message gave the impetus for Congress to pass the Housing Act of 1949, with Title I of the Housing Act of 1949⁴¹ entitled *Slum Clearance and Urban Renewal*. The law launched a 25-year effort to revitalize the central city⁴² through eradicating the poor housing conditions that plagued several central cities. The programs that the law created were substantial, as it incorporated a formula that engaged federal, state, and local governments in partnerships to attack the visible, physical evidence of obsolete land uses in American cities.

The passage of the 1949 Housing Act authorized (for the first time) appropriations for *Urban Planning Grants*⁴³ and granted state-delegated powers of eminent domain to carry out the act’s mandate to eliminate inadequate housing through clearance of slums and blight. With these authorizations, local governments were able to collect, demolish, and then sell parcels of

⁴¹ The Housing Act of 1949 took on several iterations. The Housing Acts of 1954, 1959, 1965, and 1968 all included significant changes such that by 1974, when the program ended, the legislation was “a shadow of the original” bill (Birch, 1999).

⁴² By the time urban renewal funding ended in 1974, local authorities had been awarded federal support for more than 2,100 distinct urban renewal projects with grants totaling approximately \$53 billion (in 2009 dollars), as well as smaller sums for related activities (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD] 1974a). After 1974, federal funds were channeled to cities under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

⁴³ Grants could not exceed 50 percent of the estimated cost of the planning work.

land in “blighted” urban areas for public-private redevelopment. The 1949 authorization gave the Administrator of the Housing and Home Finance Authority (HHFA) the power to make grants to official “State, metropolitan, or regional planning agencies empowered under state or local laws to perform planning work in metropolitan and regional areas, and to state planning agencies for the provision of planning assistance to cities and other municipalities with populations of less than 25,000” (Public Law 81-171, July 15, 1949). Although the act at first conditionally provided planning funds only to the state, it had a critical piece in catalyzing local planning efforts for wide-scale redevelopment, but the 1949 program in its initial phase specified that planning funds should only be used for generating surveys, land-use studies, urban renewal plans, and technical services.

This restricted use of funding underscores a prominent shortcoming that Eugenie Birch observed about the urban renewal programs. She emphasized that the early years of urban renewal programs were grounded on a philosophy that slum clearance and blighted neighborhoods were a correctable problem that could be solved through rational land use planning (Birch, 1999). Thus, attention was focused on the physical relationships of the city since elements such as building a new rail line are tangible and their benefit can be measured (Altshuler, 1965). The fundamental instrument in bringing this philosophy and comprehension into practice beginning in the 1950s was the “urban general plan⁴⁴.”

The urban general plan that expanded significantly in scope over the years became popularly referred to as the *comprehensive plan*. The general plan used the metropolis, not the traditional city, as the base and stressed overall policy guidance to conduct physical growth and spatial organization. T.J. Kent, the leading proponent of the general plan, defined it to deal with five basic elements: land use, circulation, community facilities, civic design, and utilities. Broadly, he stated that the urban general plan is:

... “The official statement of a municipal legislative body which sets forth its major policies concerning desirable future physical development that is not flexible; it will include a single, unified general physical design for the community, and it must attempt to clarify the relationships between physical development politics and social and economic goals” (Kent, 1964).

⁴⁴ The first and most widely recognized definition of the term originates from T.J. Kent’s *The Urban General Plan* (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1964) pg. 18. Note that several texts from the mid-1960s onward use the term “Comprehensive Plan” to refer to Kent’s *Urban General Plan*.

By the mid- to late-1950s, cities were growing rapidly and urban renewal programs began to slowly uproot traditional civic ties and displace blocks of residents from their “blighted” homes. As a result, people began to recognize that their emphasis on physical development created a series of far-reaching social consequences, particularly in cities with vigorous urban renewal plans. In 1958, *New York Times* writer Thomas Ennis reported that the “spreading of American metropolitan areas [were growing in] a maze-like pattern of septic tank suburban civilizations” due to the lack of local “comprehensive” planning (*New York Times*, March 20, 1958). While popular media began to question the efficacy of suburban growth, planning theorists began to question the intellectual underpinnings of Kent’s concept of the general plan, which unraveled for three reasons.

First, the inflexibility of the general plan was at odds with the need for non-physical or social planning. Second, the general plan was not anchored in the political process of local and state governments and, therefore, not thought of as a means of influencing both the public and private decision-making processes. Third, comprehensive planning lacked federal sponsorship. Up until the mid-1950s, the term “comprehensive planning” had generally come to be synonymous with the term “general plan.” Comprehensiveness was seen in the fact that it considered all physical components for which the plan was drawn (Perloff, 1956; Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies, 1970). As planning moved to consider its impact on the political process and other unexplored areas of social planning, rather than producing a series of land use outcomes, a variety of metropolitan planning units and unofficial cooperative arrangements were being established between local governments to coordinate issues of mutual interest. As a result, the federal government began to explore the idea of comprehensive planning for metropolitan areas under a new light.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Under the Housing Act of 1949, slum clearance and urban redevelopment projects were required to be consistent with local plans for the municipality as a whole. The 1954 Housing Act established a citywide “workable program” requirement for the expanded urban renewal program, e.g., public housing. Planning subsequently became an integral workable element to help guide city growth and improvement. Grants provided help preparing the comprehensive plans required for local workable programs and renewal activities. (Pg. 17, Senate Report of MCA, 1966) “Assistance was also provided for metropolitan planning activities, as distinct from citywide planning.”

The Evolution of Comprehensive Planning for Metropolitan Areas (1954-1968)

A major stimulus for metropolitan areas to organize integrated social and economic planning was section 701 sub-parts (a) and (d) of the Housing Act of 1954⁴⁶; section 701(a) authorized federal grants-in-aid for planning to official local, metropolitan, and state planning agencies with a population of less than 50,000 lacking adequate planning resources, and section 701 (d) spelled out the federal government's objective to establish formalized metropolitan planning agencies.

Section 701(a) states:

...“In order to assist state and local governments in solving planning problems resulting from increasing concentration of population in metropolitan and other urban areas, including smaller communities, to facilitate comprehensive planning for urban development by state and local government on a continuing basis, and to encourage state and local governments to establish and develop planning staffs, the [Housing] Administrator⁴⁷ is authorized to make planning grants”...

The adoption of section 701 demonstrated Congress' intent to encourage the establishment and continuation of urban planning oriented to the analysis of problems associated with urban growth and the formulation of local plans, policies, and procedures with which to minimize the adverse effects of growth. Furthermore, Congress included specific guidance concerning the extent of the area for which planning should be done—sub-part (a) contained the provision that “planning assisted under this section shall, to the maximum extent feasible, cover entire urban areas having common or related urban development problems” (Public Law 83-560). Furthermore, the act attempted to establish a basic definition of comprehensive planning in sub-part (d); the section specifically stated the following⁴⁸:

- (1) Preparation, as a guide for long-range development, of general physical plans with respect to the pattern and intensity of land use and the provisions of public facilities, including transportation facilities, together with long-range fiscal plans for such development;

⁴⁶ Public Law 83-560: 68 Stat. 590, 640; U.S.C. 461.

⁴⁷ In 1965, the Housing Administrator position would become the Secretary of HUD.

⁴⁸ Public Law 83-560.

- (2) Programming of capital improvements based on a determination of relative urgency, together with definitive financing plans for the improvements to be constructed in the earlier years of the program;
- (3) Coordination of all related plans of the departments or subdivisions of the government concerned;
- (4) Intergovernmental coordination of all related planned activities among the state and local governmental agencies concerned; and
- (5) Preparation of regulatory and administrative measures in support of the foregoing.

In sum, the Housing Act of 1954 introduced a federal notion of “comprehensive planning” that left an indelible mark on the planning profession and its treatment of metropolitan development. However, the federal government would continue to specify and expand the concept of comprehensive planning. By the 1960s, the federal government began to establish guidelines for specific elements of the comprehensive planning process.

Re-Configuring Transportation Planning

In 1962, Congress passed the Federal-Aid Highway Act⁴⁹ that provided another major stimulus to planning in metropolitan areas as well as further articulating federal planning policy. It provided that the Secretary (then of Commerce, now of Transportation) could not approve programs for highway construction in any urban area with a population of more than 50,000 without finding that proposed highway projects “are based on a continuing comprehensive transportation planning process carried on cooperatively by state and local communities.” This provision established the “3C transportation planning process⁵⁰” (continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative) and declared a new national policy, “to encourage and promote the development of transportation systems embracing various modes of transport in a manner that will serve the state and local communities efficiently.” At this point, there was a shortage of qualified planning agencies that had the appropriate agreements in place with contiguous local governments to execute the 3C transportation planning process.

In response to this shortage, the Department of Commerce provided funding and technical assistance towards helping jurisdictions form regional or metropolitan planning

⁴⁹ Public Law 87-866; 76 Stat. 1145; 23 U.S.C. 101.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, § 134-135.

agencies, a kind of precursor to the development of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). Additionally, the 1962 Act required that applicants seeking funds under the act's appropriation must coordinate their proposals to align with their urban planning assistance (701) grants. The bill stated that "activities in urban transportation planning in each metropolitan area and state highway departments" were encouraged by the Bureau of Public Roads to coordinate their planning activities with those of area-wide and local comprehensive planning agencies. This was the first time the federal government suggested policy alignment and coordination with the 701-grant program. In some ways, this can be viewed as federal inter-agency advocacy of comprehensive urban planning from within the Department of Transportation.

Water, Sewer Systems, and Public Utilities

The Housing Act of 1965⁵¹ increased the authorization of appropriations for urban planning grants by \$125 million with a specific focus on basic water and sewer facilities. The act permitted up to 5 percent of the appropriated funds to be used for grants for studies, research, and demonstration projects, for improvement of techniques for planning, and for advancement of urban planning assistance program. Most importantly, the act required conformance with area-wide planning as a prerequisite to receive grant funds and allowed for organizations composed of public officials in metropolitan or urban regions to be eligible for urban planning grants. This specification essentially established funding and legal authority for metropolitan areas to establish MPOs. Additionally, the provisions of Section 702c took up an additional sub-topic of metropolitan development. In the legislation, there was a concern for managing the impacts on water, sewer systems, and other public utilities that stem from rapid urbanization. This recognition was clearly illustrated through the requirement that a project be:

- (1) Designed so that an adequate capacity will be available to serve the reasonably foreseeable growth needs of the area;
- (2) Consistent with a program meeting certain criteria...for a unified and officially coordinated development of area-wide water or sewer facility systems as a part of the comprehensively planned development of the area; and
- (3) Necessary to orderly community development.

⁵¹ Public Law 89-117; 79 Stat. 451;42 U.S.C. 3102.

While the federal government began to consider the impacts of urbanization on the provision of water and other “functional” utilities, Congress amended the 1954 Housing Act and included Section 701(g), which provided an extra legislative guideline for comprehensive planning in metropolitan areas. This provision authorized the HHFA Administrator to:

...“To the maximum extent feasible, all grants under this subsection shall be for activities relating to all the developmental aspects of the total metropolitan area or urban region, including but not limited to, land use, transportation, housing, economic development, natural resources development, community facilities, and the general improvement of living environments...”

Compared to the relatively brief paragraph that described section 701 in the 1954 Act, the addition of 701(g) provided an unprecedented amount of guidance. By 1965, the volume of urban planning grants for metropolitan development saw a sizable increase. Nearly \$80 million⁵² had been allocated for comprehensive planning alone as well as for several other types of urban and community development grants. However, there was still no unified definition of what a “comprehensive plan” must include. Since every jurisdiction is different, was a formalized definition necessary? After all, the rigidity of Kent’s *Urban General Plan* caused many planners and critics to conclude that establishing static outcomes for the growth of a region was an exercise in futility. There were no rigid benchmarks for what 701 funds were purposed to achieve, so as the number of grant funds and programs expanded, there was a growing need to sharpen and better coordinate the overall assistance provision.

Creating a “Total Attack” Approach⁵³

By 1965, the political climate was ripe for further federal actions to meet the increasing needs of the central city’s poor and minority groups. Urban Renewal programs had now existed for the better part of 20 years, only to reveal, according to Raymond Vernon (1962) that urban development largely did “not represent the public interest, [rather] it mirrored the values of a limited elite group of users of the central city.” While Vernon’s viewpoint could be seen as unconventional, Friedan and Kaplan (1975) wrote that Urban Renewal (the largest federal

⁵² Estimate taken from [Feiss, Carl (1985) “The Foundations of Federal Planning Assistance: A Personal Account of the 701 Program.” *Journal of American Planning Association*. 51: 2, 175-184.]

⁵³ Senate Report No. 1439, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966.

grant-in-aid program available to cities) had regressed to “refurbish the central business district, build housing for middle- and upper-income families, and bolster their property tax base.” As a result, the intended beneficiaries of the program had become its victims, while the actual beneficiaries were real estate developers causing misfortunate spillover effects for poor and minority communities.

In response to these unintended and misfortunate results, President Johnson, supported by a congressional mandate, established the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The office’s primary task was to revise and fix the urban renewal program and thereby recapitulate a new definition of comprehensive planning for metropolitan planning and provide better coordination across the federal grants-in-aid system. Specifically, the mandate instructed the newly formed office to:⁵⁴

...“Assist communities in solving community and metropolitan development problems [and] encourage regional cooperation in planning and development; encourage comprehensive planning by state and local governments with coordinating federal, state, and local community development activities, and encourage private enterprise...”

The creation of HUD and its prescribed order deeply affected the local planning process. In 1965, President Johnson assembled a task force to find out what went wrong in the past. The following year, the task force set the stage for the enactment of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Act of 1966. The goal of this act was to establish comprehensive city demonstration programs for rebuilding slum and blighted areas through the following strategies:

- (1) Concentrate available resources—in planning tools, housing construction, job training, health facilities, recreation, welfare programs, and education—to improve the conditions of life in urban areas.
- (2) Coordinate all federal assistance.
- (3) Mobilize local leadership and private initiative.

⁵⁴ Public Law 89-174; September 9, 1965.

The Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act moved through the history books with numerous sources of praise and criticism that are outside the scope of this section. The act was the first formalized statement from the federal government that comprehensive planning to improve the total quality of life must entail innovative and flexible strategies that address both the physical and social aspects of residential life (Keyes, 1969). The legislation, however, would ultimately be weakened by the failure of Congress to authorize funds for the entire program, and disagreements emerged on the scope and meaning of the term “comprehensive city demonstration program.” In the process, the act was particularly significant in asserting the federal interest in improving the process of coordinating major federal investments and redefined the way in which comprehensive planning is to take place along lines of improving the physical environment, thus increasing the supply of adequate housing for low- and moderate-income people, and providing educational and social services vital to the public health and human welfare⁵⁵.

Policy Implications

Tracing all of the layers of this story is a difficult task, but the purpose of this historical narrative was to illustrate that federal policy on the planning process has been deliberate as much as it has been disparate. As time went on, the ideal of comprehensive planning would continue to be re-worked, especially between 1969 and 1972, when Congress passed the National Environmental Protection Act and Clean Water Act that would strengthen and add to topics considered in a comprehensive plan. Overall, the emphasis of the federal government toward comprehensive planning has been to support more closely unified, multi-functional planning, and to move toward stronger linkages between the planning process and the execution of plans. Throughout this historical analysis, HUD has been the primary federal agency specifying how metropolitan development occurs on the ground, most notably directed through Section 701, which became popularly referred to as the Comprehensive Planning Grant Program.

Unfortunately, funding for the Section 701 (*Planning Assistance*) program was fully suspended and its administrative and regulatory eliminated in 1981.⁵⁶ According to the Senate

⁵⁵ Senate Report No. 1439, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966.

⁵⁶ Report of the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, *Housing Amendments of 1981*. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington DC, 1981. (Full Suspension of the “701 Planning

report that documented this repeal,⁵⁷ “the essential features of this program can be accommodated under the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).” Between 1954 when the grant program began and its final year, the “number 701 was a magic number to American planning commissions” as the program was well endowed by federal appropriations (Feiss, 1985). Over its twenty-seven-year life, the federal government’s provision for local planning assistance went from \$1 million annually to \$100 million annually, amounting to a total of roughly \$1 billion (ibid.).

We cannot assess the effectiveness of the Section 701 grant program, because HUD—for reasons that are unknown—did not specify evaluation benchmarks. As of August 2011, none of the Section 701 Program grants reports are widely available. Instead, this precious interval of planning history exists in boxes that have been stored in a total of 2,036 cubic feet of space in the Library of Congress. However, the program has made an incalculable contribution to furthering federal metropolitan engagement and the planning discourse. In 1949, metropolitan planning was not a part of the Congressional lexicon; by the late 1960s, metropolitan planning dominated much of the federal urban policy initiatives.

The policies enacted from 1949 until the mid-1970s have transformed the idea of comprehensive planning from static physical development to the full incorporation of social and economic needs by creating institutions that would entrench these programs. The Obama administration’s metropolitan agenda is only in its second year of implementing programs. Without the support from Congress, it is difficult to assess if the hopes and wishes of Obama’s agenda will translate into infusing sustainable development into all aspects of government. The vibrant trajectory of policy change that this section illustrates, however, can offer an important lesson about the overall context of federal engagement in metropolitan affairs today. Whether the goal is to create well-balanced cities or sustainable communities, both ideals are not entirely dissimilar and require the integration and balancing of sometimes opposing objectives. The landscape is not new, but rather demonstrates that the different approaches to meeting the objective are an important.

Grant Program” was finalized in the Title III, Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, Public Law 97-35, August 13, 1981).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

II. Intergovernmental Coordination versus Silo-Busting Collaboration

“The Intergovernmental Maze and the “Management Muddle”⁵⁸”

By 1965, new criticisms were being lodged against the federal government for their inability to deal with the turbulent times for communities living in the inner city, which resulted in part from a tangled and ill-monitored intergovernmental system. The country on the state of the optimism that characterized most of the early post-war period had faded into a morass of In 1949, the federal government spent \$894 million to help state and local governments augment their public programs, of which the majority of funds were appropriated to Urban Renewal programs. By the late 1960s, Congress authorized 400 grant programs totaling a net expenditure of \$18 billion to be administered by roughly 21 departments and agencies.⁵⁹ Most of these programs were categorical grants that each contained separate eligibility criteria, application process, reporting requirements, specific clientele, and allowable objects of spending (Conlan, 2006).

Despite the numerous grant programs, the majority of these funds seldom assisted cities in coping with complex, crosscutting problems, such as the economic segregation and poverty that hit black urban neighborhoods the hardest. Specifically, the Urban Renewal programs that had originally been tasked to alleviate some of these pressures, had failed to improve the living and economic conditions of the poor and minority groups. In response to the severity of these issues and discontent, President Johnson was eager to assess the shortcomings of the urban renewal programs and the growing difficulty of coordinating the rapidly growing number of federal aid programs for cities (Frieden and Kaplan, 1975). These concerns constituted the impetus for the Johnson Administration’s War on Poverty, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and the Metropolitan Development and Demonstration Cities Act of 1966. Each of these enactments is relevant to strengthening intergovernmental

⁵⁸ In 1966, Senator Edmund Muskie, head of the Intergovernmental Relations Subcommittee, coined this term when investigating the federal grants-in-aid system. He expressed that in “the past [congress] concentrated primarily on the policies of government, the spotlight now, must be turned on the procedures of government...here is where the Great Society will succeed or fail.” *New York Times*, *Congress is Facing Fight on U.S. Aid*, December 4, 1966.

⁵⁹ [Ibid; Walker, 1995; U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, *Fiscal Balance in the American Federal System*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967).]

coordination. In sum, the objective of this section is to understand how the Johnson Administration coordinated the federal metropolitan effort at a time when the cost and number of programs experienced a significant increase over past administrations. Exploring the proposed solution to this “management muddle” will provide insights on the prospects of Obama’s strategy to promote silo-busting (inter-agency) collaboration.

Defining the Terms: Coordination versus Silo-Busting Collaboration

	Intergovernmental Coordination	Silo-Busting Collaboration
Definitions	<p>Intergovernmental (Vertical) Coordination (1960s) or cooperation was intended by a legislative mandate to improve the operation and administration of grants-in-aid and provide reimbursable technical assistance services to state and local government. This was intended to establish coordinated intergovernmental policy to administer development assistance programs. This mandate also required periodic congressional review of these grants (Public Law 90-577; 1968).</p> <p>Silo-Busting (Horizontal) Collaboration (2000s) assumes that local and regional leaders often scramble to fit working local programs into ill-fitting, narrower, and inflexible Federal grants and programs. Simultaneously, cities, suburbs, and exurbs often compete with one another for limited funds or create duplicative programs. Silo-busting collaboration was described as a means of encouraging more bottoms-up, multi-dimensional and multi-jurisdictional problem solving. The federal government assumed that this variation of collaboration should first promote, horizontal collaboration among federal agencies whose policies might hold cross-purposes.</p>	

Process and Products	<p>Intergovernmental Coordination (<i>The A-95 Review Process</i>)</p> <p>Title IV of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1968 established by federal statute, the A-95 Review Process intended to foster and coordinate the planning of local, regional, and state, projects supported by federal funds. The process was intended to bring state and sub-state applicants for federal funds into contact with similar local and state agencies that hold similar responsibilities. The mechanism for establishing coordination was an “early warning system,” that required a local applicant seeking to apply for a federal grant to notify state or regional agencies.</p> <p>Products OMB Circular No. A-95 Project Review Notification Review System (PNRS)</p>	<p>Silo-Busting Collaboration</p> <p>With respect to the Administration’s urban and metropolitan policy priorities, the idea of silo-busting collaboration has proposed a series of coordinated investments, local and regional collaboration across programmatic functions, evidence-driven and merit-based investments, and support for communities on the ground in more targeted and flexible ways. This new approach has been implemented with the following interagency place-based initiatives: Regional Innovation Clusters (RIC), Partnership for Sustainable Communities (PSC), and the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (NRI). (President Obama, FY2012 Budget).</p> <p>Products <i>A Comprehensive Review of Federal Programs Impacting Places</i>⁶⁰</p>
	<p>Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 - §204 Planned Metropolitan Development</p> <p>Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, 1968 - OMB Circular A-95</p>	<p>None</p>

Defining the Problem: Grodzin’s Marble Cake⁶¹

From 1949 to the mid-1960s, the field of comprehensive planning for metropolitan development developed into a complex practice. As a result, the activities of federal agencies, state governments, and their political subsystems were significantly altered. This change occurred first within the federal administrative agencies. Congress authorized a wide variety of regulations, requirements, and grant opportunities in response to the growing need for planning assistance to the state, metro, and local scale, which in turn led to more offices, bureaus, and agencies. Second, the lack of a general-purpose metropolitan government tier

⁶⁰ Retrieved: August 4, 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2010/06/30/place-based-investments>

⁶¹ Morton Grodzin, “The Federal System,” Goals for Americans, Report of the President’s Commission on National Goals, 1960.

led to the proliferation of governments, special districts, and other contractual arrangements in metropolitan areas. These entities struggled to individually or collectively provide the services desired by their constituencies. Friesema (1966) asserted that intergovernmental relations between jurisdictions in metropolitan areas are sporadic and develop on an ad-hoc basis; as a result, the decision-making process commonly defaulted into the hands of special agencies and/or the private sector, both with little power to direct, initiate, or arbitrate conflicts to achieve the types of coordination needed to implement comprehensive planning (ibid.; Center for Metropolitan Studies, 1970).

In 1960, Morton Grodzin interpreted the governmental system as a “marble cake,” that has been horizontally spread across the metropolitan map, and is layered vertically by the federal system, which tends to transmit most of its fiscal resources to or through the states and local agencies. While President Johnson was the first president to articulate and enact specific policy to coordinate the federal grants-in-aid effort, these issues had been brewing since the early 1950s. Specifically, President Eisenhower, foreseeing these coordination issues, created the Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (Kestnbaum Commission). In 1961, the commission studied the state of the federal grants-in-aid system and noted that “the fragmented and conflicting impact at the state and local level of Federal programs concerning urban highways, urban renewal, housing, airport, sewage facility construction, and so on, are well known⁶².” Commenting on the commission’s findings, Frieden and Kaplan (1975) found that this assessment was directed mainly at problems of waste, duplication, and misuse of resources. These problems prompted several cries for help from state and local agencies, as planners and politicians vocalized frustration over the maze of procedures they had to complete to get a federal grant. By 1966, too much money was at stake, and members of Congress from both the left and the right began to question the effectiveness of these investments. These doubts from within Congress, coupled with frustration on the ground, pushed the federal government to provide an immediate solution. With HUD already tasked to coordinate some of this effort, Congress focused on creating a procedural mechanism that could help local and state governments navigate the intergovernmental maze⁶³ and the

⁶² U.S. Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, *Governmental Structure and Organization, and Planning In Metropolitan Areas*. (Washington DC: U.S. Governmental Printing Office, 1961).

⁶³ Friesema, 1966.

emerging sea of one-stop⁶⁴ metropolitan development grant programs.

The Idea of Coordination and Clearinghouses

Section 204 of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act⁶⁵ laid the foundation for legislation designed to coordinate federal grants-in-aid. Section 204 of the act provided that all applications for federal assistance to comprehensive planning tasks within a metropolitan area must be submitted to an area-wide planning agency for review and comment. The section was also intended to stimulate agencies with narrow functional responsibilities to examine the relationships of their projects to area-wide plans for urban growth and development and to other traditionally siloed functions.

In addition to Section 204, Section 205 of this act proposed to provide incentives in the form of supplemental grants for areas already using existing funds to achieve “effective metropolitan planning, as recommended by...President [Johnson’s] recent message⁶⁶ on comprehensive city demonstration programs.” Unfortunately, the incentive grants proposed in Section 205 lost political favor, and Congress never authorized funds in accordance with the provisions of the section (Center for Metropolitan Studies, 1970). Section 204, was enacted on July 1, 1967 only to be suspended in name a year later by Section 201 of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1968, which was proposed to build upon the two years of experience the federal government gained under administering Section 204.

The Intergovernmental Act of 1968 enabled the President and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to establish rules and regulations to promote intergovernmental coordination through improving the relationships between state and local governments applying for federal community development assistance funds.⁶⁷ The most

⁶⁴ Generally one-stop programs do not address the totality of a problem; rather they provide immediate assistance for a small element of a larger project.

⁶⁵ Public Law 89-74; 80 Stat. 1255; 42 U.S.C. 3301.

⁶⁶ On January 26, 1966, President Johnson emphasized “comprehensive city demonstration programs are sets of local initiatives that have developed new and imaginative ways of dealing with the physical and social problems of slum and blighted areas.”

⁶⁷ Legislation follows from the recommendations provided in the Kestnbaum Commission 1961 Report.

impactful piece of the legislation was the creation of OMB Circular A-95⁶⁸, which required all applications for federal funds from the act to be reviewed by a state, regional, or metropolitan clearinghouse. This was an important and unprecedented move on behalf of the federal government: A-95 stipulated that all applications for federal grants must first pass through a metropolitan clearinghouse to be analyzed in terms of their area-wide impact.

Shifting from Policy to Process and Procedure

The A-95 Review Process provided a definitive statement on comprehensive planning. In particular, this document clarified the goals and implementation process of comprehensive planning. According to the Circular A-95, the comprehensive planning process must entail the following:⁶⁹

- Preparation as guide for governmental policies and action, of general plans with respect to:
 - a. *Pattern and intensity of land use.*
 - b. *Provision of public facilities (including transportation and other government services).*
 - c. *Effective development and utilization of human and natural resources.*
- Preparation of long-range physical and fiscal plans for such action.
- Programming of capital improvements and other major expenditures, based on a determination of relative urgency, together with definitive financing plans for such expenditures in the earlier years of the program.
- Coordination of all related plans and activities of the state and local governments and agencies concerned.
- Preparation of regulatory and administrative measures in support of the foregoing.

The A-95 Review Process: Strengths, Shortcomings, and Next Steps

This list constituted the federal government's primary intergovernmental coordination mechanism until 1982, when A-95 was suspended. This process was seen by the federal government as a way to help local governments establish the intergovernmental linkages required to bring all the components into an implementable comprehensive plan. To this effect, the program attempted to penetrate daily bureaucratic functions; if the review process was

⁶⁸ Initially, the A-95 review process applied to 50 federal programs and by 1979 covered more than 240 programs (Steinman, 1979).

⁶⁹ Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies citing OMB Circular A-95.

widely internalized into the local decision-making process, then it held the potential to redistribute power and resources. If we assumed that the A-95 requirement was upheld in strict accordance to its intended objectives—requiring all federal planning grants to only be granted if the municipality accepted greater responsibility for area-wide needs—then the process could have encouraged suburban communities and central cities to direct greater attention to alleviating the problems of the metropolitan region as a whole. However, the accomplishments of this review process and its procedural prescriptions fell significantly short of its stated goals.

It is not a matter of chance that A-95 was formulated in the late 1960s, after Johnson's Great Society project and the 89th Congress passed a backlog of social legislation.⁷⁰ As this flood of money, with federal standards attached, slowly made its way into everything from schoolrooms to rat control projects⁷¹, new intergovernmental relationships were created. These new relationships pushed the need for some kind of machinery that could coordinate these grant programs and help cities better plan their communities.

At a minimum, the procedural requirements of the A-95 review process got people to share information about their work which is a fundamental precondition to establishing trust, and therefore, enhancing coordination. But this is not enough to incite the level of cooperation, needed to achieve the goals of the legislation. Bureaucratic fragmentation across local and state departments, however, cannot be overcome with information sharing and idealistic expressions alone. Steinman (1979) questions how much influence information sharing could have in the planning process long term if the ultimate goal of coordination is to reach binding agreements that identify who does what and how. Thus, a group of actors needs to also, work to adjust its goals according to other people's immediate and long-term priorities.

Mogulof (1971) applies political subsystem theory to suggest plausible reasons why the A-95 process did not achieve its intended goals. Political sub-systems are often referred to as "iron triangles"⁷² that usually contain networks of legislative, administrative, and private interest group actors that generally hold the same level of expertise, share common values and

⁷⁰ John Herbers, "Congress Facing Fight on U.S. Aid." New York Times; December 4, 1966.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Steinman (1979) cites Harold Seidman, *Politics, Position, and Power: The Dynamics of Federal Organization*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.

resources, and agree upon similar concerns or policy questions. Within this framework, a political subsystem is a network of key actors in a particular policy area that tend, over time, to work with each other in a general cooperative manner.

When the A-95 review process was suspended, Steinman (1979) and Gordon (1975) both postulated that the circular did not adequately understand the nature of coordination and political subsystems; additionally, it did not provide the rigor and predictability necessary for it to become an effective agent of centralization. Thus, the A-95 review process contained a critical assumption that actors across different networks or political subsystems would willfully cooperate on the suggestion of the federal government.

Overtime, the rationale behind the A-95 Review Process lost its value. The circular was soon suspended and no legislation was passed nor did OMB create a program to continue its primary coordinating function. Rather, federal policy evaluation moved from intergovernmental to strictly performance-based management. Put simply, since the 1980s, the political economy changed significantly, pushing the federal system that was once concerned with intergovernmental management to focus on immediate interests with little regard for the institutional or collective consequences (Conlan, 2006). At the same time, the focus on intergovernmental affairs in Congress and the Executive branch diminished, and the intergovernmental committees that were once prominent in stature were dismantled.

The lack of continued attention on intergovernmental cooperation is unfortunate. Today, massive cuts have been made to metropolitan development programs. There are many causes of these cutbacks, but they are largely due to changes to the economy and society. As a result, vertical relationships have grown denser, more opportunistic, and less cooperative. Despite these trends, however, the interest for returning to cooperative intergovernmental management has resurfaced. Such was the case when coordinating a response to cope with the misfortunes of Hurricane Katrina and the 2008 foreclosure crisis, which were both clear illustrations for the need to rebuild trust and relationships at all levels of government.

In 2008, Miami Mayor Manny Diaz, on behalf of the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM), delivered a sobering message to the presidential candidates: "Washington has lost its values, lost its principles, lost its sense of purpose. It no longer invests in our cities.

It no longer invests in our people...Plain and simple, Washington has abandoned us⁷³.” The mayors demanded a responsive partner in the White House. The signing into order of the Office of Urban Affairs was the first step to responding to the USCM call to action. The executive order was the first federal action in nearly fifty years to recognize the centrality of intergovernmental affairs and bottom-up strategies to establish new areas of intergovernmental coordination. Considering the extent to which cooperative or creative federalism was placed on the backburner for the better part of five decades, the Obama Administration in its early days in office appeared to be rebuilding support for intergovernmental analysis, and efforts were made to merge intergovernmental flexibility with place-conscious planning and place-based programming. The Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities, as well as the other initiatives that were created under the president’s Metropolitan Agenda, are clear illustrations of the administration’s desire to “change the way the feds do business” along the lines of interagency collaboration. However, very few of the president’s recommendations have been implemented or accepted by Congress. This inability to follow through, begs the question: How do the current administration’s policy prescriptions for intergovernmental relations compare to the motivations and stated policy goals that constituted Johnson’s *creative federalism*? Drawing from the experience of the A-95 review process, what lessons could be used to shed light on the potential of Obama’s new plan?

The Obama Administration and Collaboration: a Revival of Johnson’s Creative Federalism?

In some ways, the White House Office of Urban Affairs parallels the A-95 clearinghouse concept but its procedures differ on two elements. First, the review is intended for federal agencies working on topics of sustainability rather than directly targeted at state, local, and metropolitan units of government. Second, rather than proposing legislation to Congress resurrect an OMB Circular similar to A-95, President Obama required OMB to conduct an interagency review of all the policies and programs that affect urban life. To the Obama Administration, the “prosperity, equity, sustainability, and livability of communities and larger regions are directly dependent on the ability of the Federal government to enable: locally-driven, integrated, and place-conscious solutions. The interagency review specified that these

⁷³ See Chapter One for reference and explanation of the USCM 2008 conference.

proposed solutions would be guided by meaningful measures, not disparate or redundant programs which neglect their impact on regional development (Orszag, et al., 2009). The interagency review presented a list of proposals on how they would improve the coordination of federal efforts within or between agencies. The list included the following:

- Coordinate grant application requirements and joint solicitations;
- Standardize performance measures and data collection, and identify opportunities to improve the accessibility and use of data;
- Promote use of waivers from program or regulatory requirements that impede effective coordination with state, local, or tribal partners; and
- Provide incentive grants to demonstrate how to use multiple funding streams—from federal, state, local, and tribal sources—to support more effective approaches to achieving outcomes.

The list above is a mild set of specifications, especially when they are compared to the procedural proposals within OMB Circular A-95 (see page 87 of document). Granted, A-95 was established from a congressional enactment, but the rationale of the Obama administration is somewhat unclear as to why they only focused on the horizontal (or interagency) scale of coordination. Their “silo-busting” approach is timely and much needed in order to propose integrated policies for within the federal government. The hallmark piece of this total approach is the SCRPG program, which contains a latent strategy to inspire coordination between municipalities. The recipients of the SCRPG are currently in the early phases of receiving federal funds to create a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD), but there is no evidence as of yet to determine the effect of the administration’s new strategy.

The 1969 A-95 review process survived and grew to become a benchmark federal regulation that was intended to foster and coordinate the planning of local, regional, and state projects. Thus, it is a good historical precedent, especially if the president wishes to further integrate policies and simultaneously avoid duplication of efforts or improper payments. If the Obama administration is to successfully follow through with the idea of silo-busting collaboration, then there are two aspects of the A-95 Review process that the administration could benefit from including. First, a meaningful review process would require a legal mandate or administrative rule that penetrates the influence of horizontal and vertical subsystems (Steinman, 1979). Second, the administration must move beyond suggesting collaboration and think about ways they can become effective enabler of effective communication between governmental actors.

Policy Implications

After attending an Intergovernmental Relations Commission hearing in Congress, Gordon (1975) came to the conclusion that coordination can only be achieved through either coercion or goodwill rather than the federal government's attempt to require coordination but did not specify the incentive. Given that metropolitan areas differ vastly in size and authority, Gordon's two extremes hint to a "regional readiness" or capacity problem. For areas with strong political subsystems with access to resources and relationships that already have share a common set of values and policy priorities, then coordinating can be a matter of goodwill. For communities that are situated in fragmented subsystems or that simply lack the planning tools to broker multijurisdictional regional plans, then it would take "coercion" to get everyone to see the benefit of collaboration. In the 1960s, intergovernmental management policy focused on standardization and simplification, sharing information, and establishing metropolitan institutions. In contrast, Obama has created a strategy based on sharing information, streamlining the federal grants-in-aid, and standardizing performance measures.

While establishing sustained collaboration would require a major overhaul of the legal and tax bases of our cities, there are two notable absent elements from the policies reviewed in this section that could strengthen future efforts to inspire interagency or intergovernmental partnerships. First, there has been a lack of focus on the capacity and regional readiness of a municipality to enact regional reform. The capacity level of a local government is often a function of its social and structural components (political economy, governance structure, demography, etc.). In recent years, the resource inequities continue to deepen as recent studies have documented widespread civic disengagement, lackluster voter participation, general social mistrust, the dominating role of money in politics, and patterns of participation that amplify the voices of the well-to-do in a huge struggle for political advantage (Weir, 2010).

Second, the process of achieving regional equity must be actively considered. This process must see public participation as a component to building community capacity. Intergovernmental and regional planning agencies seldom have the authority necessary to enact the substantive change required to achieve equitable outcomes. The next section will consider the role of citizen participation in metropolitan development in the 1960s compared with today.

III. Individual Citizen Participation versus Equitable Engagement

Background

In the early 1960s, the prevalence of poverty in the city centers pushed planners to consider the social aspect of development and most agreed that the first step to alleviate the problem required a dialogue with the poor themselves. According to Moynihan (1969) everyone agreed that the poor could at least describe their problems to those who were capable to correcting them; others believed that they were at least able to articulate solutions. Since the Johnson years, citizen participation has become a fundamental feature of city planning and the decision-making process. Such participation serves as the means to fulfilling a democratic requirement that serves both individual and societal goals. Furthermore, it promotes better governmental decision-making, integrates minority voices, produces better transparency and accountability, and provides a venue to gain consent and confidence for a program from its corresponding constituency (Burke, 1975). All too often, however, the governmental agencies have retained the ultimate decision-making authority as law seldom questions its place. According to Burke (1975), the resulting overregulation has “stifled the potentially creative role that citizens can play and have destroyed program credibility” as the ends or goals of the process were never legally defined. Sherry Arnstein, former Chief Advisor on Citizen Participation in HUD’s Model Cities Administration brilliantly provoked the field to consider the ways in which citizen participation can be a mere empty ritual producing shallow effects if “real power” is not conferred on the participants to “affect the outcome of the outcome of the [decision making] process” (Arnstein, 1969. This question of difference has thoughtfully endured as a calibrating mechanism to assess the level of participation evoked.

There is emerging evidence from the Obama Administration’s urban policy priorities that suggest another transformative shift to the process of public participation. In the administration’s talk of regional equity, the question of power resurfaces again in the Arnstein mode of thought. The Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities has grounded their new set of competitive grants on a philosophy of regional equity. Simply, regional equity cannot be achieved without an empowered participation process. By definition, regional equity necessitates citizen involvement across jurisdictions, involving difficult conversations of territory and needs. Unlike, prior forms of representation that tended to focus on the individual,

regional equity cannot be advanced if the power in the decision-making process is not equitably distributed. For the most part, the administration has seen the connection between empowered participation and regional equity. For example, the *comprehensive plan for regional sustainable development requirement* for the SCRPG program has moved away from individual participation and towards solidifying processes of equitable engagement, which is a better solution toward overcoming difficult power struggles inherent to the decision-making process.

The next subsection explores the context in which individual citizen participation emerged as a legal requirement in the planning process from two acts of congressional legislation: the Equal Opportunity Act of 1964 and the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966. During this time the process of public engagement was specified and debated, and has since evolved into a variety of multi-faceted procedural norms. The outcomes of this historical analysis will be compared to the recent explorations the Obama Administration has adopted in their plan to implement sustainable development.

The Origins of Public Engagement

Unresponsive Programming and Social Unrest

From 1945 until 1960 the economic health and prosperity of the United States progressed to a level that had far surpassed previous decades. These gains were sharply eclipsed by the substantial subset of the American population living in urban poverty, largely as the government's "refugees of civic progress."⁷⁴ This term is bleak, but represents the prevailing paradox of urban redevelopment. As stated in the Housing Act of 1949, urban redevelopment was intended to help all Americans have access to a decent home, yet "who" had access to this opportunity was defined by a limited decision-making process that gave authority to elected or appointed officials. Instead, the social elite were invited by city housing officials to serve on Citizen Advisory Committees (CACs) to determine the contours and ultimately, fate of many African American families⁷⁵.

⁷⁴ Bernard Frieden and Marshall Kaplan coined this term in their description of the "victims" of urban renewal projects (Friedan and Kaplan, 1975; pg. 23)

⁷⁵ (Arnstein, 1969)

As the largest federal grants-in-aid redevelopment program available to cities of the 1950s, Urban Renewal slum clearance projects stood out as the perpetrator of unjust civic progress. Citizens were not consulted unless it added to the “efficiency” of the Urban Renewal administration. In short, the voices of those affected by the slum clearance programs were not consulted about the removal of their homes. Who did these programs affect and what was the resulting Federal response? Answering this question requires a quick snapshot of the political and social context of 1965.

By 1965 one million four hundred thousand African Americans left their homes in the south for a life in central cities (Marris and Rein, 1967). Racial inequality acquired a physical definition, as newcomers crowded into dilapidated ghettos of the central city, while the middle-class whites settled into the suburbs (Ibid, pg. 12). African Americans earned on average three-fifths of the income earned by whites, and all too often faced demoralizing living conditions, poor education opportunities, racism, and an unrelenting rise in unemployment. The central city became a vivid and foretelling display of severe social inequality, economic inequity, and a complete disregard for public interest. Aptly stated by Marris and Rein (1967), amidst a growing dissatisfaction with the social effects of pure physical redevelopment, “the economic doctrine that had justified governmental inaction seemed less and less plausible.”

Across the socioeconomic divide, citizen concern for the conditions of the central city grew tremendously during this time. The civil rights movement turned its attention away from the problems of the rural south and toward the poor conditions that African Americans were experiencing in the city that grew primarily from the Urban Renewal experience. These concerns launched a series of deliberate actions of civil disobedience, protests, and riots. The mounting tension across the country became the undeniable reason for the government to recognize the need for to involve citizens in key decisions regarding program design especially when the policy pertains to the altering the “culture of poverty” (Kaplan and Cuciti, 1986). While poverty was hardly a new problem in the United States, it was rediscovered as a public policy issue.

Between 1964 until 1967 the Johnson administration pushed through an unprecedented amount of antipoverty legislation. Their commitment to understand and

address the problems inherent to the “urban crisis” or complexity of poverty alleviation initiated a trajectory of reform and renewed congressional response. This new approach was primarily focused on changing the institutions that affected slum residents by attempting to integrate federal programming by building local constituencies, involving recognized leadership as well as poverty residents. This story of reform unfolds between the years of 1964 until 1967.

“To Eliminate the Paradox of Poverty in the Midst of Plenty”⁷⁶

On March 16, 1964, President Johnson declared what popularly became known as the “War on Poverty.” Congressional approval of this declaration was demonstrated when it passed into law the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) provided the basis for the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO)--the centerpiece of the President’s “Great Society” agenda that guaranteed economic rights to all Americans. The purpose as stated in the congressional text, was to “eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty” by opening “to everyone the opportunity for education and training, the opportunity to work, and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity.”⁷⁷ The antipoverty effort, however, did not stop with this act. It encompassed a large subset of Great Society legislation that include the Civil Rights Act of 1964, that guaranteed equal opportunity for all which had far broader implications on poverty elimination than the Economic Opportunity Act alone.

Over the next decade, the federal government—in conjunction with state and local governments, non- profit organizations, and grassroots groups—created a new institutional base for antipoverty and civil rights action and, in the process, pushed the boundaries of social science to re-consider its traditional epistemology and brought the growing racial and ideological tensions in American politics and society front and center (Moynihan, 1969). The most important and innovative contribution, of the War on Poverty was its effort to involve citizens in key decision regarding program design, (Gifford, 1986; Kaplan and Cuciti, 1986).

For the purposes for analyzing this important contribution the following analysis will trace the legislative history of federal policy under the Johnson administration that dealt with expanding the voice and thereby, power to citizens to influence the policies and programs that

⁷⁶ Message on Poverty, President Johnson; The White House, March 16, 1964

⁷⁷ Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2711-2981 (1964)

impact their everyday lives.

Federal Policy and Individual Citizen Participation

By the mid 1960s a dearth of program ideas at the federal level ultimately were wed to the idea that citizen participation could be the panacea to the urban problem. Since it was not possible to plan a citizen participation plan for every city, there was a push within the federal government to raise the competency of communities stuck in poverty (Arnstein, 1969). Following this understanding, the most important authorization in expanding access to the local, state, and federal decision-making processes was established under the Community Action Programs (CAP) that were intended to provide a venue for urban and rural communities to mobilize their resources, public and private to help the country eliminate poverty. In other words, the CAP programs were created at the local level to fight the “War on Poverty” at home. The program was authorized under Title II, Section 209 of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the role and function the CAP was defined by Congress in the following five conditions:

1. “Mobilizes and utilizes in an attack on poverty public and private resources of any urban or rural, or combined community [in] a metropolitan area.
2. Provides services, assistance, and other activities of sufficient variety, scope, and size to give promise of progress toward the elimination of poverty through developing employment opportunities, improving human performance, motivation, and productivity, and bettering the conditions under which people live, learn, and work.
3. Developed, conducted, and administered with the maximum feasible participation or residents of the areas and [low-income individuals and families].
4. Conducted, administered, or coordinated by a public or private nonprofit agency broadly representative of the community.
5. The Director of the CAP is authorized to prescribe such additional criteria that he shall deem appropriate.”

From the five conditions mentioned above, it is clear that the establishment of OEO-CAP had the intension of giving the poor a voice in government; just as the Departments of Labor

and Commerce had been created to represent interest groups within government, the poor were to have OEO (Burke, 1970). Thus, Title II of the Act, is perhaps the most controversial component of EOA, as it called for the poor to have "maximum feasible participation" in identifying problems and in developing solutions to eliminating poverty. The criteria of what constitutes "maximum feasibility" were not specified in the bill; however, the OEO implemented Community Action Agencies (CAAs) to determine the terms and criteria of engagement. In the early years (1964-1967) CAAs sprouted up across the country showing up in local nooks, storefronts, and neighborhood centers. These centers helped train a new generation of community activists and leaders. These individuals also were recruited into the ranks of federal poverty program administration. On the local level, OEO funded antipoverty groups directly, by-passing city hall which reflects an interesting theory of engagement by the federal government. Krasner (1969) argued that the OEO-CAP model was driven by a rationale of "counter veiling power" rather than an attempt to work within existing structures. While the OEO-CAP model brought important the issues of local power disputes to bear, Gifford (1986) also attributes this rationale to the program's demise since the community voice suddenly became a beefed up threat to social service professionals and local politicians.

Therefore, as this new power base developed, some mayors and other political leaders were threatened and successfully lobbied Congress to earmark new funds into "National Emphasis Programs" specified by Congress. The NEP requirements effectively undermined the discretion of CAA's to allocate funds. As Congress's influence grew from the right, the commitment of the president to the OEO declined as suffered from the political backlash that would enter come the early 1980s.

The Model Cities Experience and Citizen Participation

The summer after OEA was enacted into law, the OEO-CAP model had already entered shaky territory. In a conscious effort to avoid the emerging shortcomings of the OEA coupled with the recent establishment of HUD, Johnson was compelled to continue the War on Poverty. To continue the operation, the President assembled a Task Force⁷⁸ in September of

⁷⁸ President Johnson believed that he could not rely on federal officials alone to produce fresh ideas. "The bureaucracy," he wrote, "...is too preoccupied with day-to-day functions and there is so strong bureaucratic inertia dedicated to preserving the status quo...Moreover the cumbersome organization of government is simply not equipped to solve complex problems that cut across departmental

1964 that included many notable figures outside government to formulate a new plan (Frieden and Kaplan, 1975). By December 24, 1965, Robert Wood, Chair of the President's Task Force unveiled the new program that would later become the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development (Model Cities) Act of 1966. The plan advanced three proposals to integrate social, physical, and economic concerns that gripped cities, of which one directly applied to citizen participation: "the *mobilization*" of local leadership and initiative to assure that the key decisions as to the future of American cities are made by citizens who live there, and commit to local leadership.... to comprehensive attack on urban problems, freed from the constraints that have handicapped past efforts and inflated their costs."⁷⁹

The proposal was enacted into Title I *Comprehensive City Demonstration Program* of the Model Cities Act. This section stated, "the ultimate success of [creating a comprehensive city demonstration program] rests upon the ability of local people to assess their own most pressing problems and devise their own solutions to those problems." The legislation specified, that all cities that participate in the program will "benefit from the solutions to urban problems developed through the demonstration cities approach or commonly referred by the Model Cities Task Force as the "total attack" approach. Of the congressional text analyzed it is not clear "who" the locals are or at what point in the decision-making process the model cities or OEO-CAP programs would affect local programming. The 1966 Act included some mentioning of the OEO programs, in that "many of the educational and social services which must be apart of the demonstration program can be provided by the OEO..." Suggesting a tight reliance on the OEO model. In sum, there was a clear hesitancy on behalf of the administration to specify the goals and to some extent process by which individual citizens could impact local authority structures or be incorporated into planning documents. The OEO-CAP and Model Cities certainly had its poignant merits at educating and involving individual citizens, but to what end? Frieden and Kaplan point to one problem with the model cities experiment; it tried to do too much. On one hand it attempted to recapitulate comprehensive planning and organize the grants-in-aid system and on the other hand, inspire community empowerment. This is not to say that the effort should have stopped, but suggests the two should have been addressed

jurisdictions." [Frieden and Kaplan, 1975 *citing* Lyndon B. Johnson, *The Vantage Point* (New York: Popular Library, 1971), pp.326-327.

⁷⁹ Frieden and Kaplan, 1975 *citing* U.S. President's Task Force on Urban Problems, "Proposed for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, December 1965."

under separate means.

The Obama Administration’s Interpretation

The goal of equitable engagement rather than individual participation is to further social equity values. The Obama Administration has specified that “social equity values” are fair and equal access to livelihood, education, and resources; full participation in the political and cultural life of the community; and self-determination in meeting fundamental needs. With respect to the SCRPG, this process places priority on ways to engage communities that have been traditionally marginalized from planning processes, such as low-income individuals and families, limited English speakers, persons with disabilities, and the elderly. The administration recognized the direct benefit individual citizen participation but expanded the process of engagement through emphasizing the need to have non-profit organizations that represent community interest or are themselves equity specialists at the decision-making table. This is a useful step in the right direction. The comparison between the two models (the Johnson years versus the Obama administration) is presented in the chart below.

Defining the Public Participation Process in their Historical or Programmatic Context

	Individual Citizen Participation	Equitable Engagement
Definitions	<p>Individual Citizen Participation (1960s-1980s) was traditionally seen as marginally serving administrative ends once a program was already formulated but overtime has become a legal requirement of perquisite for governmental decision-making (Creighton, 2005).</p> <p>By 1964 this perspective on citizen participation changed drastically through the passage of the Equal Opportunity Act of 1964 and the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1968. To account for the increasing civil unrest, engaging individual citizens into the process of formulating a plan became a critical element to ensure its efficacy. Participation became an end unto itself rather than a means for bureaucrats to simplify the administration of specific programs (Burke, 1970). This process of incorporating citizen participation has come to symbolize an important tradition in American self-government (Fung, 2004).</p>	<p>Equitable Engagement (2008-present) is a form of public engagement that seeks representation of marginalized communities through organizations or groups rather than direct individual citizen participation. This concept that the Obama administration has incorporated into the President’s Metropolitan Agenda reflects a shift from <i>means</i> by which a democratic requirement is fulfilled to a specific end—equitable engagement. The goal of equitable engagement is to advance social equity goals or achieve equitable representation of community voice and vision.</p>

Policy Recommendations for the SCRPG Program

Strengthening the Federal Partnership

The potential for President Obama's Metropolitan Agenda to create inclusive sustainable communities is largely a function of direct federal involvement in reframing the condition of which local and metropolitan planning occur. However, the challenge of repositioning the federal government and its administrative agencies especially, HUD, EPA, and DOT to achieve this new set of policy aspirations is substantial. It is simply not enough to enact major changes at the top levels of the agencies and expect change to immediately happen on the ground. It takes time for major shifts in policy thinking to sink into daily administrative functions—where the majority of federal policy implementation happens. There are already numerous other federal programs that are already in existence that have not internalized the new integrated approach, to what extent are the program analysts in federal departments collaborating to bust silos deep within the bureaucracy? This question cannot directly be answered, but it is presented to suggest that Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities might need a fundamental reorientation in its approach and a concomitant increase in its capacity if it is to continue to emphasize the three major policy themes discussed in this section.

Conclusions

A. Federal Policy and Metropolitan Planning

This analysis has revealed a story of policy continuity and change across a sixty-year time interval. It has traced the emergence and recapitulation of metropolitan development that has recalled planning history's quest for true comprehensiveness. Comprehensive planning for metropolitan development had been dormant in the federal books for the past thirty years, but the Obama Administration, encouraged by city mayors and urban scholars across the country, determined that urban issues needed to take priority once again. What contributed to this dormancy and what had been the reason behind this change? In part it was clear that the political and economic environment in 2008 presented obstacles to metropolitan development that could not be overlooked. The foreclosure crisis revealed multiple systemic and regulatory failures that left countless Americans in dire straights. The nation was in the middle of a meltdown. The urban unemployment rate was up, and the foreclosure crisis was especially hard felt for Latinos and blacks across the country.

The Obama Administration's Metropolitan Agenda was the proposed solution to ensure that a future meltdown could be avoided and that mayors' cry for help was being heard in the White House. The focus was on metropolitan areas for their potential to become the hotbeds of innovation and growth. With early intervention, the administration felt that this projected growth could be controlled by using sustainable means and in the process further social equity. Before 2008, this unique focus on metropolitan development was simply not a direct and open subject of national concern. It was a timely prescription as the perception of the problems of cities, suburban, and rural areas had changed dramatically in the last decade, suggesting that a new urban policy framework was in order. According to Brophy and Godsil (2009), these changes – combined with the economic reality that cities and metropolitan areas are the new source of economic growth and innovation – meant that President Obama's framing of metropolitan areas as essential components to rebuilding the national economy “resonates in a way it may not have when crime and urban poverty were higher and more vivid a part of our picture of cities.”

As explained in Part I, Obama crafted his agenda on the following three assumptions about metropolitan development in the 2008 political context. First, metropolitan areas were posited

as the new centers of innovation and growth, holding both unprecedented challenges and opportunities. Data generated from OMB, USCM, and the White House all affirmed that, with further policy prescriptions, metropolitan areas could be the locus of job creation, enhanced educational opportunities, and overall economic growth. Second, the problems facing cities and suburban areas today are interdependent and no longer fit neatly within jurisdictional borders. Finally, the administration has maintained that overcoming these problems would require coordinated and proactive federal urban policy that will be flexible enough to adapt to (and strengthen the connection between) the multiple geographic scales—neighborhood, city, and metropolitan regions.

These assumptions had been developed from a series of thoughtful endeavors. The objective of Obama's Metropolitan Agenda was to help individual cities bear the current deep and destructive recession, as well as foster collaboration between cities to incite a renewed interest in regional planning, not for metropolitan development as it was in the 1960s, but for building inclusive sustainable communities. To some extent, the billions of dollars allocated through the stimulus bill provided some immediate relief to cities and individuals impacted from the recession. Most importantly, the bill provided the tax cuts; shovel ready projects, and grants that provided financial support to cities, jobs for the local community, and immediate tax relief to families. However, the second objective of the Administration's Metropolitan Agenda to foster collaboration is still the subject of much debate and is the focus of this study's final remarks.

The events that went into creating the Obama Administration's Metropolitan Agenda (roundtable discussions, the urban tour, press releases, etc.) occurred in the midst of promising bursts of legislative activity—a landmark health care bill was enacted into law and Wall Street witnessed a sweeping overhaul, all to be bookended by a \$787 billion economic stimulus bill at the start of 2009 and an \$858 billion tax-cut package at the end of 2010. "This is probably the most productive session of Congress since at least the '60s," said Alan Brinkley, a historian at New York's Columbia University. Many urbanists watching from the sidelines believed that a policy window had opened, allowing urban issues to be seriously prioritized for the first time in years. The President, along with the democratic majority in the House and Senate, presented a promising bet that the most progressive policies stood a chance of making it through the 111th Congress (2008-2010). Of the 535 men and women who

served during this congressional session, there were notable supporters of the President's Metropolitan Agenda who helped spearhead the effort into a proposed bill. Specifically, Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) and Representative John Olver (D-MA) helped spearhead many of the central ideas related to the creation of "sustainable communities" and inter-agency coordination into proposed legislation. However, this congressional backing was short-lived and the fiscal realities of the nation, coupled with an alarming unemployment rate, pushed metropolitan and urban issues to the congressional backburner. Nothing was passed into law, but the President's ideas were picked up and further developed by three administrative agencies: HUD, DOT, and the EPA, which together formed the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities.

As this thesis' analysis of the SCRP agenda makes clear the Obama administration's reframing of the federal government's historic approach to comprehensive planning for metropolitan regions is a blend of traditional prescriptions and new remedies to address problems both new and longstanding. The administration's new focus has expanded its scrutiny to consider how the struggle for resources between the suburbs and central city has drastically changed in the past sixty years and has led to an inequitable distribution of opportunity. In considering the relationship between provision and need, the administration is now asking planners and politicians to consider who benefits and why.. For years, planners have been concerned with land use planning that maximizes economic growth without asking these important questions, but over the last two decades the emergence of sustainable development and equity in policy and practice has seemed to culminate in the President's Metropolitan Agenda. These concepts inherently require a redistribution of funds and resources, necessitating federal intervention. The federal incorporation of these themes, combined with burgeoning local dialogues on sustainable development and social equity, marks a cultural change in the trajectory of spatial planning.

Minus the historical vintage and necessary congressional support of the 1960s, the plan put forth by the Obama administration contains all the policy elements and rhetoric of previous intentions, aiming to look at each problem at its root by holistic means. However, the legislative comparison has exposed an important lesson for the Obama administration. In the 1960s to mid 1990s, there was a deliberate attempt to foster comprehensive planning for metropolitan development into a decision-making process and thus, into the politics of local and regional

development.

Part Three described how the central elements of the Obama administration's Metropolitan plan have shifted away or shifted towards several historic tenets of past regional planning practices and metropolitan policies. This historical comparison has revealed the ways that policy and action could be further developed along three themes.

I. Comprehensive Planning Versus Sustainable Development

In 1970, the Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies wrote that comprehensive planning for metropolitan development “is still largely a matter of faith. Its logic is the logic of holism. [It] asserts that that the metropolis operates as a system of interdependent parts and that for it to use its resources to develop efficiently, the relationships among the parts must be understood and rationally guided” (Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies, 1970). To a great extent this logic of holism is still valid in practice, thirty years later. Both comprehensive planning and the Obama administration's sustainable development require that planners look at the metropolitan region as a whole. The goal of both concepts seeks to plan holistically through consideration of economic, physical, and social concerns of a city and its residents as these issues affect multiple (contiguous) communities all at once. However, the similarities between past and current policies stop here, as we are in a much different world requiring planners to look at the intricacies of how communities within a region interact. These plans diverge in their approaches to achieving the intended goals. This divergence presents a compelling set of questions for practitioners today—what new “systemic” relationships and strategies have emerged?

From 1954 until 1981, when comprehensive planning was widely practiced under the section 701 grant program, sustainability and equity was not incorporated into long range plans. That is to say, there was not an explicit need to find a balance between the economic growth, environmental impact, and social equity—the core idea of sustainable development. Rather, throughout this time, federal policy and local planners had grown accustomed to only considering physical and economic development. The analysis in Part II demonstrated a layering on of topics and strategies to achieve the “holism” discussed above.

However, between the mid 1960s and the early 1970s, the social and environmental aspects of planning surfaced. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and the Model Cities program of 1966 are examples of how planning began to consider issues of crime, unemployment, juvenile delinquency, and poverty. At this time, comprehensive planning became an exciting new concept, expanding the limits of how planners could incorporate and provide solutions to these societal issues at the local scale. The National Environmental Protection Act of 1969 and the Clean Water Act of 1972 both broadened the national framework for protecting the natural and human environment. The combined legislative acts had a significant impact on the scope of comprehensive planning, but it would take the better part of the next two decades to solidify strategies that consider the interdependence of these issues. The parameters of comprehensive planning are still undefined, but so too are those of sustainable development. As the issues that affect metropolitan areas grow in complexity, it would be naïve to assume that all issues (social, physical, economic, and environmental) can be addressed all once. History has certainly proven this to be the case as was demonstrated by the Model Cities and OEO experience. Thus, the ideal of “holism” can counteract the efficacy of any sustainable development policy if the dynamic between issues like poverty, economic development, the environment, etc. are not well understood. The SCRPG program is a clear demonstration of overenthusiastic assumptions that all goals can be met simultaneously.

II. Intergovernmental Coordination versus Silo Busting Collaboration

As comprehensive planning grew to become common practice addressing a broad range of issues, the federal government was simultaneously developing a complex grants-in-aid system to support the growing planning function. The undefined nature of comprehensive planning contributed to an “intergovernmental maze” of grants-in-aid programs that often befuddled the project responsibilities of planners across the state, metropolitan, and local level. The confusion pushed the federal government to find a means of encouraging intergovernmental coordination to eliminate programs with cross-purposes, improper grant payments that contributed to program silos, and inefficient use of public funds. Even though sixty years has elapsed, the same program exists with the same goals. The objectives of the 1968 Intergovernmental Cooperation Act are similar to those included in the President’s Metropolitan Agenda that advocated for a cross-agency silo busting approach to coordinating

federal projects. This analysis has revealed notable similarities and differences that offer useful recommendations for improving cooperation strategies.

Both approaches attempted to correct for vertical duplicative efforts between cities and metropolitan areas. Section 204 of the Model Cities Act, which would eventually become the A-95 Review Process, was the proposed policy solution with stronger prescriptions than the SCRPG consortium based planning. This concept of having a clearinghouse at the federal level was a good idea at the outset but poorly implemented. By the end of its run, the A-95 Review process was seen by local city officials as just another bureaucratic layer for cities to consider that in the end did not help to encourage sustained coordination and to organize the grants-in-aid system. However, Congress and the Executive Branch from 1954 until 1972 considered intergovernmental relations and cooperation a national policy concern. As a result, task forces and commissions were developed to monitor the issue and propose solutions. Unfortunately, the A-95 review process was not reflective of the policy learning, research, and recommendations put forward by the Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. Popular literature at the time critiqued the A-95 review process as not providing enough of an incentive for disparate actors to meaningfully coordinate planning efforts or understand political networks. In contrast the SCRPG consortium based regional planning model does offer promising incentives with an understanding that political actors will come together if the competition is eliminated (only one applicant per metropolitan region was allowed to apply for funds); funds are only given when coordination comes with a documented agreement.

The Obama's Metropolitan Agenda is the first major experiment in addressing the need for improved horizontal intergovernmental relationships. In March of 2009, Obama requested an interagency review of all programs that affect urban life. The review revealed that federal policy often exists in silos, where only incremental aspects of a larger problem are treated. To the administration, overcoming this federal shortcoming was important for developing sustainable communities. The administration recognized the need for inter-agency collaboration in addition to intergovernmental coordination. This was an enlightening realization of the federal government and one that went into creating the Federal Partnership between HUD-DOT-EPA.

The Obama administration's two-prong approach has attempted to support both horizontal

and vertical intergovernmental relationships, streamlining ways that metropolitan needs are met at the federal level while improving interagency coordination. The administration could strengthen this approach further by working with OMB to continue removing programmatic silos but also alleviate some of the heavy restrictions that are usually tied to federal funds, restrictions that can prevent integration of policies.

III. Individual Participation Versus Equitable Engagement

In the 1960s the federal government began to find ways to promote individual citizen participation for the intended goal of community empowerment and co-producing better local policies. The Equal Opportunity Act of 1964 and the Model Cities Act were the first two federal assertions that it was critical to have citizen participation of members from poor or urban communities. In the past, Community Action Agencies determined the use of the funds to meet the problems of the poor as they defined them. This approach is still used and seen as a valid means toward producing effective policies. However, much has changed over the past sixty years as recent studies have documented widespread civic disengagement, lackluster voter participation, general social mistrust, hyper-partisanship, and patterns of participation that amplify the voices of the well-to-do in a huge struggle for political advantage (Weir 2010). It is now much more difficult for individuals who have been disenfranchised to become directly involved in local, state, or federal decision-making processes. However, community and faith-based organizations, non-profits, and foundations have begun to also represent the needs of various constituencies when individual citizen participation is not present. Obama's metropolitan plan and specifically the SCPRG have recognized the strong emergence of organizations representing group interests.

The SCPRG called for traditional individual participation, but also requested the presence of an organization representing the community at large within the required regional consortium. Equitable access to opportunity was the goal of the Sustainable Communities Initiative, and to meet this goal, people without access must be involved in the decision-making. Therefore, requiring both individual participation and organization-based representation is a significant step in the right direction.

B. Contesting Politics and Sustainable Communities

The objective of the Sustainable Communities Federal Partnership between EPA, DOT, and HUD was intended to stimulate more integrated and sophisticated regional planning to guide state, metropolitan, and local investments in land use, transportation and housing, as well as to challenge localities to undertake zoning and land use reforms. This was to be done in a manner that empowers jurisdictions to consider the interdependent challenges of: 1) economic competitiveness and revitalization; 2) social equity, inclusion, and access to opportunity; 3) energy use and climate change; and 4) public health and environmental impact. The objective is important and useful toward stimulating a new generation of integrated metropolitan planning, broadly encompassing transportation, housing, land use and energy planning. In short, the SCRPG program set out to achieve everything that has been left out of federal urban policies over the past fifty years. However, given the small amount of funding allocated to the SCRPG program and the advisory nature of the White House Office of Urban Affairs, it is uncertain how the Obama administration's policy aspirations and hopes will play out for all of America's metropolitan regions.

It can be assumed that the limited amount of funds available for the SCRPG program prompted the Federal Partnership to begin the program as a competitive grant as it ensures a baseline standard. However, the competitive nature could lead toward an inequitable allocation of funds, as not all regions were able to digest and comprehend the many requirements of the grant. The SCRPG results data presented in Part II illustrates that there was some attempt (albeit, behind closed doors at HUD) to distribute SCRPG funds equally across the country, but the partnership did not address how or if they would work with regions who received very little per capita SCRPG funding (Mid-Atlantic) or regions where the SCRPG grant requests were oversubscribed but were not awarded funds (Southeast) [See Part II, pg. 61].

There was some effort to infuse capacity building and clearinghouse mechanisms into the SCRPG program and it can be argued that the nature of a competitive grant in and of itself is a capacity building mechanism because the money inspires actors to address the problems, especially given that cities have been desperate for planning funding since 2008. For an initial grants-in-aid round for an issue as large and dynamic as sustainable

development, a competitive grant makes sense. The sprawling nature of the SCRPG NOFA is an indication of the experimental nature of the program, suggesting that HUD and the federal partnership did not have an exact definition or metric for what the program was to achieve. Since the 1960s, and many would argue before then, there has been evolving evidence that every level of government needs to recognize the various systems of comprehensive planning (e.g. environmental, physical, social, etc.). Yet, there is no precise static definition of comprehensive planning for metropolitan development, or even a precise definition of the term metropolitan development. The ambivalence toward specifying strict parameters of a planning grant is vividly apparent throughout the 27-year run of the "Section 701" (Feiss, 1985).

Ultimately, the shortcomings mentioned draw this story back to one of politics and the distribution of power at the federal and local government level. At the federal level, there was a real attempt by the Obama administration to enact the structural changes necessary to enable multi-level regional planning and inter-agency collaboration for sustainable development. Both the Waxman-Markey and the Livable Communities Act would have expanded the function and scope of responsibility for MPOs or other federally recognized regional agencies. Unfortunately, neither act won the approval of both the House and Senate. It also seems highly unlikely that any future legislation purposed to achieve similar outcomes will be proposed. Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT) has left his congressional post and House Representative John Olver now sits on the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, Related Agencies now have a Republican majority, potentially threatening the SCRPG funding spigot. Despite the congressional setbacks for the Sustainable Communities Initiative, \$98 million has already been allocated with an additional \$70 million appropriated for the SCRPG program.

It is still too early to know what the net effect of these funds will be on the proposed designs to support grant recipients, as well as other communities interested in implementing sustainable community strategies. But the fact that three federal agencies got together and have created and implemented a grant program of this scope is an impressive feat. With the Sustainable Communities Initiative, an important funding silo was ostensibly removed. Funds were no longer to be a single transfer from one agency to one municipality for a single goal. Now, three federal agencies (HUD-EPA-DOT) have granted

funds to a consortium of agencies that represent a region with built in requirements of collaboration.

The Federal Partnership essentially bypassed the congressional gridlock and state financial politics, created strategic alliances with two congressmen, and put funds in the hands of local city, metropolitan, and non-profit officials. This approach contrasts markedly with policy evolution of the Johnson years, President Johnson, with the help of his task forces, worked directly with Congress to craft legislation, while President Obama made one public announcement declaring that urban and metropolitan issues merit attention. Rather than assembling a task force with members outside the Washington D.C. beltway, as was the case with Johnson, Obama inspired action from within the federal government and did what he could to support associated actions. The rationale used by Lyndon Johnson during his presidency was vastly different; he believed federal officials alone could not produce fresh ideas and he deferred to outside researchers and practitioners. “The bureaucracy,” he wrote, “...is too preoccupied with day-to-day functions and there is so strong bureaucratic inertia dedicated to preserving the status quo...Moreover the cumbersome organization of government is simply not equipped to solve complex problems that cut across departmental jurisdictions” (Frieden and Kaplan, 1975 *citing* Johnson, 1971). This ideology brought Model Cities and Metropolitan Development Act into existence. Eventually, however, these pieces of legislation were criticized as having tried to do too much, without accounting for the realities of the day-to-day work of mayors. This suggests that since Obama constructed his Metropolitan Agenda by working with city mayors and federal agency officials, his approach would lend itself toward more effective implementation.

It is difficult to know what strategy of crafting legislation is more effective as we cannot assess if Sustainable Communities program will suffer the same fate of criticisms as the Model Cities program. It is often said that the most stifling aspect of federal planning grants is the heavy bureaucracy that surrounds each dollar allocated to grantees. As more reporting and crosschecking is required, the prospects of regional collaboration can be hampered. Simply, the more agencies involved leads to more bureaucracy. For the small metro areas that lack the experience navigating through these requirements, applying to the SCRPG is an overwhelming endeavor. Thus, the fact that the stimulus for Sustainable

Communities Initiative was birthed from within the bureaucracy presents some hope that the program will be sensitive to these hardships. To practitioners and policy-makers concerned with “sustainable” development, metropolitan development and regional coordination must go beyond the call for stronger partnerships. Future metropolitan policy must include ideas on collaborative governance that break down issues of power, funding silos, state authority, and merging of common goals to promote institutional action across different geographic and political scales.

Additional Considerations

The dimension of power and politics at the metropolitan and local scale was not directly addressed in the Model Cities experience or the Sustainable Communities program. Margret Weir argues that questions of power cannot be ignored and the scope of authority for collaborative efforts must be considered. She writes, “The war on poverty drove home the lesson that participation without power provides potent fuel for disillusionment and cynicism” (Weir, 2010). While her comment was oriented toward an analysis of civic engagement in the Johnson years, she brings up a crucial argument for bottom-up approaches to planning.

Governmental organization, legal powers, and established procedures are important institutions because they channel the exercise of power. The intergovernmental framework within which metropolitan or regional planning occurs provides better access to some groups than to others. It serves the interest of some groups and is unmindful of the interest of others. Our federalist system and its subsequent organization of governmental units do not create all of the sources of power in a metropolitan area. It does endow some officials with power, status, or resources. But in any metropolitan area, there are other perhaps even more important sources of power. With respect to financial and economic growth, local government can only exercise a small amount of direct regulatory power. The reality underlying any concept of integrated planning that requires substantial changes in land use is that the majority of land remains in private hands. Private developers and the owners of these parcels of land operate according to their economic interests and collectively hold a great deal of the economic power embedded in a region. With the protection of public institutions, this power plays out politically as many of these collective groups seek to achieve their objectives. Thus, future sustainable development policy must not overlook the interaction between public institutions and networks concerned with metropolitan development and the distribution of public and private power. It

may be that the administration had considered these topics, but decided they were too risky to articulate. Whether they did or did not requires interviewing key federal stakeholders. This process and the implications of power politics are far beyond the scope of this thesis, but merit future research.

Future Research

The most common structural constraints that hamper regional planning efforts are often framed in economic or constitutional law arguments. In practice, there are few economic incentives to share revenue streams or coordinate investments across jurisdictional lines. This is in part due to the division of planning powers between the federal government, states, and cities. As the SCRPG program evolves, the Federal Partnership should focus its attention on ways structural constraints can be diminished. For metropolitan areas that lack a metro scale planning authority with legal authority, it is difficult to build a consensus amongst local governments to develop an area-wide capacity program addressing their urban problems, particularly in places that remain racially divided.

This research has revealed that since the 1960s there has been continuity within federal policy supporting collaboration across jurisdictions as a means toward comprehensive planning (social, economic, and physical). However, the question of how to sustain collaboration or regional planning in urban and fiscal policy reform is an enduring and unanswered one. Theories about regionalism and its viability are widespread, but few researchers have conducted research on the current policy paradigm and the question of sustaining Obama's idea of consortium based collaboration that seeks to achieve equitable and environmentally conscious metropolitan development. Therefore, there are few concrete, illustrative findings on which planners, researchers, and politicians, can base valid interpretations, actions, theories, and policy. Even less research has focused on the types of pre-requisite knowledge, behaviors, and policies that together are necessary conditions to encourage collaboration over time.

Researchers should revisit this topic in five to seven years to assess how well the agenda promoted long-term sustainability after the federal stimulus has expired. Only then will enough time have elapsed to provide a meaningful analysis of the SCRPG program. This type of evaluation will help explain successful models of regional planning that could be replicated and

why certain models had problems addressing sustainable development.

C. Reflections

I began this thesis with a set of hardened memories and unanswered questions about regional equity and social justice. After a three-month stay at PolicyLink, I was both hopeful and skeptical about the prospects of Obama's ambitious plan to overhaul the federal urban policy apparatus. How could a set of broad-reaching principles laid out by the Metropolitan Agenda and followed by one grant program overcome traditional political challenges? Furthermore, is a grant program enough to broker coordination across agencies and jurisdictions and adopt a regional plan for sustainable development? The short answer is that a single grant is not enough to help individual municipalities overcome traditional battles of local turf and power. To improve the effectiveness of the Sustainable Communities Federal Partnership, the President's Agenda, and the White House Office of Urban Affairs, the administration must enable the legal and fiscal arrangements that are required simply to plan regionally, let alone implement an integrated plan for sustainable development. Enabling these conditions could very well take decades to achieve. There are countless old and restrictive statutes and codes that guide urban development today. Given the way federalism has operated since the turn of the 21st Century, it is no wonder that the Obama administration decided to shy away from truly clearing the pathway so that sustainable development can be widely practiced. The process of muddling through old and new congressional hearings, presidential speeches, and federal strategic plans over the last sixty years was challenging, but it exposed the intricacies of federal policy-making. From this exploration, I am certain that the President's agenda was a useful policy and represents progress in policy thinking that adds to a history of institutional and cultural change in the trajectory of planning practice.

The problems inherent to Metropolitan America will continue, especially given the deep pluralism that has surfaced from demographic shifts and divisive politics that often prevent communities from working together. However, the Obama administration has turned away from larger policy aspirations for building a better and brighter future. Today, the President's Metropolitan Agenda seems to sit on the executive shelf, clad in innovative policy tinkering but having lost its wider political appeal. For those sitting in Washington, the urgency of "now" far outweighs efforts for long-term sustainable development. At a minimum, the Obama

administration must be credited for reinvigorating the fundamental tenets of age-old issues and extending the federal discourse to recognize access to opportunity, wealth generation, and merits of collaborative planning across all levels of government. Despite the lack of congressional support for the Federal Partnership, the administration has created another round of competitive SCRPG grants for 2011. These grants will allow winning metropolitan regions to continue planning in the innovative light that the Obama administration has created as well as provide opportunity to other regions that are on the cusp of thinking sustainably. To help those communities, HUD has released a new Sustainable Communities Capacity Building Grant. To solve the nation's problems, we must not overlook the lessons learned from the policies of the past. If the legislature and agencies of the federal government can effectively work together to implement lessons learned from developing the Metropolitan Agenda, we will see real progress in addressing the country's major social and economics issues and we can look forward to solving problems of metropolitan America.

APPENDIX A | Legislative Timeline (2008-2011)

September 2008

The Federal Transit Authority (FTA) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) submitted a joint report entitled “Better Coordination of Transportation and Housing Programs to Promote Housing Near Transit” to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations.

This report released under Secretary Steve Preston was in response to the directive by Chairman John Olver in the Joint Explanatory Statement accompanying the Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Pub. L. 110-161). The report outlined strategies developed by FTA and HUD to continue and expand coordination in the area of mixed-income and affordable housing near transit over a 3-year period (FY 2008–FY 2010). The report set the framework for the Sustainable Communities Partnership.

January 6, 2009

Congressional Hearings begin to make appropriations under the “Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2010” for Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010.

January 20, 2009

Inauguration of Barack Obama as the 44th President of the United States.

February 17, 2009

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act won Congressional approval.

February 19, 2009

Establishment of the White House Office of Urban Affairs (E.O. 13503).

February 26, 2009

President release’s his FY 2010 Budget, A New Era of Responsibility: Renewing America’s Promise. The following priorities are defined:

- Immediate relief and economic stimulus
- Create jobs and invest in long-term economic growth
- Build 21st century infrastructure
- Create a clean energy economy
- Prepare children for the 21st century economy
- Lower healthcare cost and ensure broader health care coverage
- Restore America’s place in the world and keep the country safe
- Change the way Washington does business
- Create an ethical and transparent government, improve oversight & effectiveness

March 18, 2009

“Livable Communities, Transit Oriented Development, and Incorporating Green Building Practices into Federal Housing and Transportation Policy” Hearing before the Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, United States

House of Representatives. Secretaries Donovan and LaHood provide testimony and announce the “Sustainable Communities Initiative.

June 16, 2009

“Greener Communities, Greater Opportunities: New Ideas for Sustainable Development and Economic Growth” Congressional Hearing before the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. The purpose of this hearing was to examine the ways in which housing and transportation policy can work in common to meet future housing, transportation, and environmental needs of communities. EPA publicly joins partnership: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/0/F500561FBB8D5A08852575D700501350>

June 19, 2009

Second round of hearings before the subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives; THUD Budget is announced: Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies appropriations for 2010. Shan Donovan provides second testimony before the subcommittee on the Livable Communities, Transit-Oriented Development, and Incorporating Green Building Practices Into Federal Housing and Transportation Policy. Donovan moves forward to specify the objectives for HUD’s 2010 Budget.

July 13, 2009

The White House Office of Urban Affairs and the Domestic Policy Council host a roundtable about the future of America’s urban and metropolitan areas. In his remarks, the President addresses some of the challenges facing these communities, and highlights innovative solutions.

July–December 2009, President Obama charged the Office of Urban Affairs begin their National Conversation of America’s Cities and Metropolitan Areas, or the “Urban Tour,” which served two main purposes:

1. Communicate the President’s vision and priorities for Urban and Metropolitan America;
2. Identify best practices and innovative policy reforms for the Administration.

The National Conversation is an important illustration of the Administration’s commitment to Urban and Metropolitan America, and reflects the Administration’s bottom-up approach to reshaping the Federal-urban partnership. The tour approaches urban-metro regions as assets, and highlights innovations that are interdisciplinary and that are to the benefit of entire regions. The following cities are visited:

- July 23, 2009 - Philadelphia, PA
- September 1, 2009 - Kansas City, MO
- September 17, 2009 - Chicago, IL
- September 18, 2009 - Denver, CO
- October 1, 2009 - Flagstaff, AZ
- October 23, 2009 - Seattle, WA
- October 29, 2009 - Chicago, IL
- November 24, 2009 - Los Angeles, CA
- December 14, 2009 - Atlanta, GA

August 6, 2009

Senator Christopher Dodd (CT) introduces the Livable Communities Act (S. 1619) (H.R. 4690).

September 17, 2009

In September 2009, EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson, DOT Secretary Ray LaHood, and HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan visited Chicago, Dubuque, and Denver on a Sustainable Communities Tour. Read the press releases about the tour:

[Administration Officials Visit Chicago, Dubuque on Sustainable Communities Tour](#)

October 5, 2009

Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance (E.O. 13514).

November 20, 2009

Reducing Improper Payments (E.O. 13520).

December 16, 2009

Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-117).

Authorized Sustainable Communities Program; Congress provided a total of \$150,000,000.

February 1, 2010

President release's his FY 2011 Budget - the following priorities were presented:

- Rescuing the Economy
- Reviving job creation and laying a new foundation for a new economy

March 3, 2010

Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan and Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood host a Clean Energy Economy Forum focusing on creating jobs and spurring development by creating more livable and sustainable communities.

June 24, 2010

Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant NOFA released.

HUD releases its new General Section for FY2010–2015.

July 15, 2010

Open for Questions: Sustainable Communities.

Special Assistant to the President Derek Douglas moderates a discussion on the Sustainable Communities Partnership with Shelly Poticha from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Beth Osborne from the Department of Transportation, and Tim Torma from the Environmental Protection Agency.

July 22, 2010

Improper Payment Elimination and Recovery Act (IPERA) signed into law.

August 2010

SCRPG NOFA due.

September 15, 2010

Congressional Budget Office provides cost estimate.

October 2010

SCRPG winners announced.

December 19, 2010

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs as reported by Senator Dodd with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. Without written report. Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 716.

February 14, 2011

President releases his FY 2012 Budget; Sustainable Communities was included.

APPENDIX B I Legislative Timeline of Supportive Congressional Acts (1949-1982)

Housing Act of 1949 (Public Law 81-171, July 15, 1949)

National Housing Policy and Goal

- Declared the national housing policy to be that the general welfare and security of the nation required the realization as soon as feasible of the goal of a decent home and suitable living environment for every American family.
- Provided that private enterprise should be encouraged to serve as large a part of the total need as it could and that governmental assistance should be given to the elimination of standard and inadequate housing through clearance of slums and blight and to the provision of adequate housing for families of low incomes where the need was not being met by private enterprise.

Title I – Slum Clearance and Urban Redevelopment

- Authorized \$1 billion in loans and \$500 million in capital grants over a five-year period to localities to assist slum clearance and community development and redevelopment programs. To be eligible for grants, project areas were to be predominantly residential in character either before or after redevelopment, or both.
- Authorized advances to finance planning of projects, and loans for the acquisition and clearance of land and its preparation for reuse.
- Authorized capital grants to help meet the loss involved in slum clearance. The loss was to be shared on a two-to-one basis—the Federal Government making up two-thirds of the loss and local government one-third. The local share could be provided in cash or through the provision of parks, schools, or other public facilities necessary to serve the new uses of the land in the project areas, or the use of municipal labor and equipment to clear a project area.
- Federal advances were made payable from the first proceeds of temporary loans made to finance the projects. Temporary loans were repayable from the proceeds of the sale of the land as well as from Federal grants, and local cash grant-in-aid and definitive loans. The interest rate on all loans could not be less than the going Federal rate, as determined by most recently issued Federal bonds of 10 years or more maturity. Local government agencies could pledge their contracts for Federal loans as security for funds obtained from other sources at lower rates of interest. To obtain funds for loans, the Housing Administration could issue notes and other obligations for purchase by the Secretary of the Treasury.
- Authorized the Administrator to contract to make capital grants, and to make advance or progress payments on a grant contract. The faith of the United States was pledged to the payment of the grants, and appropriations were authorized to the extent necessary to provide for payment of the grants.
- Required as a condition to Federal aid that there be a feasible method for the temporary relocation of families displaced from the project area and the permanent provision of decent dwellings at prices and rents within the financial means of such families.

- Not more than 10 percent of the funds provided for loans or grants could be expended in any one State.

(New contracts under Title I were prohibited after January 1, 1975, by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, P.L. 93-383, August 22, 1974.)

Housing Act of 1954 (Public Law 83-560, August 2, 1954)

Slum Clearance and Urban Renewal

- Broadened the slum clearance and urban redevelopment program of Title I of the Housing Act of 1949 to authorize Federal assistance to local communities not only in the clearance and redevelopment of slum areas but also to help in preventing the spread of slums and urban blight through the rehabilitation and conservation of blighted and deteriorating areas.
- Changed the name of the program to “Slum Clearance and Urban Renewal.”
- Provided that new contracts for Federal assistance to slum clearance and urban renewal could not be entered into unless the applicant community had presented and had approved a workable program for eliminating and preventing slums and urban blight.
- Continued the requirement that project areas be predominantly residential either before or after redevelopment, except that 10 percent of the grant authorization could be used for projects not meeting this requirement.
- Made Federal grants available for assistance of rehabilitation and conservation projects in accordance with the same two-thirds/one-third formula as for slum clearance and urban redevelopment projects.
- Provided FHA mortgage insurance assistance (Sections 220 and 221, supra) to assist in rehabilitation and re-housing of families displaced by public action.

Urban Planning Grants

- Authorized the Housing Administrator to make grants to official State, metropolitan, or regional planning agencies empowered under State or local laws to perform planning work in metropolitan and regional areas, and to State planning agencies for the provision of planning assistance to cities and other municipalities with populations of less than 25,000. Planning to be assisted included surveys, land-use studies, urban renewal plans, and technical services. Grants could not exceed 50 percent of the estimated cost of the planning work.
- Authorized appropriations up to \$5 million for the grants.

Housing Act of 1959 (Public Law 86-372, September 23, 1959)

Community Renewal Programs

- Authorized the Housing Administrator to contract to make grants up to 2/3 of the cost for the preparation or completion of community renewal programs, which would include identification of slum or blighted areas in the community, measurement of blight, determination of resources needed and available to renew such areas, identification of potential project areas and types of action contemplated, and scheduling of urban renewal activities.

Urban Planning

- Authorized an additional \$10 million for Federal matching grants to assist State and urban planning.
- Broadened the scope of the urban planning grant program by authorizing Federal matching grants to agencies and communities not previously eligible and by authorizing grants directly to any city and county which had suffered a major disaster. Under new provisions the grants could be used for metropolitan or regional planning under interstate compacts.
- Authorized the Housing Administrator to encourage planning on a unified metropolitan basis and to provide technical assistance for such planning and the solution of problems relating to such planning.

Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-452, August 20, 1964)

- Authorized among other means of combating poverty, financial and technical assistance for urban and rural Community Action Programs in a number of enumerated fields, including housing.
- Authorized for grant assistance up to 90 percent of the cost of such programs for the first two years, and 50 percent thereafter.
- Established Economic Opportunity Council of which the HHFA Administrator was a member.

Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965 (Public Law 89-117, August 10, 1965)

Urban Planning Grants

- Increased the authorization of appropriations for urban planning grants by \$125 million. Permitted up to 5 percent of the funds appropriated to be used for grants for studies, research and demonstration projects, improvement of techniques for planning, and for advancement of urban planning assistance program.
- Made organizations composed of public officials in metropolitan or urban regions eligible for urban planning grants.

Presidential Message on Demonstration Cities Act of 1966 (H. Doc. 89-368, January 26, 1966)

Proposals

- A new demonstration cities program, in which special supplementary grants would be used to encourage selected cities of various sizes to undertake coordinated programs utilizing all forms of assistance for housing, renewal, transportation, education, welfare, economic opportunity and related problems, and emphasizing social services as well as improvements to the physical environment.
- A program of demonstration of effective comprehensive planning for metropolitan areas.
- Legislation to bar racial discrimination in the sale or rental of housing.
- Improvements in authorizing legislation for assistance to developers of new communities.

- Continued funding and authorization for various existing housing and community development programs.

Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-754, November 4, 1966)

Comprehensive City Demonstration Programs

- Authorized HUD to provide grants and technical assistance to help communities of all sizes to plan, develop, and carry out comprehensive city demonstration programs. These were to be locally prepared programs for rebuilding or restoring entire sections and neighborhoods of slum and blighted areas by the concentrated and coordinated use of all available Federal aids together with local, private, and governmental resources.
- Authorized grants and technical assistance for planning city demonstration programs, to a city demonstration agency, which could be a city, county, or any local public agency established or designated by the local governing body to administer the comprehensive city demonstration program. The grants could cover up to 80 percent of the cost of planning and developing a program. Authorized \$12 million for each of FYs 1967 and 1968.
- Required the application for assistance to plan demonstration programs to show in broad and general terms the nature and seriousness of the city's problems and the outlines of what the city proposed to do, and to be approved by the local governing body.
- Required a city's demonstration program to be designed to (1) renew entire slum neighborhoods by combined use of physical and social development programs; (2) increase substantially the supply of standard housing of low and moderate cost; (3) make marked progress in reducing social and educational disadvantages, ill health, underemployment, and enforced idleness; and (4) contribute toward a well-balanced city.
- Made two types of Federal assistance available to help finance projects or activities included in approved comprehensive city demonstration programs:
 - (1) To the extent the projects or activities were eligible for assistance under an existing Federal grant-in-aid program, they would be financed under that program.
 - (2) Special grants, supplementing the assistance available under existing grant-in-aid programs, would be provided for the demonstration cities programs. A supplemental grant could be up to 80 percent of the total non-Federal contributions required to be made to all projects or activities assisted by existing Federal grant-in-aid programs which were part of the demonstration cities programs. Authorized \$400 million for FY 1968 and \$500 million for FY 1969.
- Authorized an additional \$250 million in grant authority for urban renewal projects, which were part of approved comprehensive city demonstration programs. (Authority to enter into contracts under this programs was repealed, effective January 1, 1976, by the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, P.L. 93-383, August 22, 1974.)

Planned Metropolitan Development

- As an incentive to coordinated planned metropolitan development, authorized HUD to make supplemental grants to State and local public bodies and agencies for up to 20 percent of the cost of projects receiving aid under certain specified Federal programs in metropolitan areas

where development was being carried out in accordance with their own metropolitan planning and programming. The additional or supplemental grant could not exceed (1) 20 percent of the cost of the project for which it was made, nor (2) the grant which was being supplemented. In addition, the total Federal contributions to a project could not exceed 80 percent.

- Required that after June 30, 1967, all applications for Federal assistance for projects for which supplemental grants could be provided be submitted to a metropolitan or regional planning agency for review. Require that it be accompanied by comments of the planning agency concerning the extent to which the project was consistent with the comprehensive planning developed or in process for the area and the extent to which the project contributed to fulfillment of the planning.
- Authorized HUD to call upon other Federal agencies to cooperate in insuring that all Federal programs related to metropolitan development were carried out in a coordinated manner.
- Authorized HUD, upon the request of local officials of the central city in any metropolitan area, and after consultation with local governmental authorities in the area, to appoint a metropolitan expediter for the area. The expediter was to provide information, data, and assistance with respect to programs and activities conducted in the area by HUD, and with respect to other public and private activities and needs in the area relating to those programs and activities.

Urban Information and Technical Services

- Authorized HUD to make matching grants to States to help finance programs to provide small communities (less than \$100,000 population) with information and data on urban needs and assistance activities and technical assistance with respect to solution of local problems.

Technology

- Authorized HUD to encourage and assist the housing industry to reduce the cost and improve the quality of housing by the application to housing and urban development of advances in technology, and to encourage and assist the application of advances in technology to urban development activities.

Urban Environmental Studies

- Directed HUD to carry out a comprehensive program of studies, surveys, research, and analyses to document and define urban environmental factors that must be controlled or eliminated to establish a coordinated system of collecting and receiving information and data on urban ecological research and evaluation, and to evaluate, disseminate, and utilize information and data on urban ecological research.

Coordination of Federal Regional Activities (Executive Order 11386, December 28, 1967)

- Prescribed arrangements for coordination of the activities of regional commissions and activists of the Federal government relating to regional economic development.
- Established the Federal Advisory Council on Regional Economic Development, with Secretary of HUD as a member.

Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 (Public Law 90-448, August 1, 1968)

Declaration of Policy

- Affirmed the national goal of “a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family” and stated that there should be the fullest practicable utilization, in the Federal housing programs, of private enterprise and self-help techniques.

Title VI – Urban Planning and Facilities

Planning Grants

Revised the Section 701 planning assistance grants program in the following ways:

- Authorized grants to be made to these jurisdictions: (1) State planning agencies for assistance to “district” planning agencies for rural and other nonmetropolitan areas; (2) Indian tribal planning councils; (3) regional and district councils of government; (4) regional commissions and economic development districts established under the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (P.L. 89-136); (5) cities, without regard to population, within metropolitan areas for planning which is part of metropolitan planning; and (6) official government planning agencies for areas where rapid urbanization is expected as a result of a new communities assisted under the Act.
- Broadened the definition of comprehensive planning to include planning for the provision of governmental services and for the development and utilization of human and natural resources.
- Required the inclusion of a housing element as part of the preparation of comprehensive land-use plans.
- Increased the authorization of appropriations for grants by \$35 million for fiscal 1969 and by \$125 million beginning FY 1970. Provided that an additional \$10 million of Section 701 appropriations was to be available for study, research, and demonstration projects.
- Authorized supplementary grants for Federally assisted projects in all multi-jurisdictional areas (previously limited to metropolitan areas), such as rural planning districts assisted with comprehensive planning grants.

Housing and Urban Development Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-383, August 22, 1974)

Comprehensive Planning

Planning Grants

- Amended Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954 (P.L. 83-560, August 2, 1954), which authorized grants for comprehensive planning and for extending aid for developing management capability.
- Authorized HUD to make planning grants to these jurisdictions: (1) States for planning assistance to local governments; (2) States for state, interstate, metropolitan, district, or regional activities; (3) cities of 50,000 population or more; (4) urban counties as defined in Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974; (5) metropolitan area-wide organizations; (6) Indian tribal groups or bodies; and (7) other governmental units or agencies having special planning needs.

- Provided that activities eligible for grants include those necessary to (1) develop and carry out a comprehensive plan; (2) develop and improve the management capability to implement such a plan; and (3) develop a policy-planning evaluation capacity so that the recipient could more rationally determine its needs, set long-term goals and short-term objectives, devise programs and activities, and evaluate the progress.
- Required each recipient of assistance to carry out ongoing comprehensive planning, which would make provision for citizen participation.
- Required comprehensive plans to involve a housing element and a land-use element.
- Authorized grants to be made on an annual basis if certain specified requirements were met, including not exceeding two-thirds of the estimated cost of the work for which they were made.
- Authorized use of appropriate funds by HUD for studies, research, and demonstration projects of the techniques and methods for comprehensive planning, and for studies and research related to needed revisions in State laws governing local governmental operations.
- Authorized grants to be made to organizations of public officials representative of jurisdictions within a metropolitan area for studies, collection of data, and development of metropolitan, regional, and district plans and programs.

Housing and Community Development Amendments of 1981 (Title III, Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, Public Law 97-35, August 13, 1981)

Subtitle A – Housing and Community Development

Part 1 – Community and Economic Development

- Repealed provision for grants to States for planning assistance to small cities, authorized in Section 701, Housing Act of 1954 (P.L. 83-560, August 2, 1954) and for assistance for neighborhood development, authorized in the Neighborhood Self-Help Development Act of 1978, Title VII, Housing and Community Development Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-557, October 31, 1978). Full Suspension of Section 701.

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