

“Smart growth recognizes connections between development and quality of life.”

– Environmental Protection Agency

Smart Growth and Economic Success: Investing in Infill Development

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SUMMARY

American Planning Association’s Smart Growth Core Principles*

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

A sense of place results when design and development protect and incorporate the distinctive character of a community and its unique context, whether urban or rural. Geography, natural features, climate, culture, historical resources, and ecology each contribute to the distinctive character of a region. Smart Growth principles contribute to a sense of place that differs from the “Everywhere USA” model and anonymous architecture that dominated the last quarter of the 20th century and first decade of the 21st.

Smart Growth includes evaluating the appropriate geographies to improve air quality, water quality and quantity, habitat functionality, economic prosperity, and transportation choices; and for local jurisdictions within these geographies to establish and coordinate policies that address these elements in a manner that is appropriate for their regions and governance structures.

Smart Growth does not work without cooperation and partnerships among governments, property owners, developers, financial institutions, and the public. The principles of Smart Growth can form the basis for dialogue between these parties and challenge all to ensure that we create in America communities of lasting value. Smart Growth provides timely tools not only for long-range planning but also addressing current issues related to communities with high foreclosure rates, limited infrastructure, and fiscal challenges.