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## **Omnibus package includes full funding for EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities**

*Environmental assistance can help towns overcome persistent economic challenges*

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Washington, DC – A contaminated empty lot is more than just an unsightly nuisance for its neighbors. It's a financial burden on taxpayers, local businesses and nearby homeowners, not to mention a serious threat to land and water quality.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Sustainable Communities helps towns and cities address these kinds of problems and turn them into economic assets. Today Congress is scheduled to vote on the final FY 2012 Omnibus Spending package which will fully fund the EPA's Smart Growth Program in fiscal year 2012.

"Today's decision is a victory for towns across the country working toward economic prosperity," said Geoff Anderson, President and CEO of Smart Growth America. "The EPA's Office provides towns with the tools they need to overcome some of the largest, most persistent challenges to creating a stronger local economy. We are thrilled that Congress decided to support this program."

Today's news comes after months of debate over funding for the Office of Sustainable Communities, which was [initially slated to receive zero funding](#) in the House of Representatives' proposed appropriations bill. Smart Growth America was one of several organizations that asked Congress to defend the funding for this vital program.

### **Case study: Iowa City**

Iowa City, IA is one success story of the EPA program. Iowa City received an EPA Smart Growth Assistance grant in 2009 to help with the city's recovery from historic flooding. Plans are now in the works to revitalize a 10-square block section of the city called Riverfront Crossings, currently home to a wastewater treatment plant, brownfields, and old industrial sites. The new plans intend to catalyze private development, and include a riverfront park designed to absorb flood waters and a mix of housing options, retail, and office space in a walkable town center environment. The city also hopes to eventually connect the area to the major employer in the city, the University of Iowa, through light rail and commuter rail. [Read more >>](#)

**Smart Growth America** is the only national organization dedicated to researching, advocating for and leading coalitions to bring smart growth practices to more communities nationwide. From providing more sidewalks to ensuring more homes are built near public transportation or that productive farms remain a part of our communities, smart growth helps make sure people across the nation can live in great neighborhoods. For additional information visit [www.smartgrowthamerica.org](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org).

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