

Smart Growth...what does that mean?

Smart Growth is not a single tool, but a set of cohesive urban and regional planning principles that can be blended together and melded with unique local and regional conditions to achieve a better development pattern. Smart Growth is an approach to achieving communities that are socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable. Smart Growth provides choices — in housing, in transportation, in jobs, and in amenities (including cultural, social services, recreational, educational, among others) — using comprehensive planning to guide, design, develop, manage, revitalize, and build inclusive communities and regions to:

- have a unique sense of community and place;
- preserve and enhance valuable natural and cultural resources;
- equitably distribute the costs and benefits of land development, considering both participants and the short- and long-term time scale;
- create and/or enhance economic value;
- expand the range of transportation, employment, and housing choices in a fiscally responsible manner;
- balance long-range, regional considerations of sustainability with short-term incremental geographically isolated actions;
- promote public health and healthy communities;
- apply up-to-date local and regional performance measures of successful urban and regional growth;
- encourage compact, transit-accessible (where available), pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use development patterns and land reuse; and,
- increase collaboration and partnerships to advance place-based and regional goals and objectives, while respecting local land-use preferences and priorities.

The American Planning Association recognizes that the efficient development of small towns and rural areas is critical to their long-term survival and sustainability. The preservation of smaller towns and rural areas in light of development pressures caused by sprawling development patterns is often more economically efficient. Making housing choices available to a range of households, ages, and incomes, all while maintaining the character of the community and the quality of life is important to new and existing residents alike. The high cost of providing basic infrastructure and services in rural communities demands efficient use of existing facilities, compact development as well as land conservation.

Core principles of Smart Growth include:

- A. Efficient use of land and infrastructure
- B. Creation and/or enhancement of economic value
- C. A greater mix of uses and housing choices
- D. Neighborhoods and communities focused around human-scale, mixed-use centers
- E. A balanced, multi-modal transportation system providing increased transportation choice
- F. Conservation and enhancement of environmental and cultural resources
- G. Preservation or creation of a sense of place
- H. Increased citizen participation in all aspects of the planning process and at every level of government
- I. Vibrant center city life
- J. Vital small towns and rural areas
- K. A multi-disciplinary and inclusionary process to accomplish smart growth
- L. Planning processes and regulations at multiple levels that promote diversity and equity
- M. Regional view of community, economy and ecological sustainability
- N. Recognition that institutions, governments, businesses and individuals require a concept of cooperation to support smart growth
- O. Local, state, and federal policies and programs that support urban investment, compact development and land conservation
- P. Well defined community edges, such as agricultural greenbelts, wildlife corridors or greenways permanently preserved as farmland or open space.