

News from Strong Cities, Strong Communities Second Cohort of Cities

Brownsville, Texas

Brownsville 1 of 7 American Cities Selected for Federal Help Program

The Brownsville Herald

The contraction of the national economy in the late 2000s might have ended, but the federal government is still working to ease the struggles of American cities affected by the 2008 recession as officials announced this week the expansion of the Strong Cities, Strong Communities initiative. Brownsville is among seven cities to be included in the program and will receive individualized assistance in realizing its economic vision. The initiative assists cities that have remained resilient and developed strategies for growth despite economic difficulties. The program, which is headed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the White House Domestic Policy Council, puts federal officials in city halls across the country to help communities grow.

Brownsville Named to Strong Cities, Strong Communities List

The Brownsville Herald

Government officials in Washington this week announced Brownsville and a half-dozen other cities will be the newest municipalities taking place in the Strong Cities, Strong Communities initiative, a federal effort to assist cities struggling with economic divestment in the aftermath of the recession. The initiative, led by U.S. Housing and Urban Development, will put a team of federal employees on the ground in Brownsville to help the city navigate federal regulations and pursue the vision outlined in its 2009 Imagine Brownsville comprehensive plan. Brownsville was selected from an initial list of 91 municipalities struggling nationwide to be included in the program, which will begin this month.

Brownsville Selected for Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative

KRGV

Brownsville was one of seven U.S. cities selected in the expansion of the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative. The program aims to support the cities' vision for economic growth and development. "The goal is to help position these communities to be more economically competitive, which ultimately will create better opportunities and improve the lives for their residents," said Domestic Policy Council Director Cecilia Muñoz. Federal inter-agency expert teams work alongside city leaders, community organizations and local businesses. AmeriCorps VISTA members help as liaisons with local leaders and residents to implement solutions to a community's needs. Teams helped the program's original pilot cities more effectively use more than \$368 million in existing federal funds and investments. Brownsville Mayor Antonio Martinez said the community's eager to work with the community solutions team.

Officials Laud Federal Initiative Program

The Brownsville Herald

Local and federal government officials were in front of Brownsville City Hall Tuesday afternoon to taut the city's entry into the Strong Cities, Strong Communities program. Last week's announcement marked Brownsville's entry into the federal initiative, which will bring

federal employees to town in an effort to help jumpstart city projects. The program aims to help local governments in cities across the country navigate the bureaucracy associated with large projects. Which agency will help Brownsville hasn't been announced, but U.S. Rep. Filemon Vela noted the many examples of how federal guidance could help the city with projects already in progress. As the city awaits an environmental assessment from the Federal Aviation Administration concerning efforts to bring a SpaceX launch pad to Boca Chica Beach, the Port of Brownsville is dredging its channel and the municipal airport is planning an expansion, Vela said, noting that all require clearance from Washington in some way or another.

Flint, Michigan

Flint Gets \$1.9 Million More to Transform Chevy in the Hole Eyesore Into Massive Public Park

MLive.com//Ron Fonger

The city will use a new \$1.9-million grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to clean up the old General Motors' Chevy in the Hole site and redevelop it into **Chevy Commons**, a massive park with nature trails and fishing spots. Mayor Dayne Walling announced the funding during a groundbreaking today, Sept. 26, for Oak Street Senior Apartments, using the new award as an example of the potential for more federal help here because of the **Strong Cities, Strong Communities program** that Flint was selected for in January. Strong Cities is a federal program that targets financially distressed cities, providing them with technical advice and expertise from the federal government. "These new funds will expand the area we can cover with trees and walking paths. We are making the right connections" to secure assistance through the Strong Cities program, Walling said. The Chevy Commons grant has actually been awarded to the Genesee County Land Bank, said federal officials at today's ceremony. It will allow for work on the second phase of plans for transforming the former General Motors property to a massive public park with walking paths, called Chevy Commons.

Strong Cities, Strong Communities Federal Initiative to Better Use Resources Launches in Flint

Associated Press

Federal government representatives launched the Strong Cities, Strong Communities initiative Friday morning in Flint in an effort to make improvements throughout the city. In January, Flint was chosen to be a part of the program, which was launched by the Obama administration in 2011. The initiative calls upon experts from federal agencies to address problems within distressed cities. They work alongside city leadership, community organizations, local business and philanthropic foundations to support the cities' visions for economic growth and development. A key goal is to help officials make better use of existing resources. An important factor in Flint's selection was the new Imagine Flint Master Plan, which laid out a clear plan for the city's recovery, according to Shaun Donovan, secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Flint Strong Cities, Strong Communities team will focus on helping neighborhoods become more stable, improving public safety and strengthening economic development. Two of the most important areas in which the team will seek to improve are crime and blight. Detroit was one of the cities initially chosen for the initiative, where it helped forward a light rail project and demolish blight.

\$1.9-Million Grant to Transform Old Flint GM Plant

Associated Press

A \$1.9-million grant will help transform the site of a former General Motors manufacturing complex in Flint known as “Chevy in the Hole” into parkland. The Flint Journal reports Mayor Dayne Walling announced the funding last week, saying the new award as an example of the potential for more federal help because of the federal “Strong Cities, Strong Communities” program. The money for the Genesee County Land Bank is from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The site is being called Chevy Commons. Manufacturing began at the “Chevy in the Hole” site in 1904 and, at its peak, the factories employed thousands. The last factory buildings were demolished a decade ago by auto parts supplier Delphi, and work has been taking place for years to prepare the site.

Historic Flint Building Now Apartments for Low Income Seniors

ABC12.com

Flint Named to Federal Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative

MLive.com

Flint’s master plan is already paying dividends as the city was named to a federal program targeted at helping financial distressed cities. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan touted the Flint’s master plan as one of the reason’s the city was picked for an expansion of the Strong Cities, Strong Communities initiative. “One of the things that really impressed us about Flint is that there is a brand new master plan and provides a clear road map strategy for the city and we really felt we could be helpful on,” Donovan said. The seven new locations will receive technical advice and expertise from federal inter-agency teams, HUD said in a statement. The SC2 teams will help Flint more effectively invest existing resources, provide advice and expertise in support of local priorities, better align federal programs and investments, and facilitate new partnerships and peer learning opportunities, the statement said.

Flint Added to Program that Brings Federal Help to City

The Detroit News

The city of Flint is joining the federal Strong Cities, Strong Communities initiative. Inclusion in the program, also called SC2, is being announced Thursday along with several other cities around the U.S.: Brownsville, Texas; Gary, Ind.; Macon, Ga.; Rockford, Ill.; St. Louis, Mo.; and Rocky Mount, N.C. The program uses experts to work alongside city leadership, community organizations, local **businesses** and philanthropic foundations to support the cities’ visions for economic growth and development. A key goal is to help better use existing resources. Federal workers will head to Flint starting this month to help local officials. In a statement, Flint Mayor Dayne Walling says it’s “an honor” to be included.

Flint Selected For National Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative

NBC25

The City of Flint was selected nationally to be part of the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative (SC2). SC2 is a program launched by President Obama that has federal experts work with city leadership, community organizers, local businesses and philanthropic foundations for the purpose of economic growth and development. Federal officials will start to arrive this month

in Flint. Flint will receive technical assistance from different federal agencies and at least one federal expert will stay in Flint in order to help with the implementation of the city's Master Plan.

Flint Added to Federal Strong Cities, Strong Communities Program

Detroit Free Press

A federal initiative to coordinate aid and spark growth in economically distressed communities is being expanded to include Flint. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced today it is expanding its [Strong Cities Strong Communities](#) program to include seven cities nationwide, including Flint. Detroit was among the first six cities to be targeted in 2011 as part of the program, through which federal teams are deployed to work with local officials and activists to coordinate aid and expertise to improve economic opportunities and other priorities in financially strapped areas.

Flint Joining Strong Cities, Strong Communities

The Associated Press

The city of Flint is joining the federal Strong Cities, Strong Communities initiative. The inclusion of Flint in the program, also called SC2, is being announced Thursday along with several other cities around the U.S. The program uses experts to work alongside city leadership, community organizations, local businesses and philanthropic foundations to support the cities' visions for economic growth and development. A key goal is to help better use existing resources. Federal workers will head to Flint starting this month to assist local officials. In a statement, Flint Mayor Dayne Walling says it's "an honor" to be included.

Flint to Participate in Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative

ABC 12

The Obama Administration says Flint is among seven U.S. cities that will participate in a program meant to spur economic growth in the area. It's part of the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative. The goal is to help the city recover by bringing jobs and other economic growth to the area. Employees from different federal agencies will come in to provide expertise on how to successfully apply for federal grants. The secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development says those employees will team up inside city hall for about two years. They'll give advice on how to get local projects off the ground and create jobs. The team will be made up of two full-time federal employees and other part-timers. HUD says there's a great need for this kind of help in Flint. "This is critically important because in these critical times, municipalities don't have money to waste or throw at every problem. One of the things that really impressed us about Flint is that there is a brand new master plan called Imagine Flint that was put together, and really from like a clear roadmap strategy for the city, that we really felt that we could be helpful on," said Shaun Donovan, of the U.S. Dept. of HUD.

City of Flint Added to Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative

1470 WFNT

The City of Flint was one of seven cities from around the country named to President Obama's Strong Cities, Strong Communities initiative (SC2). The goal of SC2 is to help cities more effectively invest existing resources, provide advice and expertise in support of local priorities, better align federal programs and investments, and facilitate new partnerships and peer learning possibilities when possible. SC2 will deploy Inter-agency federal experts to work alongside city

leadership, community organizations, local businesses and other to help support the community's cities' visions for economic growth and development. Federal staffers will head to each city beginning this month to assist local leaders and along with ongoing technical assistance from various federal agencies, at least one federal staffer will be placed in the City to advance implementation of a Master Plan.

Gary, Indiana

Gary Hosts Open House for Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative

The Times of Northwest Indiana

About 50 city residents became planning partners Wednesday with city and federal officials working on Gary's Northside Redevelopment Project. Those residents attended an open house at the Genesis Convention Center for Strong Cities, Strong Communities, an Obama administration initiative that in January designated Gary as one of seven economically distressed cities to have a team of experts from different federal agencies work with local leaders on revitalization projects. "It's an opportunity to become a planner with us," Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson said. "It's our position that plans are nothing unless the community is involved." The Strong Cities, Strong Communities, also known as SC2, designation also allows the city to gain better access to funding.

HUD's Visit Highlights Strong Partnership

Gary Crusader

A visit to the city of Gary by Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julian Castro highlighted the strong partnership Gary has forged with the federal government in its effort to revitalize the city. Castro, the former mayor of San Antonio, Texas joined the Obama administration in July and Gary is one of the first cities he's visited since assuming office. "Just a few weeks ago I was the mayor of San Antonio. I'm only in my fourth week so I'm kind of new at this. I chose for my first visit to visit a community that HUD has a strong partnership with and that's why I chose Gary, Indiana, because of the great work that you all are doing," said Castro. During his visit on Wednesday, August 20 Castro, accompanied by Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson, toured the Sheraton Hotel demolition site and the South Shore Commons, a homeless veterans center. Both are HUD funded projects.

HUD's Visit Highlights Strong Partnership

Associated Press

New U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julian Castro pledged Wednesday to use federal clout to help revitalize the city of Gary. Castro, during a visit to the beleaguered northwestern Indiana city to check on the demolition of the downtown Sheraton Hotel, said his experience as mayor of San Antonio, Texas, provided firsthand knowledge of the obstacles that cities face, the Post-Tribune reported. "I see HUD as the department of opportunity ... making investments to create partnerships, create jobs and be a catalyst in the urban core," he said. The 12-story Sheraton has been vacant for nearly 30 years. HUD's Neighborhood Stabilization Program provided \$600,000 toward the \$1.77 million demolition, which is expected to be completed by the end of October.

HUD's Castro Pledges Federal Aid to Revitalize Gary

Post-Tribune

U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julian Castro stood in front of a yellow excavator moving debris Wednesday at the former Sheraton Hotel and pledged to use federal clout to revitalize the city. Until July, when he was tapped by President Obama to head HUD, Castro served as mayor of San Antonio, Texas. That background provided him with first-hand knowledge of the obstacles cities face, he said. "I see HUD as the department of opportunity ... making investments to create partnerships, create jobs and be a catalyst in the urban core," he said. Castro's trip to Gary and to Chicago later in the day marked his first official visits to cities that benefit from HUD money. HUD, through its Neighborhood Stabilization Program, kicked in \$600,000 for the \$1.77 million Sheraton demolition, expected to be completed by the end of October.

Newly Appointed HUD Secretary Makes Gary His First Stop on Nationwide Tour

Northwest Indiana Times

New U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julian Castro has only been on the job for four weeks, but on Wednesday Castro made Gary his first visit of a nationwide tour of cities and regions which are creating opportunities for residents through local and federal partnerships and collaboration. "Gary has great potential given its location, Castro said. "There's a can-do spirit in terms of leadership and a strong partnership, not only with HUD, but the state and the federal government. My hope is this project and others will help catalyze more private sector investment as well. HUD is here to be a strong partner to make opportunity happen." Castro took office last month and was ceremonially sworn in Monday by Vice President Joe Biden. Castro, the former mayor of San Antonio, joined Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson for a news conference across the street from the former Sheraton Hotel, which currently undergoing demolition. The demolition is part of the "Strong Cities, Strong Communities" initiative announced by President Barack Obama in January. Gary and six other cities were selected for the federal program designed to spark economic growth and development.

HUD Secretary Visits Gary for Sheraton Demolition

Northwest Indiana Life

Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julian Castro was in Gary this morning meeting with local officials and checking out the ongoing demolition of the abandoned Sheraton Hotel. HUD, the Environmental Protection Agency, the City of Gary and the Regional Development Authority have all partnered to fund the removal of the longstanding eyesore. Secretary Castro said the demolition project was the kind of catalytic efforts HUD supports in order to revitalize communities and create jobs. You can watch a video of his opening remarks [here](#). More photos are on our Facebook page [here](#). This is just one example of the RDA leveraging federal funding to improve Northwest Indiana. Other projects include partnerships with the EPA on stormwater mitigation and environmental cleanup in Miller and brownfields assessment and remediation in Gary, Hammond and East Chicago. Over the next decade, we plan to partner with the Federal Transit Administration to build the West Lake Corridor. This extension of the South Shore commuter rail line will take more than 5,000 riders to high-paying jobs in Chicago every day. They will bring back nearly \$150 million in annual income to spend here in Northwest Indiana, an economic boost that will add nearly 2,000 non-commuter jobs in the region.

HUD Secretary Castro Visits Gary

WAKE 1500 AM

The newly appointed Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Julian Castro was in Gary today meeting with local officials as part of his nationwide visits to cities collaborating with his agency to improve their communities. Castro got the opportunity to view the Sheraton Hotel demolition that is underway, and says the project is the kind of catalytic efforts HUD supports in order to revitalize communities and create jobs. Castro says he chose to visit Gary first because of their strong partnership and the work the city is doing to create jobs and places residents can afford, as well as the city's efforts to revitalize the downtown. HUD, the EPA, the City of Gary, and the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority, have all partnered to fund the removal of the 14 story eye sore, located on Broadway next to Gary City Hall, that has been vacant for nearly three decades.

Gary Launches Obama Administration Assistance Program

The Times of Northwest Indiana

In January, the Obama administration chose Gary as one of seven economically distressed cities to take part in the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative in which the federal government sends a team of experts from different agencies to work with local leaders on revitalization projects to help strengthen a community's economy. "It allows us to really build on the work that has been done by our city administration," Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson said. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Regional Administrator Antonio Riley said the initiative will focus on three areas in Gary: the Northside redevelopment project for the Horace Mann and Emerson downtown neighborhoods and the lakefront district consisting of the Aetna, Glen Ryan and Miller neighborhoods; making Gary data-driven by providing the tools to manage central data and sharing it publicly; and the University Park project including enhancements to the Indiana University Northwest and Ivy Tech campuses and commercial development along the Broadway corridor. Included is a study to determine the feasibility of a trauma center. "We are looking closely with Mayor Freeman-Wilson and her team to identify other priorities and mechanisms by which the **SC2** team can further support the economic revitalization of this great city," Riley said. "The bottom line is the Obama administration is committed to the revitalization of Gary to make it a stronger and safer community and a community of opportunity for its residents."

Gary Added to Strong Cities, Strong Communities Program

Post-Tribune

Federal officials Thursday named Gary one of seven selected cities for the second round of Strong Cities, Strong Communities, or SC2, a program that will put federal experts in and around City Hall to work on housing and transportation improvement and economic development. In a national conference call, Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan and White House Domestic Policy Council Director Cecilia Munoz said the seven communities will get custom technical expertise from teams of federal experts in everything from public housing to land use to transportation under the program. "It's about every aspect of what our challenged cities and communities need to create jobs and create opportunities," Donovan said. "It really is about an expansion of opportunity."

Obama Administration Taps Gary for Strong Cities Initiative

The Times of Northwest Indiana

Gary soon will get an unprecedented level of support from the federal government, which will work out of City Hall to strengthen the city's economy and lift up its residents. The Obama administration announced Thursday that Gary will be one of seven economically distressed cities that will take part in the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative. The federal government will dispatch a team of experts, including representatives from several different federal agencies, to the Steel City for up to two years to work with local leaders on revitalization projects, such as the Northside Redevelopment Project and the bid for a trauma center. Those experts will help the city deal with abandoned houses and crime, and brainstorm on how to bring in more retail businesses. Strong Cities, Strong Communities teams have helped line up nearly \$370 million in existing federal funds and investments for the program's original pilot cities, which include Cleveland, Detroit and Memphis.

Gary Among Cities Joining Federal Program Designed to Spark Growth, Development

The Associated Press

The federal government is adding Gary and six other cities to a federal program designed to spark economic growth and development. The Department of Housing and Urban Development said Thursday the seven cities will participate in the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative. HUD says interagency teams of experts will work alongside city officials, community organizations, local businesses and philanthropic groups "to support the cities' visions for economic growth and development." It's not clear if any new federal funds will flow to Gary. HUD says the program has helped Detroit, Cleveland, New Orleans and four other cities already in the program "more effectively use more than \$368 million in existing federal funds and investments."

Gary to Receive 'Critical' Federal Help

Inside Indiana Business

A Gary city leader says being added to the national Strong Cities, Strong Communities initiative is the equivalent of having access to a federal "Bat-Phone." Interim Chief of Staff Richard Leverett says the designation will provide "on the ground support" for multiple redevelopment initiatives. The city will focus on projects including investment in University Park and the re-use of vacant property. Gary is one of seven communities added to the federal effort today by the White House.

Gary Named to Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative

Northwest Indiana Business Quarterly

Today, the Obama Administration announced it is expanding the Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) Initiative to include **Gary, IN**; Brownsville, TX; Flint, MI; Macon, GA; Rockford, IL; St. Louis, MO; and Rocky Mount, NC. President Obama established SC2 in 2011 as an innovative and flexible program designed to strengthen local capacity, coordinate federal investments, and spark growth in economically distressed communities. The SC2 Initiative was developed through engagement with mayors, Members of Congress, foundations, nonprofits and other community partners who are committed to addressing the challenges facing local governments as they work to create economic opportunity for all residents. Gary Mayor Karen

Freeman-Wilson expressed her excitement after having to keep the announcement a secret for several days.

Gary Added to Federal Strong Cities Initiative

Wake Radio

The Obama Administration on Thursday announced Gary is one of seven cities being added to the Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) Initiative. Federal inter-agency expert teams will be deployed to work alongside city leadership, community organizations, local businesses and philanthropic foundations to work on economic growth and development. Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson expressed her excitement after having to keep the announcement a secret for several days, saying the city of Gary being “designated by the White House to receive this assistance is big news.” “This represents an important tool in the creation of a better Gary, a city that is designed to provide the best government that tax dollars can buy,” said Freeman-Wilson. “This not only represents a partnership with the federal government, but the strengthened engagement of our local educational institutions, local medical providers, local foundations, local non-profits and corporate partners. It is our collective goal to be the hardest working SC2 team in the history of the program.”

Mayor Freeman-Wilson Announces Strong Cities, Strong Communities Designation

The Northwest Indiana Gazette

Today, the Obama Administration announced it is expanding the Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) Initiative to include Gary, IN; Brownsville, TX; Flint, MI; Macon, GA; Rockford, IL; St. Louis, MO; and Rocky Mount, NC. President Obama established SC2 in 2011 as an innovative and flexible program designed to strengthen local capacity, coordinate federal investments, and spark growth in economically distressed communities. The SC2 Initiative was developed through engagement with mayors, Members of Congress, foundations, nonprofits and other community partners who are committed to addressing the challenges facing local governments as they work to create economic opportunity for all residents.

Editorial: Collaboration is Key to Revitalization Effort

The Times of Northwest Indiana

The selection of Gary for the Obama administration's Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative is a sign of the new era of collaboration nationally and locally. With the designation comes a flood of assistance for the city. Usually that means dollars, but this time it's even better than that. A team of experts, including representatives from a variety of federal agencies, will work with the city on revitalization efforts for at least two years. When Evan Bayh was a U.S. senator, he spoke of this happening in Gary. Now the time has finally come. There will be significant federal investment, to be sure. Strong Cities, Strong Communities teams in the original cities have helped earmark a total of \$368 million in existing federal funds for those cities.

Macon, Georgia

Strong Cities Help Comes to Macon-Bibb

The Telegraph//Jim Gaines

Leaders of local redevelopment organizations hailed a new inrush of federal expertise to Macon-Bibb County on Wednesday, sitting down to a series of business meetings even before a welcoming reception. Team members from the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative talked all afternoon with local leaders about urban and neighborhood redevelopment needs, and plans and priorities at Terminal Station. They broke for a formal welcome at the nearby Georgia Sports Hall of Fame. "Our job is to basically support whatever priorities Macon-Bibb has," said Mark Linton, executive director of the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative. Two federal officials will be based in Macon-Bibb for about a year -- Raabia Budhwani, from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Latoya Jones from the U.S. Department of Transportation. Linton said representatives of practically every federal agency can be tapped for expertise.

Macon-Bibb Meets for Round 2 of Strong Cities, Strong Communities Work Sessions

41NBC.com//Skyler Henry

Macon-Bibb is getting help from an initiative by the White House. Officials with Strong Cities, Strong Communities are wrapping up a two-day visit helping to better the community. Mayor Robert Reichert says it's a chance to improve economic development in the county. Call it a meeting of the minds... Experts, CEO's, and county officials surrounded themselves in maps, diagrams, and paperwork on Thursday. Their goal....a better Macon-Bibb. "We hope that we will be able to make a case for roads, rail, runways, and rivers," Mayor Reichert said. Mayor Reichert says teaming up with the group from Strong Cities, Strong Communities -- or SC2 -- has been beneficial. "We're talking about regional transportation issues and how we can work as a region to create more economic development," Reichert said. Officials say right now is not about dollars and cents, but more so envisioning a master plan with the help from experts. "Everybody who knows about affordable housing, to small businesses, or how do you turn around an old abandoned industrial site," Mark Litton, with SC2, said.

First Armstrong Superfund Cleanup Plans Finalized

The Telegraph//Heather Duncan

Armstrong World Industries will take the first step next year in containing old cancer-causing pollutants that have fouled Rocky Creek for years. Several old landfills on Armstrong's Guy Paine Road property are the source of polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, that have contaminated soil and water in the area, according to the federal Environmental Protection Agency. PCBs can travel up the food chain and remain stored in living tissue. Rocky Creek has high enough PCB levels that the state has warned people against fishing there, although the stream remains a popular fishing spot.

Macon to Get Major HUD Help

The Telegraph

Macon is one of seven cities that will get intensive federal help with chronic economic problems under the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative, local and national officials announced Thursday. "We're in for one heck of a ride, y'all, and it's going to be great," Mayor Robert

Reichert told a crowd gathered in Macon-Bibb County Commission chambers. The audience of about 30 included many government employees but also heads of related agencies and private, nonprofit groups that work on social and economic issues. Reichert choked up slightly as he extolled the program. "We're changing 40 years of decline," he said. "We have hit the bottom. We are on the rebound." The effort, through the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, will give "customized" help to each of the chosen cities, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan said during a conference call.

Macon Included in Federal "Strong Cities" Program

WMAZ

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has included Macon in an expansion of its Strong Communities Initiative, according to a HUD news release. The department is hosting a media call at 10:30 a.m. Thursday to discuss the addition of cities to the program, which includes St. Louis, Mo.; Gary, Ind.; Flint, Mich; Brownsville, Texas; Rockford, Ill.; and Rocky Mount, N.C. The primary goal of the program is to spur economic activity in these cities by helping them more "effectively invest existing resources, provide advice and expertise in support of local priorities, better align federal programs and investments, and facilitate new partnerships and peer learning opportunities," the news release stated.

White House Selects Macon for Government Support Program

41 NBC/WMG

Macon is one of the seven cities selected by the Obama administration to participate in the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative. The White House announced its partnership to build the local economy and create more jobs across the county. 41NBC was on the conference call announcement along with Mayor Robert Reichert--who believes this process will open doors for Macon to reach greater heights, and bounce back from a distressed economy. The year long process is the city's chance to have federal agents analyze local government's strategies and programs, and break down its strengths and weaknesses. Then, make the necessary changes to create a better future for the years ahead. Macon Mayor Reichert trusts this program will take the city of Macon to the next level.

Macon Gets Federal Distressed-City Aid

WMAZ

Two federal staffers will spend at least a year helping Bibb County develop jobs and work on other improvements. The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development announced on Thursday Macon-Bibb is one of seven cities chosen for its "Strong Cities Strong Communities" initiative. The program brings federal teams to town for a year or more to work on economic development. The federal agency says 51 cities applied and the seven were picked because they showed signs of economic distress. The agency also looked for cities with "local leadership with a clear vision." Mayor Robert Reichert says he wants to use the federal help to work on "jobs," "schools" and "places." As of now, it's still unclear just how much money the program will bring to town in terms of grants or other revenue.

Macon Named Part of Federal Initiative

The Telegraph

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development will announce Thursday that Macon is one of seven American cities that will be added to the federal government's Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative. The formal announcement will be made during a morning teleconference featuring HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan and White House Domestic Policy Council Director Cecilia Muñoz. HUD officials declined to comment Wednesday about the announcement. Macon-Bibb County spokesman Chris Floore said Mayor Robert Reichert wouldn't be making any comments until after the teleconference. Macon will join St. Louis; Gary, Ind.; Flint, Mich.; Brownsville, Texas; Rockford, Ill.; and Rocky Mount, N.C., as part of the initiative, which begins this month.

Rockford, Illinois

Rockford One of 7 New Cities in Obama's Strong Cities, Strong Communities Program

Rockford Register Star

The Obama administration has selected Rockford to participate in a federal program to help the city prevent crime and move people out of poverty and into jobs. Rockford was among seven economically distressed cities selected Thursday for the second round of [Strong Cities, Strong Communities](#). The program will bring a team of full-time, part-time and advisory federal personnel to town to help the city cut through red tape among federal agencies and make more efficient use of the city's existing federal aid. The city, along with partners such as the [Workforce Investment Board](#), [Rockford Housing Authority](#) and others, receive millions of federal dollars every year to address housing, transportation, education, job training and other initiatives. But when local agencies try to pool those dollars for a specific project, it's not always easy, said RHA Director Ron Clewer. Waivers may be required. Paperwork must be submitted. Federal approval can take months.

Rockford Added to Federal Initiative to Help Economically Struggling Cities

My Stateline

The good news: Rockford has been added to the federal government's 'Strong Cities, Strong Communities' initiative. The bad news is that the addition is just another reminder of the economic struggles and difficult path to recovery the city faces. Rockford joins Brownsville, TX; Flint, MI; Gary, IN; Macon, GA; St. Louis, MO; and Rocky Mount, NC as cities added to the list of those involved. President Obama established what's nicknamed 'SC2' in 2011 to strengthen local capacity, coordinate federal investments, and spark growth in economically distressed communities. According to a news release, federal teams will be deployed to work alongside city leadership, community organizations, local businesses and philanthropic foundations to support the cities' visions for economic growth and development. The goal is to help these cities better use federal and other resources to help achieve economic growth.

Rockford Tapped for Federal 'Strong Cities, Strong Communities' Initiative

Rock River Times

President Barack Obama (D) now has a hand in local plans to transform the area, tapping Rockford for a list of select American cities that qualify for a special development initiative.

Rockford joins Brownsville, Texas, Flint, Mich., Gary, Ind., Macon, Ga., Rocky Mount, N.C., and St. Louis on the “Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2)” list. The president created the list in 2011 as part of a push to strengthen economic development and growth in cities with varying degrees of distress. Under Strong Cities’, federal teams work alongside local governments, business leaders and community organizations to maximize development resources and funds.

Rockford Part of New National Initiative

WIFR

Lowering crime in the Stateline is just one of the many goals being talked about in the Transform Rockford movement and now the initiative is getting support on a national level. More than 100 people, all concerned about Rockford’s future packed into one room for a Transform Rockford visioning session to come up with ways to revive our struggling city. People like Janis Long who says Rockford just isn’t the same now as it was 50 years ago. “We have the Coronado Theater, we have the library, and we want people to come and see that and enjoy it,” said Long. It’s the teamwork of regular citizens, business, leaders and philanthropists that helped Rockford beat out dozens of other cities for a federal program called the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative. “Sometimes, you know regulations and bureaucracy can slow that vision down so I really look forward to getting some help and just accelerating that process of achieving that vision.”

Rockford Chosen for Federal Community Improvement Program

WREX

Rockford is joining six other cities around the country as part of the Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) program. The federal program will help Rockford leverage and implement economic development plans in the fields of business, education and workforce training, and public safety. Through the SC2 initiative a team will help augment efforts like Rockford's partnership with Etsy and provide technical assistance to identify opportunities for growing the local economy and addressing crime prevention.

Rockford to Get Expert Federal Advice to Help Recover from Economic Recession

My Stateline

The U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development will announce Thursday it's adding Rockford to the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative. The program is part of the Obama Administration's commitment to help cities hit hard by the recession bounce back. The initiative aims to help Rockford more efficiently invest existing resources, provide advice on local priorities, better align federal programs/investments, and facilitate new partnerships and peer learning opportunities.

Rocky Mount, North Carolina

Obama’s Federal Initiative Begins in Rocky Mount

The Wilson Daily Times

David Glasgow has joined the city of Rocky Mount as team lead for the White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative (SC2). In January, it was announced that Rocky Mount was among seven, out of more than 90, cities to benefit from the second round of

President Barack Obama's innovative and flexible economic development program. SC2, originally created in 2011, is designed to strengthen local capacity and coordinate federal investments to spark growth in economically distressed communities. Glasgow comes to the program from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and has many years of experience in economic and community development. He will work in City Hall for up to 24 months coordinating a team of 20 key staff from the many federal agencies that work with local governments, nonprofits and the private industry to "grow jobs and improve the quality of life in the region." An attorney with a strong communications and community development background, Glasgow will focus on three key areas set by the city in support of the Twin Counties Visioning and Strategic Planning Process, to include workforce development and talent recruitment, growing the regional food economy and improving life in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Rocky Mount Tapped for Federal Economic Initiative

Rocky Mount Telegram

Federal officials announced Wednesday that Rocky Mount is among seven cities chosen for the expansion of a national initiative designed to help communities recover from the economic recession. According to a press release, Rocky Mount was selected along with St. Louis; Gary, Ind.; Flint, Mich.; Brownsville, Texas; Rockford, Ill.; and Macon, Ga. to participate in the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative, also dubbed SC2. Federal inter-agency teams will head to each city starting this month to assist local officials. "The primary goal of the SC2 Teams is to help these cities more effectively invest existing resources, provide advice and expertise in support of local priorities, better align federal programs and investments, and facilitate new partnerships and peer learning opportunities," the release states.

Rocky Mount To Get Federal Help Spurring Job Creation

WUNC North Carolina Public Radio

The city of Rocky Mount will get help with projects to stimulate job growth, revitalize blighted neighborhoods, and move grocery stores to areas that don't have any from a team of federal experts that will work with the city for at least a year. City administrators will get full-time help from two employees of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and from a team of outside consultants who are experts in subjects such as economic development, local and federal officials said Thursday. Rocky Mount is one of seven cities across the country that were especially hard-hit by the recession of 2008 and the federal housing department is targeting for economic development. The unemployment rate in Rocky Mount is 12.8 percent, more than four points higher than the state average.

Rocky Mount Gets Federal Boost

News Observer

Rocky Mount, which continues to struggle with high unemployment, will be getting some federal help. The city is one of seven across the country being added to the Obama administration's Strong Cities, Strong Communities initiative. The program, launched in 2012, is designed to help struggling communities better utilize existing federal resources. It sends teams of federal employees to work with mayors, local businesses and philanthropic foundations to help them cut through red tape and build partnerships to improve their economy.

Strong Cities Program Has a Success Tale

Rocky Mount Telegram

Rocky Mount's selection as one of only seven cities in the country to receive special federal aid in a campaign to become more economically competitive comes as both a reward and a challenge to community leaders. Taking full advantage of the resources offered by the Strong Cities, Strong Communities program will yield opportunities that might never have been possible otherwise in Rocky Mount. The challenge to community leaders is to exercise their imaginations in ways that will make the next couple of years an investment period with high chances of long-term success. If those ideals sound a little vague, that's because cities chosen in the first wave of the program have grown in vastly different directions using resources that Strong Cities, Strong Communities helped them access.

Federal Program Aims to Boost Rocky Mount Development

Rocky Mount Telegram

Out of 91 struggling communities across the country, Rocky Mount and six others were selected this week to participate in a federal program with a record for helping spark economic growth. "During these tough fiscal times, it is vitally important that the (President Barack Obama) Administration provides support to those cities in need," said U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan in a telephone conference call. "The support provided by the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative is helping local leaders maximize every dollar to spur economic growth, create jobs and build stronger and safer communities." The SC2 program sends teams of experts to the selected communities to assist local officials make the vision for their cities a reality. Since 2011, SC2 has helped the seven pilot cities — Chester, Pa.; Cleveland; Detroit; Fresno, Calif.; Memphis, Tenn.; New Orleans; and Youngstown, Ohio — to more effectively utilize more than \$368 million in existing federal funds and investments.

St. Louis, Missouri

St. Louis, Rockford Chosen for Federal Initiative

CBS St. Louis

St. Louis is among seven cities chosen to take part in a federal initiative aimed at bettering the city and tackling some of its urban challenges. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Shaun Donovan announce the expansion of the Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative (SC2) Thursday. Its part of the Obama Administration's commitment to help cities recover from the economic recession. Besides St. Louis, Gary, Ind.; Flint Mich.; Brownsville, Texas; Rockford, Ill.; Macon Ga.; and Rocky Mount, N.C.; will receive a group of federal "inter-agency" experts that will work in the mayor's office with the goal of creating projects that will more effectively invest existing resources and create partnerships.

U.S. to St. Louis: We Want to Pump You Up

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

They're from Washington. They're here to help. Really, this time. For the next two years a team of federal experts will be embedded in the office of St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay, to help the city find ways to better tackle some of its most complex urban challenges, from crime to

redevelopment. St. Louis is one of seven struggling cities nationwide that will be part of a program dubbed [Strong Cities, Strong Communities](#), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development said Thursday. It doesn't come with dollops of new federal cash, but rather with two full-time staff members and a team of technical gurus on call to help cities such as St. Louis make the most of existing federal programs.

St. Louis Picked For Federal Program

KSDK

St. Louis is one of just seven cities picked from a list of more than 50 for a government program called Strong Cities, Strong Communities. At least one person, maybe more, will move to St. Louis for as long as two years to assist the city in projects like revitalizing North St. Louis. William Burton lives, breathes and paints North St. Louis. He sees his art as a way to connect his community. His shop, 14th Street Artist Community Gallery, is in the Old North neighborhood which in recent years has connected in revitalization efforts. Burton applauds federal help as long as it makes a place for those struggling there today. "I think they should be able to enjoy those same resources that those other communities get to enjoy because what it will do would motivate and inspire those and give them access to those same resources that they may be able to pull themselves up by the bootstraps," he said.

St. Louis Chosen As 'Strong City'

St. Louis Public Radio

St. Louis is one of seven cities that the Obama Administration chose in the second wave of its Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative. As a result the city will get a full-time federal employee who will work out of Mayor Francis Slay's office for at least a year. A team of federal employees and fellows also will provide technical assistance and inter-agency support. The goal is to push economic development forward in struggling cities.

St. Louis Picked for Federal Program to Boost City Economy

Fox2Now

The White House has named St. Louis as part of the, "Strong Cities, Strong Communities" program. Federal workers will partner with the mayor and city leadership to help boost economic prospects for the region. [According to a release from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development](#) the goal is to, "Align federal programs and help communities more effectively invest existing resources." The team in St. Louis will specifically work on implementing the City's Sustainability Plan. The goal is to make the City of St. Louis cleaner, safer, and healthier. The Northside Regeneration Project will also be a focus. HUD says that they will, "redevelop an area of the city which is in great need of support."