Request for Proposals
Regional Planning Strategy:
Designing and Building
Great Communities
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL  Regional Planning Strategy: Designing and Building Great Communities

Introduction

Silicon Valley Community Foundation advances innovative philanthropic solutions to the most challenging problems in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. One of these challenges – how we design and build great communities in the midst of projected jobs, housing, and population growth while improving residents’ quality of life and enhancing our environment – is addressed through our Regional Planning Strategy. To better understand our goals and objectives for this strategy, we encourage you to read SVCF’s research paper on the topic at http://www.siliconvalleycf.org/content/regional-planning.

Through our focus on regional planning, SVCF seeks to implement a bold vision for the Silicon Valley region. The vision consists of vibrant, healthy, and sustainable communities with access to quality services, jobs and affordable homes for all residents. The Regional Planning Strategy Request for Proposals focuses specifically on designing and building great communities through land use and transportation improvements. By using an RFP approach, SVCF aims to solicit the best thinking of nonprofit service providers, public sector agencies, research institutions and other entities serving San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

Responses to this RFP are due by 5 p.m. on Monday, July 1, 2013. In order to be fair to all applicants there will be no exceptions to the deadline.

Problem Statement

Silicon Valley is known as a global leader in innovative technology firms with a well-educated population, highly-skilled workforce and an abundance of natural amenities that support a high quality of life. Silicon Valley is a desirable place to live and work, but it’s also one of the least affordable locations in the United States. Historically, land use plans have often failed to include sufficient affordable housing, which has resulted in high rates of in-commuting and greenhouse gas emissions, isolation from employment and educational opportunities, and lifestyles that result in negative health outcomes. These land use and transportation decisions have impacted the quality of life of our community’s residents, particularly low-income communities, communities of color and immigrant neighborhoods.

The Bay Area region is projected to grow dramatically in population, jobs, and housing within the next 30 years⁴. The majority of this projected growth is slated for San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. As the Silicon Valley region grows, these patterns will continue unless we plan and act intentionally for a better future. If Silicon Valley leaders, residents, and corporations do not plan appropriately for this growth through land use, transportation improvements and transit-oriented development, the region will lose its economic competitive advantage and overall high quality of life. It should not be taken for granted that we will be able to sustain and improve our quality of life for current and future generations.

Planning processes are crucial because they will help dictate the physical development of our cities. Plans need to encourage greater availability of affordable housing, multi-modal transportation systems that provide better access to jobs and services, open spaces, and streets that are safe for walking and bicycling. Areas near public transit and existing downtowns are particularly important since this is where growth and development should be concentrated. These areas offer the best chance for affordable communities where low-income residents can capture significant transportation savings.

Putting the ideas contained in planning documents into action requires leadership, public engagement, persistence and a unique set of skills. Currently, there are two bills paving the way for moving from planning to implementation in California: Assembly Bill 32⁵ sets the 2020 greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal into law and Senate Bill 375⁶ mandates that California communities reduce emissions and their contribution to global climate change. This Bay Area planning effort is expected to be accomplished by curbing sprawl, integrating disjointed planning activities, creating attractive, walkable, sustainable communities and revitalizing existing ones, reducing vehicle miles traveled, and developing new alternative transportation options. Per SB 375, Plan Bay Area is a regional plan that integrates land use and transportation planning for the first time. It is scheduled for approval in summer of 2013 and creates an exceptional opportunity to commence implementation of a 21st century regional plan.

¹ According to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the San Francisco Bay Area is expected to grow by 2.1 million people, 660,000 new housing units, and 1.1 million new jobs by the year 2040.  http://www.mtc.ca.gov/plan-nig/plan_bay_area/draftplanbayarea/

² Signed into law as the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006.

³ Signed into law in 2008 as the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act.
Program Goal

The goal of the Regional Planning Strategy is to design and build great communities. Great communities are places where everyone has access to quality jobs and services, healthy foods, transportation options, a variety of housing choices, a safe environment, parks and social networks. As this dynamic region changes and grows, land use and transportation policies aimed at achieving this goal are essential to ensure a sustainable society, economy and natural environment. Promoting more transit-oriented development that includes affordable housing is critical. The Regional Planning Strategy connects jobs, housing and transportation into action plans that dictate how our region grows and prospers. In order to successfully align policies within these respective fields, we encourage transformative thinking and action through meaningful resident participation in land use and transportation planning processes. SVCF will invest in nonprofits, research institutions, and public agencies that work to advance local land use and transportation planning and implementation processes in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

The community foundation will invest in:

- Projects which have demonstrated and proven methods of engaging community members in planning processes. In particular, inclusion of low-income communities, communities of color, immigrant neighborhoods, and young people is critical.
- Projects that can leverage resources and increase advocacy efforts with local public agency staff and elected officials in underserved geographic areas to ensure Priority Development Area (PDA) plan implementation and to find innovative ways to finance affordable housing and transit.
- Public communication campaigns that focus on increasing awareness, community leadership and education on the benefits of creating sustainable and healthy communities for residents, commercial business owners, civic leaders and elected officials. We are particularly interested in using new and creative technological tools for this purpose.
- Data collection, research and analysis efforts that strengthen local, county and regional planning and use participatory community engagement processes.
- Projects that provide technical assistance to strengthen nonprofits and public agencies’ capacity to engage effectively in planning and community engagement processes. This technical assistance could include scenario modeling, consulting, mediation, facilitation, legal counseling and other professional assistance needed to inform the planning process and to ensure implementation of the resulting plans.
- Coalition building efforts among local nonprofits engaged in public policy development regarding general, specific and other planning processes. And, coalition building efforts through Plan Bay Area including the Sustainable Communities Strategy, Transportation Improvement Program, and Air Quality Conformity Analysis, which are all mandated by SB 375.
- Efforts that facilitate effective and sustainable partnerships among stakeholders that will ensure the implementation of adopted plans.

Proposal Eligibility Criteria

- San Mateo and/or Santa Clara County-serving organizations. Organizations headquartered outside the two-county region must demonstrate significant service to the area.
- Organizations with a 501(c)(3) designation, those that have a fiscal sponsor with a 501(c)(3) designation, public agencies, collaborations of nonprofit and public agencies, or other entities that have a designated charitable purpose.
- Organizations that do not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, citizenship status, creed, religion, religious affiliation, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, veteran status or any other protected status under applicable law. If an organization only serves a specific population, e.g., women or specific ethnic populations, the community foundation will consider the proposal on a case-by-case basis.
- Organizations with religious affiliations will be considered for funding only if the project for which they seek support attempts to address the needs of the wider community without regard to religious beliefs.

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4 This assistance shall be directed at public agencies’ broad role in plan implementation rather than focused on a particular private development.
5 Research on an array of variables such as, travel behavior, housing demand and supply, affordable housing, infill development barriers, jobs-housing connection to land use, workforce/economic development, air emissions, habitat and natural resources, infrastructure costs, floodplains, environmental justice, health and the trade-offs and impacts of growth on these variables.
Project Proposal Characteristics

We are receptive to concrete, practical and impactful project proposals that:

- Include both well-tested models that can be scaled up or expanded regionally while maintaining local relevance, and new pilots that, if successful, can be grown and replicated.
- Benefit from collaborative work and bring public and private partners together with nonprofit organizations.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the planning field and trends in jobs, housing, and transportation as it relates to designing and building great communities.
- Identify target population to be reached and justification for that focus.
- Provide clear benchmarks for measuring progress.

Application Process

1) Review reference materials. These may be found at http://www.siliconvalleycf.org/content/regional-planning.
- Research paper on Regional Planning Strategy: Building Sustainable Land Use and Transportation Plans to Secure the Future of Silicon Valley and its Residents
- RFP for Regional Planning Strategy

2) Participate in the information session. This is highly encouraged for those interested in responding to this RFP. Because all grant applications must now be submitted online, this session provides an overview of SVCF’s online application system, applySVCF. Additionally, the information session will provide an opportunity for applicants to review in more depth the RFP’s content and ask questions. To register for the session please visit our website’s calendar.

More specific questions about program concepts, content, eligibility and evaluation can be asked through phone calls and in-person meetings with the program officer, as time permits.

3) Submit grant application, including required attachments, through our new online application system, applySVCF. Applications must be submitted by 5 p.m. (PST) Monday, July 1, 2013.

Key Dates

June 3, 2013: Release of RFP
June 5, 2013: RFP Information session (register through our online calendar)
July 1, 2013 5 p.m.: Proposal submission deadline
September 2013: Announcement of grant awards

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Proposals for grants should include a narrative that responds to the questions found on applySVCF. Grant proposals will be evaluated, on a competitive basis, using the following criteria:

- Innovative and effective strategy with potential for systems change.
- Clarity of project description and project activities regarding steps to be taken to achieve desired outcomes.
- Achievable timeline (12 months) that corresponds to the key activities.
- Meaningful benchmarks and indicators of success.
- Organizational capacity to implement project — including staffing and leadership, operational and fiscal management.
- Established track record in specific program content area or potential to achieve needed content expertise.
- Ability to leverage financial, human and technical resources leading to greater impact.
- Ability to contribute content area knowledge to the field.
Total Awards

In 2013, we expect to award up to 12 grants and successful applicants will receive grants for a minimum of one year. The average grant amount awarded in the 2012 grantmaking cycle was $55,000. At least two grant awards will be earmarked for pilot or experimental projects associated with solutions to jobs, housing and transportation implementation activities throughout Silicon Valley. Budget requests will be closely analyzed and applicants should include a budget narrative that makes clear the necessity of the project’s specific line-items.

Please note that project proposal narratives may be posted publicly on our website to reflect our value of transparency and encourage learning among grantees and future applicants as well as members of the community at large.

Review and Selection Process

An advisory committee with issue expertise for this strategy will help staff to review all proposals recommended for funding to the community foundation’s board of directors. Applicants may receive a site visit, telephone call and/or other type of communication from SVCF staff as part of the proposal review process.

Evaluation, Monitoring and Grantee Learning Activities

• Grantees will be expected to meet SVCF’s requirements for a final financial and narrative report as well as a presentation to community foundation staff and donors if requested.

• In an effort to further the overall program goals of this RFP, inform future RFPs related to this topic and contribute to larger field-building objectives, grantees will be asked to participate in periodic meetings to share information on project activities and best practices as well as participate in research-based evaluations.

Thank you very much for your interest in responding to this RFP and in making our region a better place. We look forward to reviewing your proposal.
About Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Vision:
Silicon Valley Community Foundation advances innovative philanthropic solutions to challenging problems, engaging donors to make our region and world a better place for all.

Mission:
Silicon Valley Community Foundation is a comprehensive center of philanthropy. Through visionary leadership, strategic grantmaking and world-class experiences, we partner with donors to strengthen the common good locally and throughout the world.

We value:
- Collaboration
- Diversity
- Inclusiveness
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Public Accountability
- Respect
- Responsiveness

At a Glance
Silicon Valley Community Foundation makes all forms of philanthropy more powerful. We serve as a catalyst and leader for innovative solutions to our region’s most challenging problems. The community foundation has more than $2.9 billion in assets under management and more than 1,650 philanthropic funds. As Silicon Valley’s center of philanthropy, we provide individuals, families and corporations with simple and effective ways to give locally and around the world. Find out more at www.siliconvalleycf.org.