

Governor Patrick Releases 2009 Commonwealth Capital Policy

Adds new criteria of regional planning, environmental equity, and innovative transportation to municipal development scorecard for state programs and grants

BOSTON - Wednesday, July 02, 2008 - Governor Deval Patrick today released the latest version of the Commonwealth Capital Policy that has inspired hundreds of improvements in how municipalities plan for and regulate development.

"With this policy we are encouraging communities to site and build homes and businesses in ways that conserve energy and natural resources," said Governor Patrick. "Municipalities that plan for future growth and utilize the innovative land use techniques that the Commonwealth Capital Policy encourages will be doing their part to ensure that the interests of future generations are not compromised by today's development decisions."

Commonwealth Capital explicitly endorses planning and zoning measures that are consistent with the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles and encourages municipalities to implement these measures by using state funding as an incentive. Consistency with these principles is assessed through an application that examines municipal implementation of 32 land use planning and regulatory practices. Resulting scores are part of the proposal evaluation process for participating grant and loan programs. The Commonwealth Capital Policy has been very successful. Almost 300 (out of 351) of the Commonwealth's communities have applied and municipal consistency with the Sustainable Development Principles has improved significantly, up 10 percent, with the median score rising from 63 (out of a possible 140) in FY05 to 77 in FY08.

Programs for 2009: For 2009 Commonwealth Capital will plan a role in the distribution of more than \$600 million in grants and low interest loans from the following programs offered by the Executive Offices of Administration and Finance, Energy and Environmental Affairs, Housing and Economic Development, and Transportation and Public Works:

[Public Works Economic Development Program](#) (EOTPW)

(EOTPW)

[Community Development Action Grant Program](#) (EOHED-DHCD)

State Revolving Fund (EOEEA - DEP)

[LAND \(formerly Self-Help\) Program](#) (EOEEA- DCS)

[PARC \(formerly Urban Self-Help Program\)](#) (EOEEA - DCS)

[Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant Program](#) (EOEEA)

[Coastal Pollutant Remediation Grant Program](#) (EOEEA - CZM)

[Small Town Road Assistance Program](#) (EOTPW)

[Massachusetts Opportunity Relocation and Expansion \(MORE\) Jobs Capital Program](#) (MOBD)

[Water Transportation Capital Funding Program](#) (EOTPW)

[Alternative Energy Property Program](#) (EOEEA - DOER)

Off-Street Parking Program (EOAF)

New Criteria for 2009: Modifications to the Commonwealth Capital application reflect Patrick Administration priorities and feedback received from municipalities and other stakeholders. New criteria address regional planning, environmental equity, clean energy, permitting, and transportation.

Regional Planning: Many important sustainable development concerns, such as water resources and transportation planning, are best addressed through planning and action on a regional scale. This criterion rewards those communities that have taken formal and significant action to work with neighboring communities or those in the region to foster development projects, land and water conservation, and other outcomes that have a regional or multi-community benefit.

Environmental Equity: Environmental equity is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental pollution and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment. This new criterion rewards those communities that have taken actions to:

Avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health, environmental, social or economic effects on foreign-born, minority, and low-income populations;

Ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in municipal environmental decision-making

Provide infrastructure, services, and other benefits to minority and low-income populations.

Clean Energy: Clean energy decreases global warming emissions and other pollutants, enhances public health, and reduces spending on fossil fuels while promoting use of innovative technologies that enhance economic development. New criteria encourage municipalities to purchase or produce renewable energy and to apply energy efficiency measures.

Expedited Permitting: Earlier this year the Commonwealth's 13 regional planning agencies collaboratively produced and issued A Best Practices Model for Streamlined Local Permitting. This criterion encourages communities to utilize techniques from Best Practices in order to regulate development in ways that safeguard local government prerogatives and are more efficient and effective, without reducing environmental, public health, and other protections.

Innovative Transportation Measures: Communities have at their disposal a variety of important tools to avoid potential negative consequences of excessive reliance on cars, including congested roadways, excessive energy use, and polluted air and water. Through two new criteria, the Commonwealth encourages communities to construct roads and other transportation infrastructure in ways that are sensitive to their surroundings, such as historic downtowns, and to utilize other innovative transportation measures, including parking and traffic calming techniques.

"My administration is working hard to ensure that the Commonwealth's policies, programs, and investments are consistent with the Sustainable Development Principles and we are committed to working with municipalities to do the same," said Governor Patrick."