New Partners for Smart Growth Conference Kick-Off Plenary Features Heads of DOT, HUD and EPA: We are very honored to be hosting some of the new Administration’s top leaders — the members of the new federal partnership for the Sustainable Communities Initiative. When President Obama took office, he issued a call for enhanced coordination among federal agencies on issues related to climate change, energy, transportation, and environmental protection. The heads of these agencies, Lisa Jackson, Administrator of the U.S. EPA, Ray LaHood, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation, and Shaun Donovan, Secretary of HUD, will be opening the conference on Thursday evening. They will tell us what this partnership is doing to promote sustainable, livable communities and how we can partner with the federal government to make smart growth happen on the ground.

The conference registration deadline is January 15, and the hotel room reservation deadline is January 13th. For more information or to register, go to www.newpartners.org.

Diversity Scholarships Available for New Partners Smart Growth Conference: The 2010 conference program will underscore the connections between smart growth, social equity and environmental justice. Many sessions on the conference program are devoted to these very important issues. Additionally, a daylong pre-conference workshop on "Working Together for Equitable Development: Voices and Lessons from Environmental Justice and Smart Growth" is scheduled for February 3, 2010.

A Diversity Scholarship Fund has been established for this event, making scholarships and travel stipends available to minority community leaders, as well as representatives from organizations whose work is primarily focused on social equity and environmental justice. The fund is supported by an impressive group of foundations including Ford, Rockefeller, W.K. Kellogg, Bullitt, Surdna, and The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

For more details or to apply for a diversity scholarship, please contact Shani Alford at salford@lgc.org or call 916-448-1198 x330.

Local Planning for Climate Change Catapults to Global Prominence: It seems like it’s been a long, hard task to get state and federal policy makers to recognize and support the important role of local government in addressing global warming. However this month, we seem to have turned a corner.

Governor Schwarzenegger, in a speech to the U.N. climate summit in Copenhagen, quoted a U.N. figure that up to 80% of greenhouse mitigation will be done at the sub-national (local and state) level. He said, “I believe in the power of the cities and the states and the provinces to be laboratories for new ideas, which the national governments then can go and study and adopt…”

Meanwhile, back home in California, the need to provide help to financially-strapped local governments to actually implement those new ideas seems suddenly to have been recognized.

One hopeful example relates to SB 375. This legislation, passed last year, requires the CA Air Resources Board to give vehicle miles traveled (VMT) or GHG emission reduction targets (for light duty vehicles) to regions. Although local governments do not have a specific mandate imposed under SB 375, they play a critical role in implementing the Sustainable Community Strategies. It will be costly for local governments to take this charge and make the necessary changes to GPs and zoning codes; funding this work has not been given much attention.

Last month, this issue came up before the Economic Allocation Advisory Committee (EAAC), the group in charge of advising how to spend California’s share of the carbon market under cap and trade. It is anticipated that California’s income from this source will be between $7 to $22 billion a year. The LGC and the League of California Cities estimate that using a small portion of the funds annually (approximately 1% depending on the revenue generated) would be enough to fund those cities that wish to update their general plans and zoning documents to make them consistent with smart growth principles.

LGC Board Chair and Richmond Councilmember Tom Butt and others provided testimony and their recommendations on this issue were heard loud and clear. The draft report issued by EAAC this month states, “The market for innovative emission reduction solutions associated with land use is currently impeded by outdated zoning restrictions and general plans and local communities across California…In many cases the market would support higher density, mixed-use projects as individuals seek ways to reduce the time and money they spend just getting around. But outdated, unrealistic zoning prevents developers from building to the market demand. The most urgent need is to fund local governments to update their general plans and zoning codes to be consistent with the SB 375 regional Sustainable Communities Strategies…”

The EAAC report recommendations will be submitted to the Air Resources Board on January 11th. There is still time for public comment at: http://www.climatechange.ca.gov/eaac/. For more information on how to support using the allocations to fund local planning contact Kate (Wright) Meis at kmeis@lgc.org.

The State has also issued three draft RFPs that will provide financial assistance to local governments for updating planning codes. Funded under
Prop. 84, they include 65 million for land use planning and zoning for compact, walkable, mixed-use communities, $70 million for urban greening projects that reduce energy consumption, conserve water and improve air and water quality, and provide other community benefits; and up to $17.5 million for the purpose of producing urban greening plans. It is expected that the final RFPs will be issued some time in February.

**Economic Benefits of Implementing SB 375 Detailed in a New Study:** According to Transform, a California-based coalition of unions and nonprofits that works on transportation policy, Californians could save $31 billion and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 34 percent just by living in walkable communities with more transportation choices.

The study, *Windfall For All: How Connected, Convenient Neighborhoods Can Protect Our Climate and Safeguard California’s Economy* was produced by Transform. It calculated that people in Sacramento, the Bay Area, Los Angeles and San Diego who live in walkable communities near public transportation on average emit fewer carbon emissions and spend billions less on transportation compared to people who live in areas where public transit is scarce.

If all the people who live in Sacramento resided in transit-friendly neighborhoods with good access to jobs and shopping, they would spend nearly $2.25 billion less per year buying and maintaining vehicles.

A paper presented at last spring’s Scientific Congress on Climate Change in Copenhagen identified many additional benefits of walkable, transit-friendly development. They include congestion reductions; infrastructure cost savings, traffic safety, improved mobility for non-drivers, more livable communities, reduced local pollution, and improved public fitness and health. The cumulative benefits add up to support for economic development and social equity. They are “no-regret” strategies that are justified whether or not one is concerned about climate change risks.

**Yosemite Is Calling — Join Us March 18-20:** It has been noted frequently by visitors to Copenhagen that this city is not only one of the world’s most livable places, it is also the most “green.” Further, according to one study, Denmark’s citizens are among the world’s happiest. How do they accomplish this feat? This year’s Ahwahnee Conference in Yosemite will address this question.

Our 2010 conference will focus on win/win solutions found in both Denmark and leading California cities — strategies that allow residents of our communities to live within our resources while enjoying more economically secure and socially satisfying lives.

Among the confirmed speakers is economist Doug Henton, author of a new report titled, *Many Shades of Green: Diversity and Distribution of California’s Green Jobs.* This is a new report, sponsored by Next Ten that identifies green businesses and job opportunities by region.

The report notes that the number of green jobs in the Golden State jumped to 159,000 in 2008 from 117,000 in 1995, an average annual growth rate of 2.4%, putting California at the forefront of a wide range of green technologies. It also reveals that regions are developing green-job clusters by building on existing strengths. The San Francisco Bay Area leads in green energy generation, mostly solar. San Diego is strong in co-generation technologies, such as turning waste heat into energy. The Los Angeles and Orange county regions excel in transportation, including electric vehicles.

Henton will provide Yosemite conference participants with information about the green job clusters found in their own regions and how local government leaders might use government policies to further expand the growth of jobs in these sectors.

We will also hear a success story from Sonoma County where construction-related jobs increased 8.4 percent between January 2009 and September 2009 despite rising unemployment in California and nationwide. This surprising increase was achieved through a local program that allows property owners to finance energy efficiency, water efficiency and renewable energy improvements through a voluntary assessment attached to the property, paid back through the property tax system over time. According to Rod Dole, Sonoma County’s Auditor/Controller who administers the program, “We are excited by the twofold benefits — lower utility bills and new green construction jobs — of the County’s new Energy Independence Program.”

Now would be a good time to reserve your space at the conference. More information on registration and lodging are available at: www.lgc.org/events.

We Wish Our Members a Happy and Successful 2010! Our New Year’s Resolution is to Respond to the Challenges Ahead with Policies that Will Make Our Communities Even Better!

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