

## White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) Accomplishments in Cleveland, OH

*"SC2 has been helpful in advancing our neighborhood development, land banking, workforce training, and small business innovation initiatives. It has been a fresh approach by the federal government to work in partnership with local government. While we set policies at the local level, SC2 has been instrumental in helping us to implement the policies by streamlining the red tape."*

*- Cleveland Mayor Frank G. Jackson*

The Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative (SC2) supports President Obama's agenda to make historic investments to build ladders of opportunity for those working hard to make it to the middle class and to partner with communities that were hardest-hit by the recent recession. Under SC2, communities including **Cleveland, OH**, have received intensive technical assistance from federal inter-agency Community Solutions Teams that work alongside the Mayor in City Hall to support the City's vision for economic development.

SC2 has worked with **Cleveland** to increase coordination around comprehensive city and regional planning and enhance the City's capacity to address its priorities of economic and workforce development, neighborhood revitalization, municipal operations, and sustainable communities. Key SC2 accomplishments in **Cleveland** include:

- Facilitated partnership between NASA, the City, County, and the Manufacturing Advocacy & Growth Network (MAGNET), to create the Adopt-a-City program which selected **nine small and medium-sized companies to receive a total of 400 hours of subject matter expertise from NASA and access to \$450K in low- interest loans** to help grow their business and hire more employees. A second round of the Adopt-a-City program has been launched, in which **six small and medium-sized companies will receive 240 hours of subject matter expertise from NASA and will have access to \$270K in low-interest loans** to cover costs connected to finding solutions to their challenges.
- Promoted the **creation of—and secured funding for—a Strategic Workforce Alignment Group and a Veterans Employment Transition Team** to further engage 15-20 organizations to develop strategies to implement and achieve better alignment of job training and other employment resources in the county.
- In partnership with the U.S. Department of Education, worked with the Cleveland Municipal School District and the leadership at the Ohio Department of Education to **obtain approval for a supplemental waiver request to avoid duplicative school leadership trainings** as part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.
- Worked with the Cuyahoga County Land Bank to develop the [On the Road to Reuse: Residential Demolition Bid Specification Development Tool](#), which will help communities identify environmental issues that may arise in connection with a residential demolition project, including those that relate to the demolition contracting process.
- **Coordinated with the City and HUD to overcome regulatory barriers for a 40-unit affordable senior housing development.** The development will serve a neighborhood that currently has few quality multifamily senior living options.

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- Facilitated **HUD clarification of Neighborhood Stabilization Program rules regarding reuse of vacant land**, which has enabled the City to implement several innovative programs that have brought vacant properties across the City back to life.
- **Worked with the EPA to provide technical assistance and a \$60,000 Urban Waters Grant** to the Sewer District and local stakeholders for the design and implementation of green water infrastructure projects on vacant land throughout the City of Cleveland. The projects will help stabilize neighborhoods and reduce maintenance costs associated with vacant land. Currently, nine rain gardens have been constructed in the Slavic Village neighborhood on nine separate vacant properties owned by the City for under \$5,000 each.
- **Secured EPA technical assistance for the Cleveland Cuyahoga County Port Authority and a \$70,000 grant from EPA to the Cleveland Botanical Garden** to help find sustainable solutions to the long-term management of sediments dredged from the Navigable Channel of the Cuyahoga River. The Navigable Channel is one of the main arteries of commerce for the region. In addition, SC2 coordinated improvements to the Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve. **Through \$600,000 in EPA Brownfield Revolving Loan funds, the Port Authority transferred over 30,000 cubic yards of sediment** from an existing holding facility to the Nature Preserve site for mitigation and grading improvements.
- **Brought an EPA research vessel in to conduct sediment testing in the Old River Channel of the Cuyahoga River.** The results of this testing have helped the City and Port Authority quantify the contamination of the sediments in the Channel, and will help them establish what has to be removed, how it should be removed, and where it should be taken. Cleaning up the Old River Channel will allow several economic development projects to move forward, including a project involving one of the oldest and largest tugboat companies on the Great Lakes.
- **SC2 coordinated the donation of 350 computers from the U.S General Services Administration** to the Cleveland Metropolitan School District through the *Computers for Learning Program*.
- **SC2 Fellows** redeveloped the City's economic development website and created a demolition strategy to manage deteriorating properties. SC2 Fellows also assisted with modifications to the City's database and the web site for the City's land bank. The Fellows' work enhanced the City's ability to track applications for redevelopment and reuse of land banked properties through the disposition process.