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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Eight Cities Put Equity at the Heart of Environmental Efforts with New Funding Through Partners for Places**

### ***\$1 million boosts sustainability projects across the U.S.***

Coral Gables, Fla.— Eight cities will receive \$1 million for sustainability projects that focus on low-income communities and people of color, ensuring that all residents benefit from a community's environmental progress.

These sustainability efforts will take place across the United States, from the Pacific Northwest to South Florida. They include: Detroit, which will embed sustainable strategies throughout its city departments so that every neighborhood has a more vibrant, resilient future; Tucson, a UNESCO-named City of Gastronomy, which will help a Latino neighborhood strengthen its food-based economy; and Seattle, which will implement the city's new Equity and Environment Agenda.

The funding is through Partners for Places, which pairs city governments with local and national funders to support sustainability projects that promote a healthy environment, a strong economy and well-being for all residents.

"Becoming sustainable and solving the climate crisis may seem daunting, but to get there it has to be done on the local level with public/private partnerships," said Darryl Young, director of the Sustainable Cities Program at the Summit Foundation. "We're excited that so many of these ideas put the role of planning solutions in the hands of communities."

Partners for Places, led by the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities in partnership with the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, will provide \$514,000 in funding, which will be matched by the local funders listed below. The program is supported by six investor foundations: Bloomberg Philanthropies, The JPB Foundation, The Kendeda Fund, The New York Community Trust, Summit Foundation, and Surdna Foundation.

The latest Partners for Places recipients and their matching funders are:

- Chattanooga, Tenn. (\$40,000): To expand a successful program that helps low-income neighborhoods – which use 43 percent more energy per square foot during the winter than the city’s average home – increase their energy efficiency. Residents will be encouraged to create their own locally-based solutions. (Matching funder: Benwood Foundation & Lyndhurst Foundation)
- Detroit (\$25,000): To create an action plan that helps the city scale sustainable approaches across all initiatives – from transit oriented development to building demolition, energy efficiency in older buildings, vacant land reuse, green jobs and more. These design approaches can save money and resources while better positioning the city for the future. (Matching funder: The Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation)
- Hartford, Conn. (\$125,000): To create a sustainability director position for the city and a climate action plan that comprehensively addresses energy, land use, transportation, waste and water usage. The plan will look at the root cause of climate change, including ways to improve air quality and reduce flooding, to improve the health and well-being of all residents.
- Miami-Dade County, Fla. (\$50,000): To provide critical shade along public transit routes in two tree-deprived neighborhoods, so that the low-income residents can comfortably walk to – and wait for – the bus. This effort expands the successful Partners for Places-funded SHADE project and makes riding the bus a more viable option, by creating a humane, comfortable and safe waiting experience for the bus rider. (Matching funder: Health Foundation of South Florida)
- Minneapolis (\$75,000) To strengthen the local food system by helping Minneapolis’ 35 farmers markets work together, collect metrics on their impact and conduct a joint “Minneapolis Buy Local” marketing campaign. In addition, the program will expand an innovative program at the West Broadway Farmers Market’s that incentivizes low-income residents to purchase healthy foods by having doctors give patients food prescriptions. (Matching funder: Greater Twin Cities United Way)
- Portland, Ore. (\$50,000) To help this city ensure that its successful efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions directly benefit low-income neighborhoods by supporting a resident-led Community Energy Plan in the Cully neighborhood. Portland has seen impressive results from its carbon-reduction efforts – in 2014 per person emissions were 40 percent below 1990 levels – and seeks to support historically underserved communities in implementing low-carbon investments and solutions. (Matching funder: Meyer Memorial Trust)
- Seattle (\$75,000) To implement the city’s Equity & Environmental Agenda, a roadmap to ensure that people of color, immigrants, refugees and those with low-income and limited

English proficiency both lead and benefit from the city's environmental progress. Unveiled in April, the agenda provides goals and strategies so that the city, funders, environmental organizations and the private sector can work together with the community for change. Funding will support community participation in a new Environmental Justice Committee and support pilot projects with communities of color that demonstrate environmental justice in action. (Matching funders: The Bullitt Foundation, The Russell Family Foundation and the Seattle Foundation)

- Tucson, Ariz. (\$74,862) To help the mostly Latino residents of the La Doce neighborhood strengthen their food-based economy by having citizen folklorists trained in ethnographic research assess local needs. The study will look at the informal economy and what home-based food businesses exist, how they and local supermarkets are faring, and what these businesses need to thrive. As UNESCO named Tucson a City of Gastronomy last year, honoring its rich food culture, the city wants to enhance the local food economy in neighborhoods. (Matching funder: Community Foundation for Southern Arizona)

To date, Partners for Places has awarded more than \$4 million across North America in this successful matching grant program, leading to an \$8 million impact.

Partners for Places will open a new round of funding in early December with proposals due in late January 2017. To attract additional interest in urban sustainability projects beyond those funded, the program also houses an Idea Bank on the Funders' Network website, which provides summaries of past project applications.

For more information on Partners for Places, visit the Funders' Network website at <http://www.fundersnetwork.org/partnersforplaces/>. Funders interested in becoming a part of Partners for Places should contact Ann Wallace at the Funders' Network.

#### [About Partners for Places Partners for Places](#)

A joint project of the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities and the Urban Sustainability Network, Partners for Places is a successful matching grant program that improves U.S. and Canadian communities by building partnerships between local government sustainability leaders and place-based foundations. National funders invest in local projects developed through these partnerships to promote a healthy environment, a strong economy and well-being for all residents. Through these investments, Partners for Places fosters long-term relationships that make our communities more prosperous, livable and vibrant.

#### [About the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities](#)

The Funders' Network exists to inspire, strengthen and expand funding and philanthropic leadership that yield environmentally sustainable, socially equitable, and economically prosperous regions and communities. The vision of the Funders' Network is to be the leading resource in philanthropy for

interdisciplinary and transformative thinking and action that gives all people the opportunity to live in more environmentally sustainable, socially equitable and economically prosperous regions and communities.

About The Urban Sustainability Directors Network The Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) is a peer-to-peer network of local government professionals from cities across the United States and Canada dedicated to creating a healthier environment, economic prosperity, and increased social equity. Our dynamic network enables sustainability directors and staff to share best practices and accelerate the application of good ideas across North America.

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