

## The Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance Great Neighborhoods

### Guidelines for Letter of Interest

The Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance (MSGA) invites you to write a letter about an opportunity in your community for which you might be interested in partnering. (Note that due to funding constraints, initiatives must be located in the Greater Boston area.) *Please include the name of your organization, initiative, or municipality, as well as all appropriate contact information for the point person(s).*

It would also be helpful if you address the following in your letter:

- Nature of the opportunity
- How the opportunity will promote smart growth development patterns in your area
- The types of tools or resources you need to achieve success

Other issues the MSGA would like to hear about include some of the obstacles you face and how the MSGA might be able to help you to overcome them; partners involved in the initiative; and ways in which community residents and other stakeholders have been or will be engaged.

This is an initial letter of interest, not a full application, and should not exceed 3 pages.

Please submit your letter electronically to [andre@ma-smartgrowth.org](mailto:andre@ma-smartgrowth.org) by **5:00 pm on Thursday, July 15th, 2010**.

If you have any questions, contact Andre Leroux, Executive Director, Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance, at 617-263-1257. Thank you for your interest, and we look forward to hearing more about your smart growth efforts.

# **The Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance Great Neighborhoods**

## **Description and Background For Letter of Interest**

### **Introduction – The Great Neighborhoods Initiative**

Great Neighborhoods is a new initiative by the Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance (MSGA) to establish partnerships with local entities such as municipalities and community-based organizations to help create communities with a high quality of life that are affordable, diverse, and walkable. MSGA will accomplish this by helping to connect local partners to systemic policy solutions, technical assistance, strategic organizing, funding, and other resources.

The MSGA is seeking opportunities to advance initiatives that would exemplify great places to live and work, such as those articulated in the Metropolitan Area Planning Council's MetroFuture Plan, which lays out a preferred smart growth scenario for the Greater Boston region (see [www.metrofuture.org](http://www.metrofuture.org) for more details). We hope to facilitate the creation of affordable housing, access to jobs and healthy environments in locations that will promote a sustainable pattern of metropolitan development and an equitable sharing of regional power and resources.

**MSGA requests letters of interest from local groups and communities in the Greater Boston area who might like to partner with us to plan and implement transformative projects and strategies.**

Initiative Goals:

1. Increase the number of developments that improve vibrancy, connectivity, mix of uses, healthy living, and racial and economic diversity in specific locations in Greater Boston.
2. Ensure that regionally significant developments create complete neighborhoods or enhance adjacent neighborhoods.
3. Develop a policy agenda that spurs local action on smart growth and which is shaped by broad community engagement.
4. Assist local partners to access public and private funding sources.
5. Build a network of smart growth practitioners who are informed, motivated, and connected to one another.
6. Promote the MetroFuture regional vision of concentrating growth and infrastructure investment in key nodes and corridors while preserving important natural resources and open space.

There are already many examples of such neighborhoods in Greater Boston — but the MSGA wants to partner with cities and towns, community-based organizations and other local initiatives to help create more of them. By soliciting letters of interest, the MSGA wants to hear about existing or potential initiatives, collect information about their goals, ascertain interest in partnering, and identify the value the MSGA could bring for a variety of contexts and partners. Ultimately we want to partner with several initiatives whose success will significantly impact the development patterns, affordability and quality of life in Greater Boston.

## Partnering Opportunities – What can the MSGA offer?

The MSGA wants to use its strengths to help local partners advance their projects. The range of support may include: strategic and technical assistance, information resources and experts, help in managing local development and preservation campaigns, access to additional sources of funding, legal guidance and support, model by-laws and policy documents, examples of best practices in other regions, and access to the MSGA's network of staff and supporters.

Some of the resources we may have to offer from our member organizations include:

- Housing: financing expertise and access to capital, foreclosure prevention, acquisition and rehab, affordable housing outreach and education, how to mount a Community Preservation Act campaign, how to draft a Housing Production Plan
- Zoning: land-use analysis, assistance enacting Chapter 40R smart growth overlay districts, District Improvement Financing (DIF), form-based codes, design standards
- Equity/Inclusion: creating and marketing a welcoming community, development of an “analysis of impediments” strategy to identify and overcome barriers to fair housing and to create access to jobs; social and environmental justice assistance
- Transportation: preparing a project to apply for state and federal funds, parking and traffic analysis, walkability and biking studies, traffic mitigation and “traffic calming” measures
- Economic Development: developing and/or strengthening small and micro business programs aimed at local entrepreneurs and minority and woman-owned businesses, creating asset-building opportunities, assistance enacting 43D economic development districts, and support with mixed use development
- Natural Resource Protection: establishing low-impact development guidelines, identifying preservation priorities, developing strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Planning and Community Participation: how to build sustainable civic engagement, how to design charrettes, using technology to enhance the participation process (e.g., visualization techniques, keypad voting, mapping)

## What is the MSGA's Process and Timeframe?

- Letter of Interest: Please submit an expression of interest **by July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010**. See attached *Guidelines for Letter of Interest* for details.
- Follow-Up: After reviewing the Letters of Interest, the MSGA will follow up with promising potential partners over the summer to acquire more information and better understand the work which may be required.
- Establish Partnerships: In the Fall, the Alliance and its new partners will sign a commitment letter or MOU and begin to develop a joint workplan and budget.
- Implementation: Once the workplan and budget are drafted, the partners will begin their collaboration.

We welcome your interest and participation! If you have any questions, please contact Andre Leroux, Executive Director, Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance at (617) 263-1257 or [andre@ma-smartgrowth.org](mailto:andre@ma-smartgrowth.org).