Cool & Connected Planning Assistance for Broadband and Sustainable Community Development

Webinar presentation by Ed Fendley EPA Office of Sustainable Communities 202.566.9555 <u>Fendley.Ed@epa.gov</u> Google search: EPA Cool & Connected

http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/cool-connected-announcement-federal-planning-assistance-broadband-and-sustainable



What We'll Cover

- What is Cool & Connected
- How broadband can contribute to downtown & neighborhood revitalization
- What Cool & Connected partner communities will receive
- How to apply
- Timeline
- Questions



What is Cool & Connected

- Cool & Connected will provide planning assistance.
- This is not a grant program.
- But...we've seen that communities with a good plan and buy-in are more likely to attract public and private investment.



What is Cool & Connected

- We will help people come up with strategies and action plans to leverage broadband to revitalize downtowns & neighborhoods.
- We want to foster community development especially in small towns and rural communities.
- We want to help communities focus development in existing neighborhoods and make them walkable, connected and economically vibrant.
- Focusing development on traditional main streets and existing neighborhoods is good for the natural environment, good for people, and good for local economies.



How broadband can contribute to downtown & neighborhood revitalization

- America is re-centering. This is a good thing.
- Assets and amenities matter.
- Local foods & breweries, music & arts, trails & recreational opportunities can make a difference in where people choose to live and invest. This applies to small towns and not-so-small towns.
- Broadband is both infrastructure and amenity.



How broadband can contribute to downtown & neighborhood revitalization

- This is a pilot program. We don't yet have the answers.
- We want to hear ideas from communities interested in leveraging broadband for the purpose of revitalizing main streets or existing neighborhoods.
- This means taking advantage of broadband service that is already in place, will soon be in place, or can be put in place using resources already in hand.



How broadband can contribute to downtown & neighborhood revitalization

Some possibilities:

- Using broadband service to attract new types of businesses to main streets or existing rural communities.
- Combining internet service with other local amenities to attract new investors, visitors, and residents.
- Developing or marketing downtown Wifi zones.
- Extending broadband service beyond anchor institutions in ways that promote main street development.
- Selecting centrally located anchor institutions or community facilities that will receive broadband service.



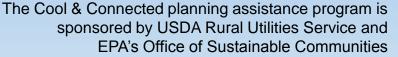
What Cool & Connected partner communities will receive

- A team of people with expertise in community development and broadband will help partner communities.
- Team members will include contractors and federal staff.
- We will conduct analysis, help communities convene stakeholders, and help create or expand useful partnerships.
- A focal point of the planning assistance is a public workshop and stakeholder gathering in the community.
- We'll help the community create or refine a strategy, and will draft a detailed action plan on what needs to get done, and how to do it.



What Cool & Connected partner communities will receive

- Cool & Connected will be modeled on Local Foods, Local Places.
- Local Foods, Local Places helps communities leverage local foods to spur downtown or neighborhood revitalization.
- Info on Local Foods, Local Places, including community action plans, can be found at http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/local-foods-local-places.





How to Apply

- To apply, submit a two-page letter of interest.
- Tell us your needs and challenges related to your town's main street or other existing neighborhood, and how a planning process might help.
- Tell us what initial ideas you might have for using broadband to foster smart development.
- You don't have to have all the answers. The planning process will help you figure out your strategy and plan for leveraging broadband to create a great place to live and work.



How to Apply

- You are encouraged to indicate partners that can be expected to participate in a planning process, such as local internet service providers, local officials, business associations, or local schools or colleges.
- Any community representative is welcome to submit a letter of interest.
- Special consideration will be given to small towns and rural communities that face economic challenges.
- Special consideration will be given to communities in places where USDA has provided loans or grants in support of broadband or other internet-related services.



How to Apply

- Submit your letter of interest to Ed Fendley at <u>fendley.ed@epa.gov</u> by Wednesday, February 24, 2016.
- Please include "Cool & Connected" and the name of your community in your email subject line.



Timeline

- February 24: Deadline for letters of interest
- March or April: USDA & EPA select partner communities
- Spring, summer, and fall: Work with partner communities
- Pilot round concludes by the end of 2016
- Potential for another round of community partners, building on the pilot round

