

## **East Alabama Planning Commission receives HUD Planning Grant**

---

The East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission was recently awarded a HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant. East Alabama was the only award recipient in Alabama. The following is the abstract for the grant project.

### **Abstract – CLEAR Plan 2030: Community Livability for the East Alabama Region**

---

The East Alabama Regional Partnership for Sustainability (the consortium) seeks to create the Community Livability for the East Alabama Region Plan 2030 (CLEAR Plan) for the ten county region of East Alabama. The East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission is the lead applicant for the consortium, and it has gathered a broad range of partners representing a diverse array of communities to join the consortium. CLEAR Plan Consortium partners are committed to the concept of planning for sustainable development and promoting the six Livability Principles as a framework for the regional plan. The consortium places a strong emphasis on involving traditionally marginalized communities in the process to develop the CLEAR Plan. The consortium will seek to identify and break down the various existing barriers to sustainability throughout the region through the planning process. Various scenario planning and visioning exercises will produce a regional vision that will inform the development of the CLEAR Plan and provide a direction for the Plan to take.

While many rural areas around the country have embraced sustainability as a way to preserve small town character, agricultural lands, and open space, communities in East Alabama have proven to be particularly skeptical of sustainable practices. Data collected on the region indicates sprawl, high automobile dependency, socioeconomic inequities, high incidences of poor health, and economic distress. The creation of a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development will enable communities in the region to better understand the benefits that sustainable practices can offer rural and small communities. The consortium will seek to advance the six Livability Principles throughout the region in the Plan, to develop goals for each Principle as it relates to regional needs, and to formulate objectives and strategies to accomplish those goals. The Regional Plan will both align existing regional plans and dictate the creation of deeply harmonized regional transportation, land use, housing, and environmental studies.

The CLEAR Plan will seek to produce a variety of outcomes related to livability for the region, including the reduction of economic disparities, overall housing and transportation costs, DVMT per capita, and undeveloped land converted to use. The CLEAR Plan also seeks to increase housing within traditional town centers, regional knowledge of sustainable practices, access to fresh food, and the use of compact development. Development of the CLEAR Plan will allow communities in the East Alabama region to better health, improve quality of life, grow more sustainably, preserve open space, and promote equity for all residents.