

Central Iowa Sustainable Communities Initiative

Rating Factors Response

August 23, 2010

I. Capacity of the Applicant and Relevant Organizational Experience

The central Iowa region's application for the Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant proposes a consortium that includes the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the City of Des Moines, the western suburbs (represented by the cities of West Des Moines and Urbandale), the northern suburbs (represented by the City of Johnston), the eastern suburbs (represented by Polk County), Polk County, Warren County, Dallas County, the Center on Sustainable Communities (COSC), the Greater Des Moines Partnership (GDMP), and the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines (CF). The region of study is defined by the MPO's metropolitan planning area (MPA), an area of 542 square miles, with a 2010 estimated population of 480,000, 18 communities, and occupying parts of Dallas, Madison, Polk, and Warren counties.

a. Organizational Capacity and Qualification

The Consortium is organized to represent the citizenry of the central Iowa region and involve them in addressing sustainability issues in the region. The Consortium has formed a steering committee to initiate and oversee the creation of a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD). The steering committee has identified Angela Connolly, a Polk County Supervisor, former MPO chair, and current Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) chair, as its chairperson. Des Moines Mayor T.M. Franklin Cownie, an avid sustainability champion, has been chosen as the steering committee's vice chairperson.

Given its regional focus and planning experience, the MPO serves as the lead applicant and lead agency. The City of Des Moines, along with the City of West Des Moines, whose staff members have extensive experience in administering HUD programs, will support the MPO in fulfilling the administrative and fiscal responsibilities of the grant. The majority of the project staffing will be provided by a consultant, while the MPO, the municipalities, and the counties will play key roles in data and research collection, community outreach, and implementation. The GDMP and CF possess deep-rooted connections to the private sector and business community that will enhance the planning work. Staff members of these two entities have valuable experience in developing strategic visioning plans and projects for economic development and enhanced quality of life. COSC rounds out the steering committee and offers substantial expertise and connections in regard to sustainability. COSC, which has sustainability as a core mission, offers an independent perspective as well, enabling the steering committee to consider sustainability more holistically rather than from any individual community's parochial perspective. Each of the consortium members has representation on the steering committee.

The steering committee will be the central source for creating the RPSD. The steering committee will receive input from regional partners, from public forums, from a speaker series that includes nationally recognized regional planning experts; from key regional planning staff via a technical committee; and from the government oversight committee, which will provide insight regarding feasibility and implementation. With this input, the steering committee will facilitate the formulation of a regional vision and goals, and will work closely with the RPSD consultant(s) to develop the formal RPSD. Because of the breadth of input that it will receive, the steering committee will resolve by majority vote most disputes that arise. Any other disputes will be resolved by the MPO Policy Committee in accordance with its existing inter-governmental 28E Agreement and established Bylaws.

In existence since 1983, the MPO brings established regional experience and organizational capacity to the proposed project. The MPO is committed to implementing a comprehensive, coordinated, and continuing multimodal transportation planning process for the greater Des Moines metropolitan area. Its planning boundary corresponds to the area contemplated for the RPSD. The MPO is particularly well-suited as the lead agency because its core mission of transportation planning involves directly or tangentially virtually every issue involved with quality of life and sustainable development in the MPA. The MPO already coordinates all its member communities and eight regional committees involving hundreds of planning and policy leaders in the region. The MPO provides a regional forum to ensure coordination between the public and local, state, and federal agencies in regard to planning issues and to prepare transportation plans and programs. In 2009, the MPO completed the *Horizon Year 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan* (HY 2035 MTP), which seeks to preserve and promote the quality of life and economic prosperity of the region by providing a transportation system consistent with regional goals. The MPO frequently works with federal programs, handling compliance and annually managing tens of millions of dollars in federal and state funding. It has a well-earned track record as a catalyst for resolving disputes between and among central Iowa member governments on issues of consequence.

The MPO's work already involves extensive outreach efforts. The MPO recently updated a *Public Participation Plan*, which ensures that regional constituents are offered a meaningful opportunity to be engaged in the transportation planning process. The MPO engages the public by:

- Facilitating stakeholder groups and committees;
- Hosting public meetings, typically at locations along transit routes; and,
- Publishing paper and web-based newsletters and blogs.

More specifically, two MPO committees – the Transportation Advisory Group (TAG) and the Stakeholders Working Group (SWG) – include a wide range of stakeholders who represent traditionally marginalized populations. The TAG, which meets monthly, consists primarily of human service organizations that represent persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and low-income persons. The committee informs the MPO about transportation issues these traditionally marginalized groups face so that local governments and transportation providers can better meet those needs. In turn, this group hosts the Mobility Matters Workshop annually to engage others in the community about the importance of affordable, accessible, and coordinated transportation. The SWG is a cross-disciplinary committee that includes representatives from neighborhood associations, economic development agencies, utility companies, development groups, environmental organizations, transit providers, state and federal agencies, human service organizations, and local governments. This committee meets quarterly and helps the MPO engage other organizations in transportation planning activities up-front. The SWG was developed, in part, to help the MPO better address environmental and sustainability issues.

With an estimated 2009 population of 198,000, the City of Des Moines is the region's principal city. As a designated entitlement city, the city has 39 years of direct experience with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs and funding. In the past year, the City of Des Moines has managed nearly \$32 million in HUD-funded programs through entitlement, public housing, and stimulus grant funds. The city administers and monitors a full range of housing and community development program funds that target low- and moderate-income residents as well as families and individuals who are homeless or nearly homeless. These funds provide support for expanded local services, and two county-wide agencies: The Polk County Housing Continuum and the Des Moines Municipal Housing Agency.

Public participation in federal grant programs is facilitated in Des Moines through HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs and the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) programs funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

A fifteen member volunteer citizen board, the Neighborhood Revitalization Board (NRB), has been in place for the past twenty years, when it succeeded an earlier citizen board that had served since Des Moines began receiving CDBG funds in the 1970s. The NRB advises the City Council on CDBG and CSBG programming needs and services to benefit low, extremely low, and moderate income households.

The NRB provides public comment and oversight to the Des Moines Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) that serves 58 neighborhood organizations within the City of Des Moines. This group also serves as the Community Action Agency (CAA) Board for the CSBG programs that serve Des Moines households up to 200 percent of poverty level. The CAA maintains a site office in each quadrant of the city to provide better access to services and opportunities. These four office also allow for community outreach to low-income residents and households that generally are marginalized by the typical notification and service delivery process.

Two recent projects spearheaded by the City of Des Moines, the *Highway 5/North River Area Plan* and *What's Next, Downtown?*, exemplify the city's capacity to execute multi-disciplinary, collaborative planning projects. Currently in its final stages of adoption, the *Highway 5/North River Area Plan* utilizes sustainable planning principles to address the future of 30,000 acres on the south side of Des Moines. The City of Des Moines collaborated with Warren County and a number of other communities in creating the plan. In this process, the city produced new working relationships and built consensus for the vision of this area of metro Des Moines.

What's Next, Downtown? is a downtown plan resulting from leadership and joint funding by the City of Des Moines, Polk County, and the Downtown Community Alliance (an entity of the GDMP). Completed in 2008 and approved by all of its sponsors, the plan identifies key initiatives for downtown Des Moines; several of these initiatives currently are underway, including the identification of downtown neighborhoods, the creation of a regional transit facility, the addition of pedestrian amenities, and the review of publicly-owned properties, parks, and open space. Both projects included broad public outreach that resulted in well-attended public forums at key project milestones. Together, these recent planning efforts illustrate regional capabilities in identifying long-range planning visions that include housing, transportation, and infrastructure; in collaborating beyond jurisdictional boundaries; and in procuring and managing consultant resources.

Polk County, which, as of 2009, had a growing population of nearly 430,000, represents the majority of the region's population. In 2006, the county adopted *Polk 2030*, which serves as the county's comprehensive plan. Polk County's Air Quality Division, Public Health Department, Emergency Management Department, Housing Rehabilitation Division, and Planning Division, all of which deal regularly with sustainability issues, will help support the Consortium's efforts.

The majority of central Iowa suburbs will be part of the RPSD initiative, and all possess the capacity and qualifications to successfully partner in completing this project. For example, the City of Johnston, located northwest of and contiguous to Des Moines, is one of the fastest growing cities in Iowa with a current estimated population of over 16,000. City of Johnston staff have recently undertaken and completed two key planning initiatives. These initiatives include the Merle Hay Road Redevelopment Plan, which focused on sustainably redeveloping a corridor focusing on neighborhood mixed uses and pedestrian connectivity, and the Watershed Assessment and Stormwater Management Plan, which focused on implementation of stormwater best management practices for all new developments and retrofitting these practices into the existing stormwater system. Additionally, the City is nearing completion of a

Comprehensive Plan update, which is being developed based upon the smart planning principals and elements of the new Smart Planning Legislation that was recently adopted by the Iowa Legislature. Throughout all of these studies, staff implemented multiple forms of public education, input and outreach efforts.

The City of West Des Moines serves a U.S. Census 2009 population estimate of 56,503 persons, the largest in terms of population of the cities contiguous to the principal city of Des Moines. The City of West Des Moines was designated an entitlement community for HUD's CDBG program in 2005. The City is a full-service community, providing all general municipal services, including: fully accredited emergency medical, fire, and police departments; garbage collection and regional recycling; planning; park and recreation; library; human services; public works; administration; water service; building review and inspection; and economic development. A majority of the City's employees have work-appropriate certifications, credentials, and licensing to perform the responsibilities of a full-service municipality.

The City of West Des Moines has developed a Consolidated Plan with goals related to affordable housing, infrastructure, homeless individuals and families, the provision of special needs services, and the sustainability of current municipal services. The City also has a long-range Comprehensive Plan that guides development and provision of services into the future and establishes goals and policies to aid those activities. The City administers and monitors a full range of federal, state, and local funding initiatives that enable the development and maintenance of local and regional infrastructure, sustainability projects, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified projects, job creation and retention, preserve and enhance transit opportunities, home ownership assistance, energy assistance, rental assistance, transitional housing, and quality of life improvements for our residents and visitors. The City is the only community besides Des Moines that has a dedicated department for human service needs, including housing, food, clothing, and transportation assistance. The City serves as the administering agency for the Dallas County Local Housing Trust fund, the Metro Home Improvement Program, and the Polk City Home Improvement Program.

The City partners and collaborates extensively with its neighboring cities and counties in such programs as emergency response, centralized dispatching, regional waste water, regional geographic information systems data and analysis, cultural and arts programs, and regional transit. It participates in the Metropolitan Partnership for Lead Safe Housing program, Emergency Management and Response, Westcom (centralized dispatching for three of the western suburbs of the principal city), the regional waste water authority, county housing programs in Polk and Dallas Counties, the MPO, DART, Polk County Emergency Management, the Regional GIS program, human services programs to other western suburbs, the GDMP, the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce (economic development), the State of Iowa for job creation and retention projects, the City of Waukee joint studies for a common interstate interchange, and others. All of these examples include some form of materials and services acquisition, public participation, project management, fiduciary responsibilities, and administrative responsibilities provided by the City. These activities represent examples of the City's ability to execute and participate in multi-disciplinary, collaborative, and cross jurisdictional plans, programs, and services. Throughout its activities, the City follows public participation plans that provide for public input and comment on activities using a variety of methods including review forums; written, web-based, and telephone surveys; hearings; and neighborhood meetings.

The GDMP is the economic and community development organization serving the Greater Des Moines metro and covering a three county region. Through the consolidation of individual development groups, the GDMP is devoted to making Greater Des Moines a better place to build a business and to build a life. The GDMP is dedicated to the economic and community development of the entire Greater Des Moines area. Through economic development, the GDMP works regionally to recruit and assist new

and expanding businesses and to ensure there is a talented and educated workforce from which those firms can draw their human resources. Through community development, the GDMP contributes directly to the good health and vitality of members' businesses and the improvement of quality of life for the entire region. Embedded within each of these areas is a strong emphasis on building and sustaining a vibrant downtown core through development, events, environment and promotion. All of this creates a true partnership between business, government, and the public, so the GDMP can pursue its economic and community betterment goals with one voice, one mission, one focus.

The GDMP has four primary work platforms. Regional economic development is the cornerstone of the GDMP's priorities. By building upon its successes over the past several years, Des Moines will continue to experience economic vitality that reaches across the region. Greater Des Moines' business growth – thanks in no small part to the GDMP's economic development efforts – has made it necessary for the GDMP to ramp up its workforce attraction initiatives. The GDMP also works to build relationships in pursuit of a world-class community with one voice, one mission, and one regional identity. With the creation of the “dual membership” model that is now offered with the region's affiliate chambers, the GDMP's voice has been elevated to over 4,000 member businesses strong. Finally, maintaining the momentum that downtown Des Moines has enjoyed – thanks to unprecedented investment over the past decade – is another key priority; a strong region requires a thriving core. The GDMP administers the following regional councils, committees, and programs that support the four work platforms: Attraction/Retention Council; Communications Advisory Council; Diversity Council; Government Policy Council; International Advisory Council; Young Professionals Connection; Business to Business; Buy Into the Circle; Education; Health & Wellness; Share Your View; Sustainability; Transit 2030 Task Force; and, School-Career Connection.

The GDMP has been integrally involved in helping lead successful community visioning efforts in the recent past, including the Major Projects Task Force, the Capitol City Vision Plan, and Project Destiny, and will help lead the strategic regional visioning effort as part of the RPSD.

The CF was established in 1969 and holds over 700 charitable funds with assets of over \$160 million. The CF strives to improve the quality of life for all by connecting donors with their passions, fostering links between community organizations and convening local leaders to promote the common good. Increasing the region's connectedness includes building trust, civility, volunteerism, and encouraging informal socializing and civic engagement. Making community connections builds on the tendency to reach out to one another and lend a hand to those in need.

The CF possesses vast experience as a community convener and will leverage this experience to bring the region around the table to provide input to the RPSD process. The CF is committed to ensuring that the final vision for the region will be a living, vibrant plan that includes an ongoing implementation strategy. The CF's involvement with the RPSD also will draw upon the CF Board's resources and influence among the business sector, the nonprofit sector, and the philanthropic community.

The CF works to improve the quality of life for all by connecting donors with charitable organizations that fulfill their passions, fostering links between community organizations, and convening local leaders to promote the common good. The CF Board and staff carefully monitor community progress and challenges, and identify critical issues that need immediate attention. The CF works in a leadership capacity on these issues to convene community leaders, leverage funding, and build support to make progress toward positive change. Specifically, the CF has convened leaders around issues, such as:

- *Homelessness*: The CF convened local leaders and provided technical assistance to design a plan for programming, facility design and fundraising for a local homeless shelter relocation;

- *Arts and culture:* The CF convened local leaders and provided technical assistance to design Bravo Greater Des Moines, an umbrella organization for our local arts and cultural organizations that secures ongoing funding for our region's arts and cultural organizations;
- *Education:* The CF provides leadership for the Business/Education Alliance Roundtable to pull the area's 13 superintendents and local business leaders together to address issues impacting the Greater Des Moines educational system;
- *Workforce Development:* The CF is providing leadership to develop the Evelyn Davis Center for Working Families, which will serve as a workforce and educational re-engagement center in the heart of Des Moines;
- *Human Services Coordination:* The CF has provided leadership funding for over ten years to support coordination of our human service providers and to encourage movement toward community progress indicators;
- *Civility:* The CF convened a group of partners to design *Better Together: Creating Community through Civility*, a series of conversations about the importance of civility in building a strong community;
- *Nonprofit Capacity Building:* The CF has developed a nonprofit capacity building program designed to strengthen the nonprofit community by providing funding to build nonprofit boards and governance, strategically plan for the future, provide staff training and streamline operations; and,
- *2008 Flood Recovery:* The CF served as the hub for flood recovery efforts and implemented the Iowa Disaster Recovery Fund and Embrace Iowa program. Over \$8 million was raised to assist those affected by the 2008 floods.

COSC is a nonprofit membership organization founded in 2005 that serves as Iowa's trusted educational resource for sustainable building. As the recognized leader in providing education and connecting resources, COSC empowers individuals and communities to make everyday decisions that promote sustainability, resulting in a better quality of life for all Iowans. COSC recently was accepted by the United States Green Building Council as a LEED Educational Provider. This will allow COSC to offer LEED accredited courses for sustainable building in the commercial and residential sectors as well as for neighborhoods and community level planning and design.

b. Capability and Qualification of Key Personnel

The MPO, the City of Des Moines, Polk County, and the suburban communities represented in the Consortium all maintain professional planning staffs that offer years of knowledge about the region. Working collaboratively, these planners bring multi-disciplinary planning experience that is unique to the region. Committed involvement by each community across the region will be integral to ensuring insightful research, public outreach, and, ultimately, implementation of a comprehensive RPSD. The Consortium partners have committed staff resources to this project and are prepared to begin the process with their dedicated staff within 120 days of being awarded the grant.

While the MPO is charged with coordinating the regional transportation system, the MPO staff possesses the knowledge base and skill sets necessary to prepare and coordinate the collaborative formulation of the contemplated RPSD. For the past nineteen years, MPO efforts to develop long-range transportation plans, transportation improvement programs, public participation plans, and other special plans and programs have fallen under the leadership of an individual deeply tied to national research initiatives. Currently, the MPO Executive Director serves, by invitation, on a plethora of committees, which are outlined in the attached résumé. Furthermore, the MPO Executive Director brings extensive experience to the position of project

director. Not only does this individual possess years of transportation planning experience, this person is adept in managing staff, allocating resources, and developing and administering a budget that is largely funded by federal dollars.

The MPO Executive Administrator will serve as the day-to-day program manager. Currently, this individual is responsible for all of the human resources, operations, and administrative management functions for the MPO. The Executive Administrator has comprehensive expertise in job design and analysis, performance management, strategic planning, conflict resolution, budget analysis and administration, operations and facilities management, and project management, as outlined in the attached résumé.

The MPO will dedicate a Principal and a Senior Transportation Planner, both of whom are American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) certified planners, and an Associate Transportation Planner, who serves as the MPO's public involvement specialist, to the RPSD initiative. These staff members have experience in long- and short-range planning, project management, geographic information systems skills, brownfields remediation, data analysis, scenario modeling, asset mapping and cluster analysis, development review, and coordination of travel and technical surveys.

In 2009, the MPO staff developed the HY 2035 MTP, which serves as a guide for the transportation decision making process for the greater Des Moines metropolitan area. Staff developed a growth scenario process, engaged the public, considered the land use and environmental impacts of various coordinated transportation modes, and outlined a twenty-five year plan for the region.

In addition, the MPO helps plan and coordinate multi-modal transportation activities, including bicycle, pedestrian, freight, public transportation, street and highway, and rail issues. Staff develops and maintains the regional travel demand model, which serves as the basis for the long-range plan. In particular, the MPO personnel who will work on the RPSD already provides staff support for the Public Transportation Roundtable, the Freight Roundtable, and the SWG. Additionally, these planners serve on a wide variety of external committees relating to such topics as the environment, public transportation, geographic information systems, research and development, and international trade and economic development, among others.

The City of Des Moines will draw from the Community Development Department to contribute staff for this initiative to develop the RPSD. The City Manager's Office, which currently is led by a City Manager trained as a planner, offers its full support of the project. Key staffers working on the RPSD include AICP-certified and American Institute of Architects (AIA) registered professional planners along with senior administrative staff with over thirty years of experience managing and administering HUD-funded programs. The Community Development staff is experienced in directing multi-disciplinary planning efforts and in procuring and managing consulting services. Furthermore, these staff members serve on an array of steering committees and boards for housing, water infrastructure, open space preservation, economic development, and transportation projects and organizations. The city's Community Investment Administration Division, staffed by four full-time employees, monitors and reports financial administration of HUD-funded programs. As such, the city will offer this administrative expertise to the MPO to help ensure compliance with HUD's program requirements and efficient and accountable local administration of the grant.

Polk County's County Administrator, Land Use Planning Manager, Air Pollution Engineer, and Public Health Planner will support the RPSD initiative. These individuals possess years of experience in developing long-range comprehensive plans, in air quality planning, in promoting community health, and in public participation efforts. Furthermore, these individuals already are actively involved in regional economic development projects and transportation and infrastructure planning. Polk County is the only central Iowa

county engaged in air quality planning, so this commitment will serve an invaluable role in the development of the RPSD.

The regional suburbs also will play important roles in developing the RPSD. For example, the City of West Des Moines will assign an AICP-certified Planner to assist with the preparation of the RPSD. The Planner is the lead staff for the City's update and modification of its long-range Comprehensive Plan and is assigned to economic development and long-range efforts planning, and development review and approval for current planning projects. This planner offers twenty-two years of experience, which includes current planning, long-range planning, project management, budgeting, geographic information systems skills, data analysis, facilitation, presentation, and leadership skills. The Planner represents the City on local and regional standing committees, workgroups, steering committees, and has demonstrated effective facilitation and leadership skills toward productive regional and local initiatives. The Planner has the full support of the City Manager's Office and the ability to consult and/or bring into the project other city staff resources as needed, such as a housing planner and Community Development Block Grant administrator; other AICP planners, a licensed and AIA certified Architect and LEED professional, certified Professional Engineers, licensed and American Society of Landscape Architects certified Landscape Architects, City Manager staff, Finance Department staff, Community & Economic Development staff, and any other staff resources needed to effectively participate in the project.

Since its inception, COSC has engaged in a variety of outreach efforts, including workshops, lunch and learns, exhibitions, forums, presentations, open houses, and lectures. Through these efforts, COSC has educated over 72,000 participants about sustainability.

The following individuals will be deeply involved with the project; selected résumés are attached.

- Tom Kane, MPO: Executive Director and proposed project director;
- Stephanie Ripperger, MPO: Executive Administrator and proposed day-to-day program manager;
- Bethany Wilcoxon, MPO: Associate Transportation Planner;
- Dylan Mullenix, MPO: Senior Transportation Planner;
- Adam Noelting, MPO: Principal Transportation Planner;
- Larry Hulse, Des Moines: Assistant City Manager & Community Development Director;
- Kathy Kahoun, Des Moines: Neighborhood Development Administrator;
- Erin Olson-Douglas, Des Moines: Urban Designer;
- Bret VandeLune, Polk County: Land Use Planning Manager;
- Elizabeth Presutti, DART: Chief Development Officer;
- Jay Byers, GDMP: Senior Vice President for Government Relations and Public Policy;
- Kristi Knous, CF: Vice President, Donor Relations & Community Involvement; and,
- Lynnae Hentzen, COSC: Co-Founder and Executive Director.

The group includes seasoned professionals, all of whom have been involved with the creation and coordination of regional, multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary planning efforts. Representation on the steering committee includes an array of organizations and jurisdictions throughout the region and individuals that represent public and private interests. There is experience in outreach at a regional level and experience with outreach to specific municipalities and stakeholders, including those typically underserved, among the group. These key representatives, and their support personnel, bring complementary experiences and provide a collective base of knowledge and skill sets in planning for regional economic development, housing, transportation, land use, and infrastructure.

II. Needs/Extent of the Problem

The central Iowa region's grant application encompasses the MPO's MPA. The MPA includes the majority of Polk County along with portions of Dallas, Madison, and Warren counties. The information included in factor form 2 represents the best data available at this time.

The MPO's long-range transportation plan forecasts the central Iowa area to grow to 650,000 residents by 2035. Now is the time to plan for this growth, and the data outlined below will guide the region in executing more collaborative, sustainable planning. There currently is no unifying vision or organization guiding the area's land use, housing, and transportation development. Disjointed progress is underway, and some organizations offer services at the regional level. Still, numerous entities push their own visions without fully appreciating the needs of the greater metropolitan area. Housing, transportation, accessibility, economic development, health, and the environment are considered somewhat in isolation. This sector-specific planning produces some of the most acute challenges currently facing the region.

The area leadership aspires to break down this isolation phenomenon and work collaboratively to create a better region for the long term. Not only does the region lie at the crossroads of two major interstates, it lies at the crossroads of rural and urban America, at the crossroads of autonomy and collaboration, at the crossroads of status quo and creating a more sustainable future in the heartland of America.

a. Housing Costs

Central Iowans are fortunate in that median regional housing prices relative to household income remain reasonable. Median regional rental prices for Dallas, Polk, and Warren counties lie below \$700, while median regional household incomes total nearly \$62,000. While these figures bode well for the area, the regional rent-to-income ratio has risen 4.26 percent since 2000, indicating an increase in the proportion of their income that renters are paying. Conversely, the median housing-to-income ratio has steadily declined since 1990. In fact, this ratio dropped nearly 16 percent between 1990 and 2008, representing a significant change in the allocation of homeowners' finances. By developing an RPSD, regional leaders will be able to position the area to maintain favorable trends in both areas.

According to the Center for Neighborhood Technology's (CNT) Housing and Transportation Affordability Index, nearly 20% of the area's population is burdened by housing costs (30 percent or more of income). However, when considering both the combined affordability index, nearly half (49.2 percent) of area residents are burdened, paying more than 45 percent of their income for housing *and* transportation costs.

Much of central Iowa's housing is located in low-density, sprawling developments. Additionally, many area residents desire small town amenities, so they opt to live in rural areas. This desire drives up the affordability index for the area; the area encompasses both rural and urban communities, yet many rural residents who desire small town lifestyles must commute into the core city in order to afford the existing housing and transportation options they have chosen. In central Iowa, the availability of jobs, services, and cultural amenities in rural communities continues to decline, while the concentration of these jobs, services, and cultural amenities grows in the urbanized area. This will perpetuate itself into the future, and the overall affordability of the area will continue to diminish in the absence of an effective RPSD.

b. Environmental Quality

Another challenge facing central Iowa is maintaining the environmental quality of the region. Between 1990 and 2000, the urbanized land per capita increased from 0.21 to 0.22, and nearly 20,000 acres were urbanized.

While the urbanized land per capita change is minimal numerically, the 20,000 acres represent a significant loss of economic production for central Iowa. The area has long relied upon agriculture to drive its economy, and non-urbanized land is central to agricultural endeavors. In the four counties included in this application, farmland was valued at nearly \$4,300 per acre in 2009. Furthermore, central Iowa features some of the best farmland in the country; the region's soil is a world resource that must be protected and managed properly. As more land becomes urbanized, prime farmland is taken out of production, potentially harming not only the local economy but also the environment.

As of 2008, the central Iowa region included over 1,600 miles of water distribution infrastructure. This figure, based upon the best data available, indicates approximately 3.38 miles of water distribution infrastructure per 1,000 individuals served. When compared with cities around the country, such as Kansas City, Mobile, and Knoxville, the region's water distribution infrastructure would be considered more efficient; the aforementioned cities serve 1,000 individuals with approximately 5.67, 6.39, and 8.34 miles of water distribution infrastructure, respectively. A new report by the consulting and engineering firm Tetra Tech, though, estimates that water sustainability will be a challenge for central Iowa by 2050. Using climate projects from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change models, Polk County faces an 'extreme' risk of water shortages as a result of global warming, while Dallas and Warren counties face a 'high' risk of water shortages by 2050.

c. Transportation Access

Since 1990, the number of road mileage in central Iowa has increased over 60 percent, while the number of vehicle miles traveled has nearly doubled. The region encompasses a large area, yet, because the existing transportation system operates with great efficiency, area residents are willing to travel long distances in the course of an ordinary day. Accordingly, vehicle miles traveled per capita have increased nearly seven miles since 1990. The vehicle miles traveled per capita in central Iowa outpaces the national average by nearly three miles – 75 percent greater than the national average. This increase in vehicle miles traveled per capita correlates to the proportion of the regional population paying more than 45 percent of income to combined housing and transportation costs; as previously stated, some people desire that small town lifestyle, so they choose to move to rural areas of the region. Consequently, to reach jobs, services, and cultural amenities, they are required to drive greater distances.

Not surprisingly, because of the rural-urban dichotomy, central Iowa is an auto-dependent region. In 2008, over 95 percent of all regional trips utilized automobiles. This is due to the efficiency with which the roadway network operates. Parking is abundant, and, according to the Texas Transportation Institute, the average commute time is approximately 19 minutes, so there is little-to-no incentive to utilize transit; one can arrive at a destination in less time than it would take a bus to arrive there. Furthermore, bus service in the metropolitan region recently was reduced, and buses run less frequently; it is not uncommon to wait an hour for a bus on some routes. One area resident stated, "I cannot use public transportation unless I map out my entire day around the bus schedules."

While some residents decide to use transit because of environmental concerns, many area residents associate riding the bus with core cities and the challenges those areas face. Some individuals have a stigma against transit, thinking that only low-income and otherwise disadvantaged individuals ride the bus. Consequently, these individuals refuse to consider riding the bus, thus keeping the percentage of transit trips at a minimum.

The area, though, has been experiencing a movement towards more cycling. Bike lanes have been painted as part of the City of Des Moines' "Complete Streets" initiative, and the area cycling community continues to

advocate for the usage of bicycles as a means of transportation. Still, many area residents express hesitance in using bicycles as a means of transportation rather than merely for recreation for a wide variety of reasons.

Finally, development trends contribute to the prevalence of automobile trips in the Des Moines metropolitan area. As previously mentioned, the amount of urbanized land has expanded over the last twenty years. Despite the fact that the area's core is undergoing vast revitalization efforts, growth around the fringes continues, furthering the need for automobile trips to reach these employment, shopping, and recreation destinations. Not only is growth continuing to occur on the fringes, but that growth at the periphery – generally low-density in nature – is far exceeding redevelopment of the core.

d. Socioeconomic Inequity

While the central Iowa region faces transportation access issues, the dissimilarity index for each of the four counties indicates little racial segregation. In fact, to achieve perfect integration, just 59 African-Americans, 81 Hispanics, and 53 Asians would have to move. While this represents an extremely small proportion of the area's total population and perfect integration can never be achieved, one must consider that the central Iowa area is predominantly Caucasian. Therefore, achieving racial desegregation between and among central Iowa communities does not pose a significant challenge. Accordingly, central Iowa leaders hope to attract a more diverse set of individuals to the entire area, resulting in an enriched quality of life for all, and pockets of racial concentrations within communities.

Like many regions throughout the nation, an abundance of central Iowa students are eligible for the free and reduced lunch program. Statewide, nearly 37 percent of all students qualify for this program. While all four central Iowa counties under consideration have a lesser reliance on the free and reduced lunch program, each county demonstrates a dependence on this program. In Polk County, which is home to the majority of the area's residents, 36 percent of students rely upon the free and reduced lunch program. The Des Moines public school system, which is within Polk County, has an even higher percentage relying on the program. The numbers demonstrate the disparities between the urban core and suburban and rural areas located on the fringe of the metropolitan area; even as officials endeavor to revitalize the urban core, some classic urban issues persist.

e. Economic Opportunity

Even as the urban core faces an array of disparities, it is home to the five largest employers in the central Iowa region. Combined, these entities employ over 35,000 individuals in the financial, insurance, and health sectors. While these five employers lie within close proximity to one another, the availability of subsidized affordable housing within this area is lacking; just 5 percent of the housing near all of these employment centers is subsidized.

f. Fresh Food Access

Though subsidized affordable housing is not prevalent near employment centers, the central Iowa region is fortunate in that the proximity to full-service grocery stores for low-income and auto-dependent households lies below both the state and national averages. However, one also must consider the quality/variety of food available at these grocery stores. The majority of the grocery stores in the central Iowa region are part of large chains and offer little fresh, locally grown food. Additionally, the fresh, locally grown food often is expensive due to the dynamics of the supply-chain and demand. Because of these dynamics, low-income central Iowans are forced to select less than the most nutritious foods, essentially eliminating their access to fresh food. When

one considers that Iowa has some of the most fertile soil in the country, if not the world, and the availability of land in the state, all residents should have ready access to fresh, locally grown food.

g. Healthy Communities

Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) data reflects that the prevalence of preventable disease in central Iowa is relatively low. While the numbers presented in rating factor form 2 represent county totals (not by race), the IDPH asthma hospitalization data, based on 2009 resident inpatient data, depicts an average incidence of 0.45 per 1,000 for the four counties.

IDPH is conducting a body mass index assessment project that considers obesity among third grade students at twenty-nine schools across Iowa. While spring 2010 data finds that 21.7 percent of all students included in the study are obese, information for each school, two of which are located in the region, is not available.

Healthy and active residents are an integral component of sustainable communities. Diabetes data from the IDPH is based upon 2009 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Synthetic Estimates and shows a prevalence ranging from 6.1 percent for Dallas County to 8.0 percent for Madison County. While Madison County's prevalence of diabetes falls under the 2009 national average of 8.3 percent, it is above Iowa's average of 7.6 percent.

Heart disease information for the four counties is based upon 2009 resident inpatient data. The highest prevalence is found in Madison County, with a rate of 10.8 cases per 1,000; the lowest prevalence is found in Dallas County, with a rate of 5.2 cases per 1,000.

The incidence of lead poisoning in central Iowa is extremely limited. Three of the counties experienced no cases of lead poisoning in 2009, while Polk County dealt with less than three cases; this data is masked for confidentiality.

Finally, Polk County experienced a rate of 85.9 low birth weights per 1,000. Warren County saw less than three incidences, so this data is masked. Meanwhile, Dallas and Madison counties did not report any incidences of low birth weights.

i. Additional Measures

In addition to the aforementioned socioeconomic challenges in the region, poverty is most highly concentrated in the core city. Specifically, three downtown zip code tabulation areas have poverty rates of 16 percent, 29 percent, and 32 percent, respectively, far outpacing the regional average of approximately 8 percent poverty.

Just as poverty is concentrated in the core city, lower educational attainment levels are concentrated in this area. In these three zip code tabulation areas, nearly 14 percent of individuals over the age of twenty-five do not have high school diplomas, whereas the regional average is approximately 4.5 percent. Coupled with poverty rates, and continuing correlations to race, this disparity in educational rates illustrates that the region must work to revitalize the core city and expand opportunities for the disadvantaged in order to create a more equitable region.

Furthermore, according to Central Iowa Shelter & Services, there are over 5,100 homeless individuals residing in central Iowa. Approximately 2,800 of these individuals, including over 450 veterans, do not live in family

units. Moreover, the homeless housing capacity is less than 2,300 beds, representing a substantial service gap for those in dire need of emergency, transitional, and permanent housing solutions.

The transportation access problem is compounded for many low-income individuals because central Iowa does not have a high capacity transit service. However, DART's long-range planning initiative, which will be developed in conjunction with this grant, will help to address such needs.

Transportation planners across the region will utilize DART's long-range planning initiative in conjunction with the MPO's HY 2035 MTP. A review of the pavement condition index (PCI) data for the HY 2035 MTP indicates that, in the study area, approximately 19% of Federal Functional Classification System (FFCS) roadways rate poor or lower. According to the Iowa Department of Transportation, approximately two-thirds of the area's principal highways were last resurfaced prior 2000.

Some of the largest obstacles in the central Iowa region relate to environmental quality. While the central Iowa region currently is in attainment for 8-hour ozone and particulate matter PM2.5, it is expected that, once new, more stringent standards are adopted, portions of the area will be in nonattainment. In anticipation of this event, the MPO is working to implement MOVES technology and serves as part of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' PM2.5 Workgroup; the MPO desires to be proactive and prepared for any changes in standards regarding ozone and/or PM2.5.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources also reports that, in the study area, 156 contaminated brownfield sites are listed as closed, indicating that these sites are no longer regulated or that these sites have been cleaned up to regulatory standards. However, 29 sites still remain active and in need of remediation.

Moreover, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Raccoon River, which runs through the study area, is the second most polluted river in the country. While this does not bode well for the area, project partners are part of a task force that has been established to remediate this challenge, with the vision of developing a greenways system that preserves, protects, and enhances the environment; improves water quality; enables alternative transportation options; promotes fun, healthy lifestyles; and fosters community and economic vitality through regional cooperation.

The pollution issues associated with the Raccoon River are exacerbated by flooding issues, which have become more prevalent with expected climate changes. Since 1993, a period of just 17 years, the Des Moines area has experienced flooding beyond the 100-year flood risk level at least three times. The event in 1993 shut down the public water works for the entire city of Des Moines. The event occurring in 2008 caused thirty-six households to be displaced. Of those households, eleven were located outside of the 100-year floodplain, and just two had flood insurance. During this event, twenty-seven businesses were forced to close for at least one day, while numerous other businesses were impacted by the threat of flooding that did not materialize (i.e., conferences were cancelled, patrons stayed away from restaurants, workers were sent home resulting in productivity losses, etc.). Three city buildings and at least one county building were damaged and temporarily closed due to flooding. Fifteen nonprofit, cultural, and arts facilities also were damaged by the floods. Finally, road closures, sewer backups, and water in the lower level of buildings caused major economic disruptions, some of which have yet to be addressed.

Additionally, the 2008 floods posed serious health concerns due to the risk of drowning and contamination of drinking water. Long-term psychological assistance is necessary for some flood victims as their lives are negatively impacted. Compounding the situation is the fact that the core city is located at the confluence of two rivers. While advantageous for industrial and recreational uses, poverty

and lower educational attainment levels are concentrated in this area; and these flood victims often have few resources to deal with such emergency situations. Now, in 2010, the area is once again battling flooding and the associated water pollution impacts; shortage of fresh water; massive, widespread destruction; and economic disruption.

III. Soundness of Approach

a. General Description of Proposed Regional Plan for Sustainable Development

The Central Iowa RPSD will provide a comprehensive framework for future development of the region, creating new and integrating existing regionally-planned components. Grant funding will facilitate the creation of regional housing, environmental, and land use plans. Moreover, grant funding will provide the opportunity to produce a long-range regional transit plan and a strategic plan for economic and workforce development, both of which are vital components of the Central Iowa RPSD. The formulation of the RPSD ultimately will provide the chance to link these key endeavors to one another as well as to other existing regional plans. Additionally, the RPSD will suggest updates to existing plans in order to align all regional planning efforts. The RPSD, with its time horizon stretching to 2050, will relate the findings of the aforementioned studies and plans to the overall multi-disciplinary vision, goals, and initiatives underway in central Iowa.

There are currently a number of developmental aspects planned and implemented by regional agencies in the central Iowa region:

- BRAVO is a regional arts and culture entity;
- DART offers regional transit services;
- Des Moines Water Works (DMWW) supplies water to the majority of the region;
- The GDMP works to develop the region's economy and workforce;
- The MPO coordinates the regional transportation system;
- The United Way of Central Iowa acts as a regional resource for human services; and,
- The Wastewater Reclamation Authority (WRA) provides regional sewer services.

This initiative intends to align these entities' planning projects with one another. The RPSD would mark the first time that these components of the regional fabric are integrated into a single regional plan. While the aforementioned aspects (arts and culture, transit, water, economic development, transportation, human services, and sewer) are not formally integrated in the central Iowa region and each of them is regional in scope, their coordination has clearly been incomplete.

For other key elements of development, most notably housing and land use, regional planning is very weak. The process of bringing new aspects into the regional discussion and integrating – with its requisite adjusting, overhauling, and/or honing – existing regional planning allows the central Iowa region to focus on sustainability as a key, underlying objective. While integrating the planning work alone should enhance sustainability in the region through the realization of resource efficiencies, creating new regional forums for housing and land use planning; and incorporating climate change, public health, and energy efficiency as prime considerations of their conception, will elevate sustainability in public discourse and will advance sustainable development in the region.

An alternative scenarios model that can reliably depict the results of a variety of planning and policy decisions is the centerpiece of this application and will sharpen the regional visioning process. If awarded this grant, the central Iowa region would enter into a contract for the creation of a robust alternative scenarios model. Such a model would help policymakers and the public understand the long-term implications of various planning and

policy decisions. The interactive alternative scenarios model would engage the public through graphic depictions of alternative scenarios. It would include choices about future regional development including housing, transportation, transit, development location and density, policies about urban form, and the environment. These planning and policy choices would produce immediate adjustments to a regional growth model and other outcomes, such as commute times, cost of living, government spending, and air quality. In conjunction with a real-time voting mechanism, the alternative scenarios model would provide participants in the regional planning process with sophisticated tangible feedback on planning and policy issues that often seem remote and abstract. The alternative scenarios model will be a tool for engaging a larger section of the public and a system that allows for their informed input, thereby providing policy-makers with a stronger basis for establishing a vision and goals for the RPSD.

To advance sustainable development in the region, the Consortium will leverage regional experience using scenario planning. As part of the development of its long-range transportation plan, the MPO develops a preferred growth scenario by identifying future growth areas and the needed transportation infrastructure improvements to support the identified growth. In addition, the MPO has worked with the New Jersey Institute of Technology to participate as a beta tester and as a case study for the Transportation Economic and Land Use Model (TELUM). The TELUM model provides a means to identify potential future growth and land use scenarios. In addition, the MPO regularly performs sensitivity analyses to determine the impacts of proposed transportation infrastructure improvements.

Some City of Des Moines staff were previously employed in the Denver area and would be familiar with their regional interactive alternative scenarios model and the positive role it has played in regional planning and setting regional policy.

The Consortium includes representatives of key entities that have the capacity to address the *Livability Principles*. Additional advocates for each of the six *Livability Principles* have been identified and will be active in the process of creating the RPSD, including:

- Provide more transportation choices: DART and the MPO;
- Promote equitable, affordable housing: City of Des Moines, suburbs, Polk County, COSC, Polk County Housing Trust, Dallas County Housing Trust, Continuum of Care, Homelessness Coalition, United Way, CF, and DART;
- Enhance economic competitiveness: GDMP, CF, Des Moines Area Community College, and Iowa Workforce Development (Region 11);
- Support existing communities: City of Des Moines, suburbs, Polk County, DART, and the MPO;
- Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment: City of Des Moines, suburbs, the MPO, and GDMP; and,
- Value communities and neighborhoods: City of Des Moines, suburbs, counties, COSC, GDMP, and CF.

The Consortium affirmed its dedication to the long-term outcomes in its commitment agreement (see attachment and Rating Factor Form 5). The *Livability Principles* are embedded in the long-term outcomes. Earlier this year, the State of Iowa adopted *Smart Planning Principles* that require cities to adopt policy and comprehensive plan alignment to receive state funding; there is direct overlap between the federal and state principles. The ten Iowa *Smart Planning Principles* include:

- Collaboration;
- Efficiency, transparency, and consistency;

- Clean, renewable, and efficient energy;
- Occupational diversity;
- Revitalization;
- Housing diversity;
- Community character;
- Natural resources and agricultural protection;
- Sustainable design; and,
- Transportation diversity.

While the recent legislation supports planning efforts in Iowa, Factor 2 research demonstrates the region's lack of integrated regional planning. The region continues to experience a steady rate of growth, with the City of Waukee and Dallas County among the fastest growing cities and counties in the country, respectively. This growth is enabled by regional entities, such as WRA and Des Moines Water Works. The lack of coordination and of a defined regional vision, though, exacerbates some of the region's most difficult challenges, such as:

- Nearly half (49.2 percent) of area residents utilize more than 45 percent of their income for housing and transportation costs;
- Over 95 percent of all regional trips utilize automobiles;
- The area is home to the second most polluted river in the country (Raccoon River);
- Poverty and low educational attainment are concentrated in the central city; and,
- Major flooding events are occurring more frequently.

The RPSD will integrate the many existing regional plans, providing recommended changes to align the planning work with the RPSD. Grant funding will facilitate the creation of regional housing, environmental, and land use plans, along with a long-range regional transit plan and a strategic plan for economic and workforce development, both of which are vital components of the Central Iowa RPSD. The creation of the RPSD ultimately will provide the chance to link these key endeavors to one another as well as to other existing regional plans. The coordination of such plans will position the region to address these persistent challenges that plague the central Iowa region. The interdependence of each of these regional planning components then can begin to address the challenges of housing location, multi-modal transportation access, and land use in a sustainable manner.

In the last year, the central Iowa region garnered several national accolades, including:

- "America's Best Place to Raise a Family," *Forbes*, June 2010;
- One of the "Best Cities for the Next Decade," *Kiplinger's*, May 2010;
- "Best Place for Business and Careers," *Forbes*, April 2010;
- One of the top ten "Best Mid-Sized Cities for Jobs," *Forbes*, April 2010;
- Number one city in the U.S. for doing business, *MarketWatch*, December 2009;
- Number two "Most Secure City to Live," Farmer's Insurance Group, December 2009;
- "Most Livable Bargain Market" for real estate, *MSN.com*, November 2009;
- Number three city for "Where to Live & Play Now!," *National Geographic*;
- Top place to live to GO GREEN, *National Geographic*;
- One of the top ten "Best Places to Launch a Small Business" for mid-sized metro areas, *CNNMoney.com*, and,
- A fifth place ranking for "Cities Where Americans Are Getting Richer," *Forbes*.

In determining these rankings, experts focused upon several factors, including:

- Business costs that are 15% below the national average;
- Cost of living;
- Crime rate;
- Educated labor supply;
- Homeowner costs;
- Household income;
- Income growth;
- Job growth;
- Low housing cost;
- Projected economic growth;
- Revitalization of downtown Des Moines; and,
- Short commute times.

The RPSD will leverage the existing regional economic assets that led to these favorable rankings, including the interstate system (Interstate 80 and Interstate 35 intersect in Des Moines), the extensive regional trails network that provides over three hundred miles of multi-use trails, the railroad right-of-way located on both active and inactive lines, the rivers (the confluence of the Raccoon and Des Moines Rivers is located on the southeast side of downtown Des Moines), and the water infrastructure. These items represent significant investments in time, money, and imagination, and will be used as the framework for defining the 40-year RPSD.

b. Process to Develop a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development

The Consortium and its representative steering committee are intentionally comprised of entities that represent a broad cross-section of the region's communities. The suburban communities are represented by geography – eastern, northern and two from the western suburbs. Each representative will be responsible for reaching out to adjacent communities and utilizing their staff resources for information gathering and public outreach. Des Moines, the core city, is represented on the steering committee by an at-large Council member, its Mayor, and its city manager, each having responsibilities to the entire city, helping to ensure engagement throughout the city.

In addition to broad representation by the Consortium, the MPO, as previously mentioned, includes a wide range of stakeholders that represent traditionally marginalized populations. The TAG consists primarily of human service organizations that represent persons with disabilities, senior citizens, and low-income persons. The committee aims to inform the MPO about transportation issues these traditionally marginalized groups face so that local governments and transportation providers can better meet those needs. In turn, this group hosts the Mobility Matters Workshop annually to engage others in the community in dialogue about the importance of affordable, accessible, and coordinated transportation.

The SWG is a cross-disciplinary committee that includes representatives from neighborhood associations, economic development agencies, utility companies, development groups, environmental organizations, transit providers, state and federal agencies, human service organizations, and local governments. This committee meets quarterly and helps the MPO engage other organizations in transportation planning activities up-front. The SWG was developed, in part, to help the MPO better address environmental and sustainability issues.

GDMP counts over 4,000 businesses and investors from across the region among its members, including the region's largest employers and an array of small businesses. The GDMP has been in existence for over a decade and has built a strong regional organization for economic and workforce development. During the

process of creating the RPSD, the GDMP's network will provide an invaluable connection to the private sector, citizens, and insight into workforce issues.

In addition to engaging a broad cross-section of local communities, it will be essential to assess existing conditions and projected trends in the region. The alternative scenarios model is intended to provide a highly engaging tool that is easily accessible to a wide array of constituents. In conjunction with interactive voting at public meetings and other forums, the alternative scenarios model will give attendees the opportunity to see the impacts of various planning and policy decisions on regional development. The voting mechanism will record demographic information and also allow participants to see the consensus reached by other participants in the process and gauge this consensus against the full range of inputs. An actively monitored, frequently updated internet presence with the interactive alternative scenarios model and reports from various meetings will be key to sustained interest and participation in the visioning, planning, and implementation phases of the RPSD.

The alternative scenarios model can be utilized throughout the process of developing a vision for the region, creating the RPSD, and implementation. It will be a powerful tool in depicting the implications of various decisions during the visioning stage and then will become a descriptive graphic device to explain the logic and likely outcomes of various planning decisions. Finally, in implementation, the alternative scenarios model will be maintained and used to describe intended outcomes in early stages and, in later stages, to test the efficacy of the alternative scenarios model's projections and continue to model changes in policy and planning directions.

The alternative scenarios model will capture the array of existing conditions, including transportation, water infrastructure, roadways, employment centers, and housing. It also will have the capacity to capture and communicate growth trends, including continuing growth in a status quo fashion and altering growth with a variety of changes to current planning and policy directions that incorporate sustainability and regionally-coordinated growth.

Initially, the Consortium will use the data presented in factor form 2 to identify areas in which the region is severely lacking. This asset mapping will be leveraged to help the Consortium define its vision for central Iowa. The data from factor form 2 then will be utilized as the basis for the alternative scenarios model inputs in the first phase of the development of the RPSD. Specifically, the data trends will be extrapolated out to 2050 in order to demonstrate a scenario that maintains the status quo. The Consortium will utilize the following indicators to supplement the modeling:

- Parcel-level data will reveal development densities and locations;
- The MPO's most recent *Vehicle Occupancy Report* and *Travel Time Report* will provide information regarding single occupant vehicles and commute times;
- Energy and water use data from members of the partners committee will offer insight into potential increases in efficient use of resources;
- Identification of environmentally sensitive areas will help the Consortium develop policy recommendations; and,
- Historical Census data will assist in forecasting future housing needs.

After considering this data, the Consortium will create scenarios as part of the interactive alternative scenarios model. Then, based upon public input, the alternative scenarios model will be updated, and the interactive scenarios – based upon the underlying data – will be made available online. The data truly drives the RPSD. It will be used throughout the duration of the project, from month one to month thirty-six; the data will be used for a variety of tasks, from mapping and analyzing existing conditions to interactive alternative scenarios modeling to monitoring performance measures.

Raising the regional awareness and understanding of sustainability will be important in overcoming barriers. The steering committee has identified an interest in hosting a series of speakers that could offer experiences and insight into regional planning structures and sustainable development. The alternative scenarios model will serve as an educational tool as well. Short-term expediency often is a major barrier to sustainability. By depicting the consequences of various decisions and scenarios, the alternative scenarios model will reveal the long-term benefits of sustainable development.

A knowledgeable public that offers robust input will help ensure a sustainable future for the region. Education must play a key role in the planning process. The previously mentioned speaker series will be important to raising the community's understanding of the range of sustainable opportunities. Communication with the media also can play a role in enhancing the region's understanding of sustainability. Describing and defining sustainable terms used in the alternative scenarios model will assist in enhancing the community's knowledge of sustainable issues.

Integrating and aligning plans will require two strategies: one for integrating existing plans and another for relating planning efforts that are parallel to the RPSD. The RPSD will outline recommended changes to existing plans that can be captured in the next update to the respective plans. The level of regulation for implementing the RPSD into others' work plans already has generated discussions about the need for an implementation-type of organization. While not resolved, the steering committee is conscious of the challenges of implementation on a regional scale and unit of planning.

As previously mentioned, the RPSD efforts will provide the opportunity to produce a long-range transit plan that mirrors the RPSD time horizon. DART will lead this initiative, with the goal of advancing the region's sustainability as a guiding principle. The GDMP and the CF will simultaneously lead the efforts to produce a strategic plan for economic and workforce development. Given the profound connections of these two entities, the leadership of the GDMP and the CF in this component of the RPSD will ensure that private sector and business interests play significant roles in regional economic growth. Furthermore, technical staff, partners committee members, and steering committee members maintain overlapping positions with these endeavors.

Although the development of the RPSD itself will not result in the demolition or conversion of any low- or moderate-income dwelling units, the Consortium recognizes that, in order to meet the identified outcomes, the implementation phase may identify such strategies for redevelopment. In this instance, acquisition and relocation assistance and advisory services would be provided by the City of Des Moines in accordance with the *Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970* (Uniform Act), as amended. The Uniform Act requires that just compensation be paid to the owner of private property taken for public use, which is based upon an independent appraisal and review appraisal for the property to be acquired. In addition, the Consortium, supported by City of Des Moines Real Estate staff, would host public hearings and meetings to inform the public about the project.

The project has strong regional support amongst the local municipalities and organizations outlined on page 25; their support is expressed via the Letters of Commitment and Support attachment. At the time of the application, no community objected to the regional planning effort; rather, the timeframe of the application process did not allow for the resolution to reach communities who meet less frequently. Generally, the municipalities will determine the fate of implementing much of the RPSD. In addition to the steering committee that has strong representation from all of the communities, a governance committee also is envisioned that will allow community leaders to stay informed of progress on the RPSD, to offer input throughout the process, to identify challenges for specific communities, and to ward off major conflicts early in the work.

Most of the regional entities take their direction from their participating members' municipal requests; WRA, DMWW, and DART are likewise at the service of their member communities. The RPSD has the support of these entities (see Letters of Commitment and Support attachment); their participation is included in a partners committee. It was important to these entities not be caught in policy debates; rather, these entities will inform the decisions of policy-makers.

The project enjoys solid support from the private sector. Over five years ago, discussions amongst the business community and private sector identified the need to create an RPSD. The RPSD process is of great interest to the private sector. Consequently, the GDMP and CF have committed in-kind funds for the RPSD initiative.

The Consortium partners have already begun wrestling with the challenges of implementing a regional vision. There is a desire for understanding the methods and mechanisms that have fostered the success of thriving regional areas elsewhere. As the attached organizational chart depicts, the steering committee has discussed two structures for implementing the RPSD, both of which will be investigated during the creation of the RPSD. The RPSD and resulting governance will not aim to be dictatorial towards local entities; rather, it will seek solutions to local challenges that meet federal objectives.

During the creation of the RPSD, the Consortium will host a series of public informational/educational forums about regional planning, policies, and governance. These educational opportunities will raise the aptitude for regional planning and will assist community leaders in identifying potential future structures for regional oversight of the RPSD's implementation. The Consortium already has identified two alternatives.

In the first scenario, the role of the governance committee would extend beyond the three year planning period. The governance committee would ensure that existing regional entities incorporate the RPSD's recommendations into their respective plans during the next update. Municipalities would be asked to endorse the RPSD and to integrate recommendations into updates to their respective long-range comprehensive plans in this scenario.

The second scenario builds upon the public forums and the first scenario. While the aforementioned entities still would be asked to endorse and integrate the RPSD recommendations into their respective plans, the second strategy also includes the formation of a new regional entity. This body would oversee the implementation of all regional investments covered by the RPSD, including those of existing regional entities such as DART, WRA, and Water Works.

Performance metrics will be established during the modeling phase of the RPSD. During this time, the public will have a chance to establish which indicators (e.g., government spending, miles traveled, cost of housing, etc.) are the most important to them. The adopted regional vision and goals, also to be determined largely from public input, will establish which metrics are the most important for the region.

To track the established metrics, the newly created governing body or an existing committee will meet annually to determine how well the region is achieving these metrics by implementing the RPSD. Regional technical staff members will track metrics and develop an annual audit to determine how well the region is achieving the short-, mid-, and long-term goals.

c. Governance and Management

The steering committee is the direct extension of the Consortium, with members from each of the Consortium partners. The steering committee is comprised of key regional community leaders and decision-makers. It is balanced with leaders from Des Moines, its suburbs, and outlying areas in the counties. It includes established and trusted representatives of the business community. A number of the steering committee members wear multiple hats, representing their respective organizations while having extensive knowledge of important aspects of the region through experiences with other organizations. The steering committee will guide the progress and direction of the RPSD and is structured to make decisions with the input of a partners committee, a technical committee, a government oversight committee, public forums, and a series of speakers. See the Committee Compositions and the Organizational Chart attachments.

The steering committee has identified two leaders. Angela Connolly, a Polk County Supervisor and former MPO chairperson, will serve as the steering committee's chairperson. Supervisor Connolly also serves as chair of the DART Commission, on the boards of the Convention and Visitor's Bureau, the Riverfront Development Authority, the Polk County Housing Trust Fund, Transit 2030, GDMP, is past chair of the Metropolitan Advisory Council, and is the past President of the Iowa State Association of Counties. In 2003, Supervisor Connolly was named Leader of the Year by *American City & County*.

Des Moines Mayor T.M. Franklin Cownie, a devoted sustainability advocate, will serve as the steering committee's vice chairperson. He formed the Mayor's Task Force on Energy Conservation and Environmental Enhancement five years ago, and the task force has been active in implementing an array of initiatives, including LEED building standards for municipal buildings, a green checklist for the Park and Recreation Department's parks and conservation projects, hybrid and alternative fuel vehicles for the city's fleet, a free downtown transit shuttle, an extensive trail system that connects to over 300 miles of regional trails emanating in every direction from Des Moines, light-emitting diode (LED) traffic lights, and methane recovery from landfills. Mayor Cownie is active in national sustainability discussions through his roles with the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), the United States Conference of Mayors, and the National Endowment for the Arts' Mayor's Institute of City Design, and will call upon these organizations to ensure that the RPSD incorporates current best practices in sustainability.

Both Supervisor Connolly and Mayor Cownie have been in their respective leadership positions for a number of years; Supervisor Connolly has served on the Board of Supervisors for twelve years, while Mayor Cownie is serving his second term as Des Moines' mayor. In addition to their current roles as leaders of their respective governments, their careers are marked by extensive resumes in public service. Each has played an active role in planning in the region as well. Prior to her role as a Supervisor, Ms. Connolly spent nearly two decades in Polk County's planning department; Mayor Cownie chaired the Des Moines' Plan and Zoning Commission for a number of years prior to serving as mayor.

Supervisor Connolly will represent Polk County on the steering committee.

In addition to Mayor Cownie, Des Moines has three members on the steering committee. Councilperson Chris Coleman is an at-large Council member serving his third term. Councilperson Coleman has been actively engaged in the MPO and works with homeless issues. Councilperson Bob Mahaffey represents northeast Des Moines, an area of growth for Des Moines, and is serving his fourth term as a Council member. Rick Clark has been the Des Moines City Manager since 2006 and has served in Des Moines' city government for over thirty years. He is trained as a planner and worked in planning and community development for many years prior to leading the City Manager's Office.

The suburban communities are represented by four appointed steering committee members, distributed by approximate population and arranged by geographic location: Two are from the western suburbs and one each come from the northern and eastern suburbs. Each of these suburban representatives is an elected official and will represent their own communities along with the others in their geography. The suburban representatives are as follows:

- Western: Russ Trimble, West Des Moines City Councilperson, one of the country's fastest growing suburbs;
- Western: Robert Andeweg, Mayor of Urbandale, lawyer and local developer;
- Eastern suburb representative: Tom Hockensmith, Polk County Supervisor for the eastern district, an area that has seen significant infrastructure investment and growth in recent years; and,
- Northern: Paula Dierenfeld, Mayor of Johnston, a community that has been a leader in sustainability for many years.

With approximately 90 percent of the population of the Des Moines region residing in Polk County, Dallas and Warren counties represent potential areas of growth in the region. The steering committee representatives from these two counties have played active roles in the debates about urban growth and rural conservation:

- Warren County: Ruth Randleman, Mayor of Carlisle, has taken an active role in regional planning discussions and serves as co-chairperson of the State of Iowa Smart Growth Task Force; and,
- Dallas County: Brad Golightly, Dallas County Supervisor, has roots in agriculture in Dallas County and is active in economic growth discussions.

The balance of the steering committee is formed by representatives of regional entities:

- MPO: Ted Ohmart, current chairperson of the MPO and City Councilperson from West Des Moines;
- Greater Des Moines Partnership: President and CEO Martha Willits has established a reputation for articulating and representing the issues and concerns of the business community in the region. She has convened ambitious discussions about central Iowa's workforce, quality of life, and economic development issues during her tenure at GDMP. She is a former member of the Polk County Board of Supervisors;
- Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines: President Barry Griswell continues the exponential growth and influence of the Community Foundation, building upon his past experiences as CEO of Principal Financial, the area's largest employer, and chairman of United Way. Mr. Griswell brings distinct interest in housing issues to the steering committee; and,
- Center on Sustainable Communities: Executive Director and co-founder Lynnae Hentzen leads an organization which has rapidly become the state's independent leader of sustainable development. COSC serves as an educational resource and advocate for sustainability.

The steering committee will operate under Iowa's open meetings and open records laws; agendas will be publically advertised, and meetings will be open to attendance by the public. Decisions made by the 15-member steering committee will be subject to a majority vote. Additional governance of the steering committee will be established in accordance with Iowa law if awarded a grant. Commitment of each of the Consortium members is affirmed in the Letters of Commitment and Support attachment.

The Consortium assembled the steering committee to maximize the opportunity of creating a robust RPSD that will be utilized to shape and prioritize development in the coming decades. The Consortium believes that the steering committee aptly represents the comprehensive set of decision-makers needed to advance sustainable regional planning, that is capable of bold, historic decisions, and highly influential among other regional decision-makers. The steering committee also assures a broad range of input into the creation of the RPSD. Furthermore, the structure of the input groups and committees will help guarantee a broad and diverse range of insight into regional planning, though the time allowed for compiling the application has not provided an exhaustive inventory of specific members for of the contemplated input groups.

If the grant is awarded, the steering committee will conduct a regional audit to identify a full breadth of groups and organizations that should be represented in the planning process within the 120 days prior to commencing the project. The Consortium is committed to a range of strategies that have been successfully employed in the region and elsewhere for gathering a breadth of input, including input from traditionally underserved populations. Public meetings will be held in a variety of locations and areas that are accessible by transit. Broad geographical representation among the Consortium members and their staff personnel will allow for the identification of specific community needs for outreach. This aspect of the budget includes funding for public input and communications that will be used for outreach to those that are traditionally underserved, including educational support, translation services, and print media. The Consortium is open to additional steering committee members and/or members on the input committees (see Organizational Chart attachment) that evaluators of the grant application deem necessary to create a meaningful RPSD with a fully participatory process.

In order to ensure that decisions are well-informed and communicated across jurisdictions, the MPO will serve as repository of all collected data. The data management plan specifies that data will be collected from regional partners and jurisdictions. Once collected, a quality control check will be performed on the data. The data will then be reviewed for consistency before integration into an accessible database.

The MPO will publish all relevant data to a File Transfer Protocol (FTP) site. The MPO currently maintains a password-protected FTP site and will leverage this existing resource to share data with the Consortium. By placing the data on an FTP site, the Consortium will ensure accessibility for all interested parties. If data updates are necessary, the MPO will perform and/or incorporate these changes to the data and republish the data to the FTP site.

d. Project Implementation Schedule

The development of the RPSD will be completed in three phases:

1. Data Collection/Create Alternative Scenarios Model;
2. Visioning; and,
3. Create RPSD.

Public outreach will occur throughout the initiative to educate, inform, and gather input from the public and other stakeholders. Thirty-three actions have been identified within the three phases, with over one-third of those actions involving public outreach and/or education. Please refer to the Proposed Project Schedule attachment.

Phase 1 of the initiative will focus on addressing personnel needs, consultant retention, data collection, and the creation of a regional alternative scenarios model to integrate land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, and environmental quality into a regional scenario planning and visioning tool. Phase 1 is anticipated to last 12 months and would begin in Month 1, with completion anticipated by Month 12.

Phase 2 of the initiative utilizes the alternative scenarios model as a planning and visioning tool to determine how land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, and environmental quality choices affect the outcome indicators. A common, unified vision will be chosen as the region's preferred scenario and goals, objectives, and performance measures/metrics will be developed to reach this vision. This vision will be chosen with consideration and input from the public and numerous stakeholder organizations. Phase 2 is anticipated to last 19 months and would begin in Month 8, with completion anticipated by Month 26.

Phase 3 of the initiative expands on the unified vision, goals, and objectives and includes the development of the RPSD. The RPSD will be a comprehensive plan for the region, focused on aligning land use, housing, transportation, infrastructure, and environmental quality with the region's vision. Recommendations for updates to existing regional, municipal, and county plans will be identified, and the long-term governing oversight committee will be created. Phase 3 is anticipated to last 24 months and would begin in Month 13, with completion anticipated by Month 36.

e. Budget Proposal

See Total Budget attachment.

f. HUD's Departmental Policy Priorities

In developing its RPSD, the central Iowa region aspires to address HUD's policy priorities of capacity building and knowledge sharing, and of expanding cross-cutting policy knowledge. To fulfill this goal, the Consortium will undertake several targeted activities.

To build capacity and share knowledge, the Consortium will offer both a speaker series and public input series. Other educational forums will be held in conjunction with these events; these forums will allow regional partners – GDMP, CF, Convention and Visitor's Bureau, DART, Wastewater Reclamation Authority, United Way, Water Works, BRAVO, and the MPO – to increase their skills and technical expertise. The Consortium hopes to have at least one individual from each of these entities as well as cities and counties participate in the educational forums. The Consortium anticipates hosting up to ten educational forums during the three-year performance period. Additionally, podcasts of the educational forums will be made available online. In doing so, the Consortium will be able to engage a broader set of participants, including decision-makers and the general public.

Furthermore, monthly Consortium meetings will establish regular dialogue between RPSD partners. Therefore, during the three-year performance period, approximately 36 meetings will be held. Existing MPO subcommittees also will provide structured peer exchange and will allow for the opportunity to conduct cross-regional briefings. The TAG meets monthly, while the SWG meets quarterly. Hence, approximately 40 additional cross-regional briefings will be offered. All of these meetings all will be open to the public.

As part of the RPSD, fact sheets about the project will be issued. The MPO will include information about the RPSD in its quarterly newsletter over the three-year performance period and will provide updates via its website and blog.

The Consortium also will strive to expand cross-cutting knowledge. The entirety of the development of the RPSD will be carried out in a transparent manner. This transparency then will allow the central Iowa regional planning model to be transferred to other regions throughout the state, the Midwest, and the country, resulting in increased sustainability for a plethora of regions.

To expand cross-cutting knowledge, the Consortium will rely upon its members to collect data regarding the identified outcomes. The MPO will continue analyzing commuting times as part of its *Travel Time Survey*. The MPO also will support the central Iowa Consortium by analyzing VMT data. The Consortium will work with a higher education institution to analyze household-level data, while it will leverage the existing Central Iowa Regional Geographic Information Systems Consortium to provide consolidated local data free to the public on a regular basis.

IV. Leveraging Resources

There is a sense that the central Iowa region is at the tipping point for regional development, a term coined by Malcolm Gladwell that visually references a fulcrum gingerly leaning in one direction and describes the gathering momentum towards a desired outcome. The variety of leveraged resources is indicative of this tipping point; the Consortium will leverage funds from numerous entities if the RPSD grant is awarded. The Consortium will draw upon communities, the private sector, and federal resources to successfully execute and implement the RPSD successfully. These resources total \$1,091,834, representing a match of 57 percent. See Letters of Commitment and Support attachment for details on these leveraged resources.

V. Achieving Results and Program Evaluation

The Consortium is committed to the outcomes identified by the grant program and enthusiastic about addressing the additional outcomes specific to issues in the central Iowa region. In the course of solidifying the Consortium organization and confirming support for the outcomes, one of the steering committee members exclaimed that this project would be his “most important contribution as a public official!” See Letters of Commitment and Support attachment solidifying commitment to the outcomes and Rating Factor Form 5 matrix for an outline of the outcomes, anticipated plan elements, and benchmarks.