



AIA Request for Proposals

Center for Communities by Design
2010 Sustainable Design Assessment
Team (SDAT) Program



Center for Communities by Design
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1. Introduction

This Request for Proposals (RFP) solicits applications for inclusion in the AIA Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) 2010 program. The SDAT committee will conduct two rounds of application review through the remainder of 2009 to offer applicants the opportunity to receive an early decision by the review committee. The first round of review will be in September 2009, and committee members will evaluate all applications received to date. Applications received after the first round of review will be reviewed in December 2009. Any additional applications received after the second review period will be considered for the 2011 SDAT program. **The final deadline to submit proposals for consideration in the 2010 SDAT program is November 13, 2009.** In furtherance of the mission articulated in section 2 of this RFP, the AIA Center for Communities by Design administers the SDAT program.

2. Background

The Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) program focuses on the importance of developing sustainable communities through design. The SDAT program brings together multidisciplinary teams of professionals to work with community decision-makers and stakeholders through an intensive planning process. The mission of the SDAT program is to provide technical assistance and process expertise to help communities develop a vision and framework for a sustainable future.

The AIA is committed to sustainable design that creates communities and buildings which advance enduring public and environmental well-being. The SDAT program is based on the AIA's goal of helping communities create a sustainable relationship between humans, the natural environment, and place. By achieving balance between cultural, environmental, and economic systems, communities can sustain a place as a stage for human settlement. The SDAT program upholds the AIA Design Assistance team values of utilizing a multidisciplinary team approach; ensuring the objectivity of all participating team members; and requiring broad, inclusive public participation and support.

The SDAT process is modeled on five decades of experience with the Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) program, one of AIA's longest-running success stories. While the R/UDAT program was developed to provide communities with specific design solutions, the SDAT program provides broad assessments to help frame future policies or design solutions in the context of sustainability and help communities plan the first steps of implementation.

Since its launch in 2005, the following communities have participated in the SDAT program:

- Oklahoma City, OK
- Pittsfield, MA
- Northampton, MA
- Cache Valley, UT
- Forest City, NC
- Alexandria Township, NJ
- Lawrence, KS
- Northeast Michigan
- Longview, WA
- Guemes Island, WA
- New Orleans, LA
- Syracuse, NY.
- Hagerstown, MD
- Northern Nevada Region
- Culver City, CA
- Central, LA
- Tucson, AZ
- Albany, NY
- Dubuque, IA
- Englishtown, NJ
- Fellsmere, FL
- Ft. Worth, TX
- Parma, OH
- Detroit, MI

- Kauai, HI
- Tampa, FL
- Windsor, CA
- Leon Valley, TX
- Morristown, NJ
- Hilo, HI
- Beatrice, NE
- Eagle River, CO
- Indianapolis, IN
- Los Angeles, CA
- Port Angeles, WA
- Orange, MA
- VA Beach, VA
- SE TN Valley, TN

For more information about the SDAT program, consult the Center for Communities by Design website, <http://www.aia.org/about/initiatives/AIAS075265>.

3. Purpose

The Center for Communities by Design is seeking potential partner communities that can demonstrate the capacity to convene a diverse set of community leaders and stakeholders for an intensive, collaborative planning process focused on long-term sustainability. The Center is particularly focused on identifying communities that have the ability to leverage local resources and build strong partnerships for implementation of an SDAT process. Through issuance of this RFP, the Center is seeking communities who desire assistance in assessing community sustainability, have identified their key issues, and are in a position to build strong partnerships to plan for the future.

4. SDAT RFP - Technical Requirements

For consideration in the SDAT program, community proposals must include the following elements, at a minimum:

Project Information

- Summary Page
- Community Description
- Problem Statement and Issues Analysis
- Objective of SDAT Process

Project Organization: Local Capacity and Resources

- Steering Committee Information
- Budget and Funding Information
- Educational Partners
- Communications and Media Outreach Plan
- SDAT Project Timeline

Community Partnerships and Support

- Community Letters of Support

Supplemental Documents and Attachments

- Existing and Past Planning Documents
- Graphic Illustrations
- Additional Information on the community

A table of contents should be included to guide reviewers through the project proposal. The following sections describe each of the proposal requirements in further detail.

4.A. Project Information

Summary Page (1 page)

This section of the RFP response should include the Project Title, the Primary Contact information and an abstract of the project.

The proposal should include the name of the community in a short project title, such as:

- *Cache Valley, Utah: Valley on the Verge*
- *Guemes Island, WA: Creating a Sustainable Guemes*
- *Forest City, North Carolina: Weaving Together Community Betterment and Design*
- *Pittsfield, Massachusetts: Sustainable Urbanism in the Heart of the Berkshires*
- *Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Industrial Transformation*

Community Description (1-2 pages)

Each proposal must include a brief narrative statement describing community conditions. The statement should include the following elements:

- History
- Population figures
- Demographics
- Economic information
- Form of Local Government
- Geography/Topography data
- Important project or contextual information
- Regional setting and influences
- Past and/or ongoing planning efforts and reports

Problem Statement and Issues Analysis (2-5 pages, plus maps).

Each proposal must include a Problem Statement and Issues Analysis. The statement should include the following elements:

- *Study Area:* The statement should define and describe the proposed study area.
- *Barriers to Success:* Each proposal should identify the existing barriers (physical, social, economic, political) that have limited the community's ability to address its concerns or agree on solutions. Include an assessment of your community's most significant needs (e.g., water supply concerns or public health issues). Describe any past attempts that have failed to resolve community issues. Include as much graphic material as needed to describe existing conditions.
- *Scope of issues:* Proposals should identify the scope of issues the SDAT will address, including an explanation for why they should be considered critical to the community. The statement should describe how the issues relate to development concerns at the regional, municipal, and neighborhood scales. Be sure to include information on the surrounding county if the proposed study area

is a municipality. A sample list of issues identified for previous SDAT projects is provided below. SDATs will expect to consider at least two topics in each of the three areas when developing the final scope of the project.

Environmental	Social	Economic
Air quality	Housing/affordability	Revitalization
Water quality/quantity	Public spaces	Diversity
Open spaces	Ethnic/racial issues	Jobs
Wildlife habitat/wetlands	Demographic/income shifts	Public services
Flooding and drought	Education	Public policy/planning
Natural disaster	Sense of community/place	Agricultural preservation
Transit and land use	Pedestrian/bicycle options	Traffic congestion
Energy efficiency	Access to jobs/housing	Transportation
Flooding and drought	Managing growth	

Objective of the SDAT Process (approximately 300 words).

Proposals must include a brief statement defining the Project Objective. The statement should identify the specific outcomes the SDAT process will contribute toward in the community. It should also explain how the SDAT process will be incorporated into other community planning and development efforts.

4.B. Project Organization: Local Capacity and Resources

Steering Committee Information

The SDAT process requires local partners to form a Steering Committee to guide and implement the process. The proposal must include a detailed description of a planned subcommittee structure that demonstrates how various roles will be shared as the SDAT process is planned and implemented. There is no limit or minimum number of members to be included in the Steering Committee, however the Steering Committee should include a broad range of community leaders including representatives from the public and private sector as well as a representative of the local AIA component. AIA local components and their committees should be involved in the effort and help coordinate with partner organizations. It is preferable that AIA local components lead the assembly of an SDAT Steering Committee for the project. At a minimum, the local or state AIA components must indicate their support of the project in order for an application to receive a favorable review.

All proposals must include the contact information for the Chair(s) of the Steering Committee. Naming co-chairs of the steering committee is recommended, however one chair should be designated as the primary contact. Contact information must include:

Name
Affiliation
Address
Phone Number
E-mail address

In addition, each proposal must list contact information for all local Steering Committee Members which must include:

Name
Affiliation
Address
Phone Number
E-mail address

Budget and Funding Information

The Sustainable Design Assessment Team is not a traditional grant program. Awarded communities receive pro bono services through the program, and the AIA commits to funding up to \$15,000 for each project to cover team expenses. Recipient communities are required to make a one-time payment of \$5,000 to the AIA as a cash match to the program. They are also required to cover any costs above the \$15,000 ceiling should cost escalations occur.

Most communities raise additional funds to cover local costs associated with project implementation (public outreach materials, meeting and facilities, etc). Typical projects require a total of between \$20,000 and \$30,000 for implementation. Therefore, depending on the scope and intensity of the project, local sponsors should be prepared to raise up to \$15,000 to fund the project. Successful proposals must demonstrate a local capacity to raise the necessary funds for SDAT implementation. Therefore, proposals must include the following Budget and Funding elements:

- *Proposed Project Budget.* Each community budget may vary depending on local conditions, funding and sponsorship partners, and the degree of local contributions or in-kind services. The Project Budget should identify expected expenditures and illustrate a line-item distribution for each program area. It may include some of the following elements:
 - Work space/Meeting space rental
 - Onsite Information Technology needs
 - Supplies and photocopying
 - Advertising
 - Local Transportation
 - Media and Communications
 - Helicopter/Light Plane Rental
 - Catering
- *Fundraising Plan.* Each proposal should include a fundraising strategy showing how the community will provide funds or in-kind services identified in the budget. It should include the following elements:
 - Identify potential donors. AIA does not require successful applicants to demonstrate a fully-funded budget at the time of the application. However, communities must be able to demonstrate a feasible fundraising approach and potential and/or existing donors and sponsors. They should also identify specific contribution commitments and monetary amounts where possible.
 - Potential in-kind Contributions. Proposals should identify local partners who have committed in-kind resources toward the implementation of an SDAT process, and those that may be potential partners.

Educational Partners

Each proposal must include information about participating educational partner institutions if proximity or relationship to such institutions allows for partnerships. Partner institutions can include schools of Architecture, Urban Design, Landscape Architecture, Environmental Studies or other relevant disciplines. Student participation and the use of an SDAT process as part of a studio or class project is welcomed. However, relevant faculty members should be consulted and agree to coordinate student participation during the team visit prior to partnering. Each proposal must include the following information on partnering educational institutions:

- The name of the partner institution
- Faculty or Dean/Dept. Chair Contact Information
 - Name*
 - Institution and Specific School or Department*
 - Address*
 - Phone Number*
 - Email Address*
- A formal letter of commitment from the partner institution

Communication and Media Outreach Plan

Effective communication is a key component to project success, including the ability to generate media coverage and conduct community outreach to a variety of stakeholders in order to ensure widespread interest and participation in the SDAT process. Each proposal should include a detailed Communication Plan that demonstrates how the Steering Committee will communicate the SDAT process to stakeholders and the general public in advance of the SDAT Team Visit, during the visit, and after the visit. AIA will work with local partners on communication strategy and message development, but proposals should demonstrate local capacity to deliver communication to relevant audiences through a variety of media outlets. The Communication Plan should include the following elements:

- *Communication Partners/Personnel.* Identify local partners, communication firms or consultants, or staff/committee members who will be involved in implementing the Communication Plan.
- *Media Relations.* Each proposal should include a brief outline of a media plan and a list of local media outlets and contacts.
- *Project Spokespersons.* Identify potential spokespersons that will represent the SDAT project for media audiences, such as the chair of the local Steering Committee or other designated individual who can represent the project.
- *Communication Vehicles.* Identify potential communication vehicles (websites, listservs, web logs, community newsletters, press releases, press conferences, etc.) that will be used to implement the Communication Plan.

SDAT Project Timeline

Each proposal should identify a general implementation timeline for the SDAT process. The timeline will serve as the basis for scheduling each phase of the SDAT process. The timeline should include target date ranges for each stage of the SDAT process, including:

- The Preliminary Assessment Visit
- The SDAT Team Visit
- The Follow-up to the SDAT and final report

In addition to the timeline, each proposal should include a contextual rationale and information regarding events that may affect the timing of any part of the SDAT process (e.g., six months before scheduled comprehensive plan revisions). AIA will work with communities to schedule SDAT implementation in a manner that complements ongoing planning activities, but dates may be adjusted based upon program needs and availability of team members as necessary.

4.C. Community Partnerships and Support

The key to SDAT success is diversity and community participation; the process involves multiple disciplines and multiple stakeholders. The SDAT process includes not only the national team but also government agencies and officials, private businesses, schools and students, community members, and other parties as appropriate. The process encourages the active participation of all sectors of the community. The team members who visit your community will seek the opinions and comments of the public as well as community leaders and interested groups. Proposals should demonstrate community support and participation by including letters of support from a broad base of community members. **A letter of support from the local AIA chapter is required.** Proposals may include letters from the following sources:

- The local and state AIA component
- Public Officials (Mayor and Town Manager)
- Public Agencies
- Neighborhood Groups
- Community Leaders
- Churches
- Businesses and institutions

4.D. Supplemental Documents & Attachments

Each proposal should include, at a minimum, the following attachments:

- *Existing and Past Planning Documents.* These attachments may include:
 - Select Information from Zoning Ordinances or Comprehensive Plans
 - Neighborhood Redevelopment Plans
 - Downtown Revitalization Plans
 - Charrette Reports
- *Graphic Illustrations.* These attachments may include:
 - Maps

- Study area site plans
- Photos and aerial views
- Diagrammatic maps that illustrate locations and concentrations of specific community needs
- *Information on the community.* These attachments may include:
 - Newspaper articles covering key issues
 - Tourism materials
 - Chamber of Commerce brochures
 - Local Economic Development Agency materials

The AIA welcomes additional relevant information that may be deemed appropriate and necessary to help understand community needs, existing conditions, and prevailing issues.

5. Evaluation Criteria and Process

The evaluation process will be conducted by an SDAT Application Review Panel. The Review Panel will begin evaluating SDAT applications in September 2009. Applications will be evaluated in the order they are received, and applicants will be notified upon acceptance. The final deadline for submission is **November 13, 2009**. The Review Panel will complete its final work in December and notify recipient communities. The full list of 2010 SDAT Communities will be announced in January 2010.

In general, the Application Review Panel will analyze communities according to:

- types of problems to be addressed, range of issues
- local commitment and support—public and private sectors
- political will to address issues of sustainability
- local matching funds and logistical support
- self-evaluation/assessment regarding issues and opportunities

The Application Review Panel will apply the following criteria and scoring to its evaluation of each proposal:

Comprehensiveness of the Proposal **40%**

- Project Information
- Holistic view of SDAT
- Problem Statement and Range of Issues
- Clear and specific Project Objective
- Feasibility
- Attachments and Supplemental Documents

Project Organization, Capacity & Resources **35%**

- Steering Committee Composition
- Educational Partners
- Project Budget and Fundraising Plan
- Communications and Media Outreach Plan
- Project Timeline

Community Partnerships and Support **25%**

- Demonstrated Community Support
- Community Partners
- Support of local public officials

TOTAL **100%**

6. Submission Deadline

A CD containing a PDF of the compiled application must be received **by close of business on Friday, November 13, 2009**. Proposals should be sent to:

Erin Simmons, Director, Design Assistance
 The American Institute of Architects
 1735 New York Avenue, NW
 Washington, DC 20006-5292
 202.626.7492

7. SDAT RFP Information and Inquiries

Applicants seeking additional information about the SDAT program, RFP, or review process should consult the Center for Communities by Design website at <http://www.aia.org/about/initiatives/AIAS075265>. The website includes successful applications from previous SDAT communities that are available for download. In addition, the Center for Communities by Design will schedule a public teleconference in association with the 2010 Request for Proposals in September 2009. To sign up and participate in the call, please contact the Center for Communities by Design at communitiesbydesign@aia.org.

Technical questions about the SDAT program or the proposal process are welcomed throughout the submission period. Inquiries about the application process should be directed to the AIA Center for Communities by Design staff.

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