

**Southwest Region University Transportation Center  
Project Proposal - FY 2012**

TITLE OF PROPOSED PROJECT: STATES' TOOLS FOR CONNECTING TRANSPORTATION AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

STRATEGIC GOAL(S) ADDRESSED: LIVABLE COMMUNITIES, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

CONSORTIUM MEMBER: UNO.

TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET: \$35,613.

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HAS THIS PROPOSAL BEEN SUBMITTED FOR FUNDING ELSEWHERE? N

DID THIS PROPOSAL RECEIVE FUNDING FROM ANOTHER SOURCE? N

DOES THIS PROPOSED RESEARCH INVOLVE THE USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS? Y

WILL THIS PROPOSED RESEARCH INVOLVE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AS PARTNERS? Y

LOUISIANA HOUSTON ALLIANCE  
GREATER NEW ORLEANS COMMUNITY DATA CENTER

PROJECT MONITOR NAME, ORGANIZATION, ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER:

**Awaiting confirmation:**

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ABSTRACT OF PROJECT:

Transportation and housing access together shape the ability of citizens to live healthy and productive lives. Federal, state, and local governments spend billions on transportation infrastructure and affordable housing subsidies, but not always in conjunction. Yet, the

combined costs of housing and transportation affect whether housing is truly affordable and often depend on proximity to transit. The relationship of housing and transportation is gaining more attraction at the federal level, exemplified in the formation of the HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities. States are pivotal in shaping transportation and housing systems. They not only spend state-generated revenue but also frequently determine how federal dollars are spent. The largest federal subsidy for affordable, rental housing is the low-income housing tax credit program (LIHTC), but states determine the criteria for allocating these credits. Each state must develop a qualified allocation plan (QAP) that outlines their LIHTC strategies and criteria. This project will examine to what extent states are considering transportation in LIHTC allocation and examples of state tools to coordinate across housing and transportation.

# ***States' tools for connecting transportation and affordable housing***

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Transportation and housing access together shape the ability of citizens to live healthy and productive lives. Federal, state, and local governments spend billions on transportation infrastructure and affordable housing subsidies, but not always in conjunction. Phase I of this project will explore how state policies on housing incorporate transportation, focusing on state allocations of low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC). Beyond LIHTC allocations, this phase will also identify several states that have innovative tools to coordinate affordable housing policy and transportation investment.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Linking transportation and affordable housing**

The combined costs of housing and transportation (captured in the H+T index available at <http://htaindex.cnt.org/>) affect whether housing is truly affordable and often depend on proximity to transit. The relationship of housing and transportation is gaining more attraction at the federal level, exemplified in the formation of the HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities. Access to both housing and transportation is critical for all citizens. States are pivotal in shaping transportation and housing systems. They not only spend state-generated revenue but also frequently determine how federal dollars are spent. The largest federal subsidy for affordable, rental housing is the low-income housing tax credit program, but states determine the criteria for allocating these credits. Each state must develop a qualified allocation plan (QAP) that outlines their LIHTC strategies and criteria. With increasing attention on need to combine affordable housing with mobility options, some states have incorporated transit proximity into their QAPs.<sup>1</sup>

## **OBJECTIVES OF STUDY**

This project will examine to what extent states are considering transportation in LIHTC allocation and examples of state tools to coordinate across housing and transportation. Additionally, this project will also explore the viability of proposed transportation policy interventions in Louisiana and compare the needs and challenges of moderate and low-income residents in urban, peri-urban and rural settings, as proposed by the Louisiana Housing Alliance.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research will address the following questions:

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<sup>1</sup> Quigley, L. (2010). Preserving affordable housing near transit: Case studies from Atlanta, Denver, Seattle and Washington, D.C. Columbia, MD: Enterprise Community Partners.

1. How are states incorporating H+T costs and transportation access into their housing subsidy programs (QAPs)?
2. What measures of transportation accessibility are states using?
3. What are innovative practices to coordinate affordable housing and transportation planning at the state level?

Document review will be the primary data collection strategy. A protocol for review of QAPs will be developed and then analysis of all 50 QAPs undertaken. Through this analysis and discussion with national experts (e.g. staff from the FTA, PolicyLink, or National Housing Trust), several states will be identified for further study. Profiles of 2-5 states, with tools for coordination between housing and transportation, will draw on further document review and informal, telephone interviews.

**WORK PLAN**

Task	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Data Collection	■	■	■								
2. QAP database				■	■						
3. Data analysis					■	■					
4. Final Report on LIHTC policies and State practices					■	■					
5. Site selection for LA LIHTC study					■	■					
6. Interviews						■	■	■			
7. Analysis and report								■	■		
8. Conference paper preparation										■	■

**Staffing Plan**

The project will be completed under the direction of Dr. Catherine Lowe. Dr. Lowe is an Assistant Professor in the Planning and Urban Studies Department at the University of New Orleans. Her mixed-methods research focuses on transportation policy and planning, as well as multi-level governance. Additionally, she is analyzing the links between policy and transit agency finance, while developing research on the accessibility and mobility patterns of low-income workers.

It is also anticipated that a graduate assistant will be completing primary work tasks that include interviewing stakeholders, analyzing data findings, and creating a database.

**SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES**

**Phase I:** This phase consists of data gathering to build the QAP database. Additionally this phase will include data analysis as well as a final report on LIHTC policies and state practices.

**Phase II:** This phase could further examine the relationship between affordable housing and transportation policies. It may include focus groups with housing and social service agency staff in Louisiana to explore the viability of proposed transportation policy interventions. In addition, this phase would include interviews with residents of housing that was subsidized with LIHTC. A student workshop could compare the needs and challenges of moderate and low-income residents in urban, peri-urban and rural settings, as proposed by the Louisiana Housing Alliance.

### **Deliverables**

1. QAP database (November 2012).
2. Report on LIHTC policies and state practices (December 2012).
3. Report on transportation needs in different LA settings (May 2013).
4. Conference paper (October 2013).

### ***PURSUIT OF FUTURE FUNDING***

1) Actions that will be taken to extend the research effort:

Faculty in the Planning and Urban Studies department are building an ongoing collaboration with the Louisiana Housing Alliance and GNOCDC. As this research project develops, the collaboration will identify research gaps in the region and at the interaction of affordable housing and transportation.

2) Potential sponsors for the additional research:

Partners plan to pursue funding from the Ford Foundation for the collaborative effort, linking community development/housing to transportation systems.