SMART GROWTH FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Smart growth—development that serves the economy, the environment, and the community—is based on planning decisions and service delivery policies that recognize the connection between development and quality of life. No one set of rules works for all communities. Instead, each local government must study the principles of smart growth and tailor them to its unique geographic, demographic, and financial circumstances.

This report discusses the dynamics of sprawl, or uncontrolled growth, and its impact on communities. The causes and results of sprawl are contrasted with the characteristics of smart growth. The report presents techniques that local governments can use to integrate principles of smart growth into their operation and management.

Case examples describe the implementation of smart growth principles in a variety of communities. The report includes a copy of the Ahwahnee Principles and a list of organizations and publications that can provide more information on smart growth.

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Smart Growth for Local Governments

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Winston Churchill said, "First we shape our buildings; then our buildings shape us." In a similar way, the nature in which our cities and towns are designed and built determines how we live, work, and play. Traditionally, towns cropped up as centers for agriculture. Towns brought an era of specialized crafts, and people worked in their homes or in nearby workshops.

With the advent of the industrial revolution, cities grew up. People began to work in factories. Mass transportation and the automobile allowed workers, usually men, to commute to downtown offices or factories in the center city from their homes in the suburbs. Office parks and residential developments began to sprawl across the landscape, taking people farther from the center cities. But economic forces and industrial processes are changing, and many people are deciding that long commutes, loss of family time, diminishing open space, and wasted infrastructure investments are too high a cost to pay for unchecked growth.

In 1996, the Bank of America issued a report, *Beyond Sprawl,* that stated: ". . . . as we approach the 21st century, it is clear that sprawl has created enormous costs that California can no longer afford. Ironically, unchecked sprawl has shifted from an engine of California's growth to a force that now threatens to inhibit growth and degrade the quality of our life."[1] Support for reevaluation of policies that have encouraged sprawling development patterns is coming from many sectors: citizen groups involved in changing the tax structure or in preserving precious green space; Republicans and Democrats; federal, state, and local government officials; businesses and farmers; and others. A growing constituency is saying that the location and kind of growth determine the nature of a community and its quality of life.

The result is that many local governments are looking at smart growth—development that serves the economy, the environment, and the community. Smart growth does not mean an abandonment of growth. It means better decision-making that recognizes the connection between development and quality of life. It is not prescriptive, but offers certain principles to serve community needs (see the sidebar on page 2). The question becomes not whether, but how, communities should grow.

This report considers the dynamics of sprawl and its impact on communities. It also explains the characteristics of smart growth. Finally, it presents various techniques that local governments can use to integrate principles of smart growth into their operation and management.

WHAT CAUSES SPRAWL?

In many ways, sprawl is a uniquely American phenomenon. In the post-World War II era, federal, state, and local policies and private investment practices supported Americans' flight to the suburbs. The GI bill and the mortgage-loan deduction made home ownership a reality for many. As Americans became more affluent, the capital gains tax deferment (recently changed) encouraged the purchase of larger, more expensive homes. While home ownership helps stabilize neighborhoods and strengthen communities, these policies also encouraged new low-density developments outside the core metropolitan areas.

Other policies have contributed to growth in outlying areas. The interstate highway system and cheap gasoline made it easy for people to commute to jobs in the city. But the building of federal highways also ripped up existing housing and destroyed existing neighborhoods.

Infrastructure policies have shaped current patterns of development. The relocation of federal offices, including post offices, to the suburbs has had a domino effect. Development often follows state and local investments in infrastructure, as well. For example, extending sewer lines into relatively undeveloped land is a major incentive to new development.

Telecommunications policy also plays a role in encouraging sprawl. Concerned primarily about the provision of service to rural communities, the Federal Communications Commission dictates that basic phone service must be delivered at the same rate to all customers, regardless of the cost. Thus, even though it may cost ten times as much to serve households on the urban fringe as those in the center of a metropolitan area, residents and businesses at the fringe pay no premium for basic phone service. State and local practices follow suit.

Taxing policies play a role. As cities with a declining tax base impose higher taxes to generate revenue, development and investment leave the center for the lower tax areas on the fringe. Other tax policies have a similar result. In states that impose limits on property taxes, local governments often try to maximize retail profits to generate revenue. Smaller cities on the edge of expanding urban areas build malls or other commercial structures at the expense of main street businesses, furthering the spread to the edge.

Finally, cheaper land, fewer development restrictions, and even subsidies have promoted development of previously undeveloped areas (called greenfields), while areas with existing infrastructure are ignored. Cleveland State University's Professor Tom Bier states that public policies at all levels of government have made it more expensive to redevelop than to build on farmland. He cites a federal grant provided to build a new road that opened up 200 acres for development in the suburbs beyond Cuyahoga County, Ohio. At the same time, the state was promoting a loan fund for redevelopment of vacant industrial land (brownfields). The road construction grant was an outright gift while the brownfield program required municipalities to borrow and pay back the loan with interest.[2]

Federal, state, and local governments are beginning to evaluate the impact of their policies on development patterns. The U.S. General Accounting Office is currently reviewing the impact of federal policies on land use. The state of Maryland recognized the cost of sprawl and in 1997 passed the Smart Growth Areas Act. In the words of Governor Parris Glendening, "State resources are no longer available to support sprawl."[3] Instead, the state is reinvesting in areas with infrastructure and is protecting open space. And numerous local governments are reassessing their land use and development policies. See http://www.mde.state.md.us/environment/sm_growth/index.html for more on Maryland's Smart Growth initiative.

WHY SHOULD LOCAL GOVERNMENTS BE CONCERNED ABOUT SPRAWL?

Post-World War II policies that made the dream of a home in the suburbs attainable for thousands of families are no longer working. Increasingly, sprawl is affecting not just big cities but also small towns and suburban communities, imposing significant costs on local governments.

Sprawl creates an inefficient land use pattern that is expensive to serve with public funds, blurs local government roles (thereby fueling competition, redundancy, and conflict among local government agencies), threatens economic viability by diffusing rather than focusing needed public infrastructure investments, and erodes a sense of community.

Economic Costs

Sprawl demands that government invest in new and expanded infrastructure, while letting existing infrastructure go to waste. It also increases operating costs of government services. A few examples illustrate the economic costs to taxpayers.

- Taxpayers in Prince William County, Virginia, a bastion of "go-go growth" in the 1980s, finally called for more balanced growth because of the county's inability to build enough schools, parks, libraries, and fire stations to keep up with its population. In 1998, local officials estimated that the price of providing services to each house was at least $17,000, while they were recouping just $2,000 in proffers (or developer fees) for each single-family detached house. New guidelines increased the proffers to $10,218 per detached house, $7,259 per town house, and $3,639 per condominium or rental apartment.[4]

- Summit County, Utah, determined that the cost of each residential unit developed in the county exceeded tax revenues by $300.[5]

- Between 1970 and 1990, Montgomery County, Maryland, spent $500 million to close more than 60 schools while simultaneously building 60 new schools in newly developed areas.[6]

Many metropolitan areas continue to waste infrastructure investments in the urban core while making new investments in outlying areas. Sprawl forces governments to spend money on new schools and other capital projects that would not be needed if residential patterns remained more compact. In an era of limited government budgets, decisions to encourage development in undeveloped areas require a reevaluation.

Public policies at all levels of government have made it more expensive to redevelop than to build on farmland.

In many cities, the growth in land area exceeds population growth, stretching the area over which local governments must provide services and the distances between destinations. For example, between 1990 and 1996, the population of West Palm Beach, Florida, expanded by 30 percent while land area grew by 75 percent.[7] Between 1970 and 1990, metro New York's population grew only 5 percent but consumed 61 percent more land, metro Chicago grew by just 4 percent but consumed 46 percent more land, and metro Cleveland lost 11 percent of its population but consumed 33 percent more land.[8]

Many studies have outlined the costs of sprawl, and the inequities they reflect. Two are described here:

- James E. Frank of Florida State University compared the costs for providing sewer service to a suburban neighborhood in an outlying area with the costs for providing the same service to an inner-city neighborhood close to the Tallahassee treatment plant. The costs av-

Defining sprawl

To use Justice Potter Stewart's famous remark about pornography, sprawl is "hard to define, but you know it when you see it." Sprawl is defined as "low-density development beyond the edge of service and employment, which separates where people live from where they shop, work, recreate, and educate, thus requiring cars to move between zones." Sprawl has four defining characteristics:

- Low-density development, usually single-family homes on large lots
- Strip commercial development
- Scattered development, with commercial, residential, and retail development not integrated or close together
- Leapfrog development where drivers view long stretches of vacant land between developments.

Source: Samuel R. Staley, *The Sprawling of America: In Defense of the Dynamic City*, No. 251 (Reason Public Policy Institute, January 1999), p. 5.

eraged $4,447 per home in the inner-city neighborhood and $11,443 per home in the suburban neighborhood. Because the sewer service rates are based on average costs, both neighborhoods pay the same rate per unit. The inner-city neighborhood (which has the disadvantage of being closer to the treatment plant) subsidizes the service for suburban residents.[9] Frank also found that it can cost as much as $10,000 to provide a new suburban house with adequate roads, compared with just over $570 for a house in town.[10] Finally, he calculated the cost of roads, sewers, schools, and other public services and infrastructure at $18,000 for an urban house and $48,000 for a rural house.[11]

- A study conducted for the Brookings Institution compared sprawl to compact growth. It found that compact growth, with a mix of housing types and higher density, consumed 25 percent less land, and cost 25 percent less for roads, 15 percent less for utilities, 5 percent less for housing, and 2 percent less for other public costs than sprawling development with three units or fewer per acre.[12]

Utility companies are also affected. James Dodge, president and chairman of Providence Energy Corporation, a major New England utility firm, states, "Over the last three years our company has spent $18 million on growth. Yet we haven't got any new customers. People will pay for that $18 million investment in higher rates."[13]

The price of a tank of gas

If the financial costs of air pollution, traffic injuries, congestion, and the defense of oil-producing countries are all included, the cost of driving (not including the cost of the vehicle and gasoline) is conservatively estimated at $0.22 per mile. To adequately cover the cost of driving would require a gas tax of $6.60 per gallon, or $132.00 for a tank of gas.

Source: Phillip J. Longman, "Who Pays for Sprawl?" *U.S. News and World Report*, 27 April 1998, p. 23.

Even the real estate industry has recognized the changing dynamics and costs of sprawl. In their 1997 annual report, the Equitable Real Estate Management Company (now ERE Yarmouth) warns investors away from sprawling suburban development as an unsafe investment and recommends investors look instead to more urban, mixed-use development.

Environmental Costs

From 1970 to 1990 more than 30,000 square miles or 19 million acres of once rural land in the United States became urban.[14] This transformation has significant repercussions in terms of environmental health—increased air and water pollution, loss of farmland and wildlife habitat, flooding and erosion. In turn, these changes affect human health. In many places, air pollution gains from more efficient engines have been wiped out by the increase in the number of miles driven, as a result of sprawl. While California's population grew by 50 percent from 1970 to 1990 (and a number of pollution control laws went into effect), the vehicles miles traveled (VMT) increased 100 percent. The Seattle area population grew by 22 percent from 1980 to 1990 while VMT quadrupled in that same time period.[15]

Cars and other gas-powered vehicles, including lawn mowers, are major contributors to smog, and smog is linked to human health. In 13 cities that are ozone nonattainment areas, smog was blamed for 15,000 hospital admissions and 50,000 emergency room visits over a two-year period in the mid-1990s.[16]

Loss of Competitiveness

A community's competitiveness requires an ability to adapt to changing economic conditions. In the current economy, that means preserving a sense of place, creating vital centers of commerce, providing opportunities for all segments of the population, and preserving the environment.

Sprawl affects all these factors. A study published by the American Chemical Society showed that states with lower pollution levels and a better environment generally have more jobs and better socioeconomic conditions and are more attractive to new business.[17] Some businesses are already considering livability in their development decisions. For example, AT&T cited the community's commitment to quality of life and open space when it chose to relocate in Boulder, Colorado.[18]

Social Inequity

While sprawl degrades the quality of life of inner-city residents, it also depends to a large degree on financial subsidies borne in large measure by this population (see Economic Costs above).

Dispersed development also makes it necessary for people to drive cars if they are to have equal access to jobs and services, but many people cannot drive. In Denver, for example, one-third of the population is too young, too old, too poor, or physically unable to drive a car.[19] In Chicago, between 1980 and 1990, 81 percent of new jobs went to suburban areas where only 18 percent of the region's people live, and the city experienced growing joblessness and poverty.[20]

Quality of Life

Those people who do have cars spend large amounts of time in traffic: road congestion cost the nation $53 billion in wasted time and fuel in 1994.[21] According to the 1990 U.S. Census, 6 percent of Americans spend two hours or longer commuting (by car) each day; in some areas of the country, as many as 30 percent or more do so.[22]

In the Washington, D.C., area, citizens spend more than 59 hours per capita a year stuck in traffic. In Los Angeles, the average freeway speed is expected to fall to 11 miles per hour by 2010.[23] The cost to families in lost time, personal stress, and fatigue cannot be documented.

Many consumers are no longer happy with conventional suburban development. Smart growth offers an alternative: more walkable neighborhoods, smaller yards, greater accessibility, and stronger community life.

WHAT CAN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS DO TO MANAGE GROWTH?

State and federal policies have a great deal of influence on sprawl and growth. Local government attempts to manage growth can be stymied as contradictory federal or state policies support growth at the fringe. A 1996 executive order directed federal agencies first to consider locating facilities in downtown historic districts rather than on the urban fringe, but compliance is spotty. The loss of federal facilities, such as post offices, from downtown

areas can lead to a chain reaction of business failures or abandonment of the downtown. Federal water and sewer grants were designed to provide clean water and waste treatment to rural areas but such grants have often invited development further into the countryside.

Many state and federal subsidies feed sprawl. The bulk of the $217 billion transportation bill of 1998 supports highway construction. Car transportation is heavily subsidized. Tolls, gasoline taxes, and other user fees cover only about 70 percent of the direct cash costs of the nation's road system, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation. The rest is financed by general revenues.[24]

In addition, the ability of local governments to respond to the demands of growth is affected by state enabling legislation and the degree of flexibility that local governments have to direct growth. But short of changing federal and state policies, local governments can still influence development patterns in their jurisdiction or their region through a number of mechanisms. In some places, it is identifying the core vision for a community's future and implementing it. In other places, it is revitalizing the downtown or preserving the uniqueness of place. In still other places, as Mayor John Norquist of Milwaukee advocates, it is embracing design elements to create or influence particular social patterns.

Roles for the Local Government

It is important to tailor smart growth to the particular needs and unique characteristics of the individual community. This section outlines the basic roles that local governments can play and provides specific examples. The next section, Tools for Smart Growth, highlights specific methods that can be used.

Local government as educator. Local governments play an important role in creating political and public will for action and support by communicating the problem and possible solutions. Probably even more important, local governments can facilitate public development of a vision and, in the process, educate citizens and build ownership, commitment, and support for that vision.

For example, regional planning is often not popular with citizens. The promised benefits of regional cooperation, such as global competitiveness, tend to be abstract and distant while the costs are immediate. People want their region to thrive in the international arena but not at the expense of quality of life or higher taxes. Citizens need to know what is in it for them. What is really important to most citizens is the immediate, neighborhood-based concerns. To motivate citizens to support regional cooperation, the local government can reflect regional issues in the neighborhoods.

One way is to use a Visual Preference Survey™ (VPS). Citizens are shown images of their community and neighborhood and are asked to rank the

kind of places they like and would like in their city or town. Citizen preferences then form the basis for components of a jurisdiction's urban plan and design guidelines. Local governments can conduct surveys in partnership with community organizations. A description of how Carson City, Nevada, conducted a VPS on its cable access channel is included later in this report. The survey could also be placed on a local government Web site. Communities can also use "before and after" video images that illustrate the potential impact of a community's proposed urban design changes. Finally, the local newspaper or television stations can be powerful allies in communicating the vision that evolves through use of a VPS.

Local government as leader. Public policy decisions can encourage new development. Local governments build and maintain infrastructure; they purchase, manage, and sell land; they set standards, regulations, taxes, and fees; they procure large amounts of products and services; and they provide services, such as water, waste management, transportation, and social services, required by the community. Local governments can choose to maintain a presence in the town center, promote transportation options for their employees (both for commuting and for business within the jurisdiction), put infill sites to productive reuse, and create or maintain open space and civic spaces. Through these means, the municipality can determine where and how the community should invest in growth.

Political support for smart growth

The November 1998 elections included more than 240 ballot measures on open space and farmland preservation, smart growth, and related issues. Voters approved more than 72 percent of these measures.

A 1997 poll by the *Atlanta Journal Constitution* found that 62 percent of Atlanta area residents agreed that local governments should manage growth rather than leave land development to market forces. Sixty-five percent favored establishing an elected metrowide authority to handle regional problems such as transportation planning, water, and land-use issues.

In 1998, the governors of New Jersey and Maryland announced major land preservation and smart growth initiatives. In 1999, more than 25 governors set growth management-related goals. Many view smarter growth, preservation of open space, and reinvestment in urban centers as crucial to their states' future. Even some development and real estate industry groups are announcing broad campaigns in support of smart growth.

Coalitions are forming that bridge urban and suburban, even rural, interests. Examples include Ohio's First Suburbs Consortium and its farmland preservation task force; a coalition of Illinois legislators from urban and first-ring suburban districts working together to try to shift reliance for school funding away from property taxes and onto the state treasury; and a bipartisan urban caucus in the Michigan legislature that formed to examine state policies affecting urban disinvestment and sprawl.

Sources: Phyllis Myers, *Livability at the Ballot Box: State and Local Referenda on Parks, Conservation, and Smarter Growth, Election Day 1998* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, January 1999); *Livable Region Proposal: Vision 2020*, Atlanta, July 1997; Rob Gurwitt, "The Quest for Common Ground," *Governing*, June 1998, p. 21.

As one example, the village of Winthrop, Maine, issued bonds so that it could renovate its high school without state funds and keep the school in the town center. State funds were available for new construction but not for renovations of existing schools. The state standards also specified that high schools have 15 acres plus one acre for every 100 students, requiring a site of almost 30 acres for Winthrop. The village concluded that renovation of the existing school would cost about half as much as building a new school. In addition, students would remain integrated into the civic downtown, could continue to walk to school, and could continue to serve as volunteers in the nearby grade school. Finally, the existing location helped to maintain Winthrop's traditional New England village character.

Northampton County and the city of Cape Charles, Virginia, used municipal funds to create an eco-industrial park near the historic downtown. In an area rich with natural beauty and historical and cultural treasures, Northampton lacked jobs and opportunity for its residents. The city and county worked in partnership with citizens, civic organizations, and the business community to transform a 500-acre site that included brownfields into the country's first eco-industrial park. They also set aside a part of the parcel that had never been developed as a nature preserve and wildlife refuge.

Boulder, Colorado, created a State of the City Sustainability Report that provides a baseline study of its internal operations. The report summarizes local government programs and policies, measures trends such as the number of employees using alternative transportation and the amount of open space, and describes programs to improve the city's sustainability.

Local government as regulator. Visitors to Charleston, South Carolina, are charmed by the historic neighborhoods and mixed-use design of the gracious city. The South Carolina Coastal Conservation League hands tourists a brochure, "How You Can Take Charleston Home With You." It explains how Charleston's urban design principles could be applied elsewhere but also how regulations governing development in many jurisdictions prevent their implementation.

Local governments can review their zoning and planning codes and other regulations for elements that contribute to sprawl and can revise them to foster development that serves the needs of the community. Narrower streets and tighter curb cuts that benefit pedestrians might alarm local public safety officials, but local government officials can work with public safety officials to design for safety—of pedestrians as well as cars—while also designing for livability. Local codes can accommodate mixed uses explicitly, can include performance zoning criteria such as open space and landscaping provisions, can require demonstration of tangible impact before requiring developers to revise their proposals, and can establish a focus on approval of development.

Local government as convenor. Local governments can bring together stakeholders on growth and development through constructive dialogue. Too often, growth debates break down into battles between no-growth and pro-growth advocates. Local governments can convene people in a more productive process.

Olympia, Washington, initiated the Sustainable Community Roundtable, a community nonprofit organization. This group has helped facilitate cooperative growth management across the region through a regional land-use and transportation strategy that supports increased density, public transportation, open space, agricultural and forest lands protection, and better planned public services and utilities.

In other places, local governments have organized study circles to foster a discussion on growth in the community.

Local government as partner. The effects of uncontrolled growth are often regional. Policies of nearby jurisdictions have an impact on local growth and development, so it is important to work in partnership with nearby jurisdictions to better manage growth, whether through interjurisdictional agreements or modification of local policies. Local governments can also work in partnership with community groups and with the state and federal government.

Hillsborough County and the city of Tampa, Florida, agreed to cooperate to revitalize the city's urban core while discouraging the pressures of growth in valuable agricultural areas. In 1997, they established a joint approach to encourage infill development, renovation, and development within an urban development boundary. As part of the agreement, they preserved agricultural land and delicate ecosystems while providing 1,500 affordable housing units each year and replacing substandard homes.

Grantsville, Utah, incorporated into its master plan elements of a model sustainable plan that had been developed by a team of university students. The plan includes recommendations on urban growth policies to preserve the small, rural character of the town and to preserve the natural environment through infill development and reduced sprawl.

Tools for Smart Growth

Local governments have a number of tools at hand to direct growth to the areas most able to sustain it. Use of those tools or methods depends on other factors such as political will and public support or on the degree of home rule or state enabling legislation. But creative and innovative approaches can help energize the public and build political support.

Mixed-use development. Locating shops and restaurants, commercial areas, and jobs close to housing is mixed-use development. Mixed-use development helps reduce reliance on car travel, encourages other transportation options, and makes communities more "livable." Unfortunately, many local zoning and land-use regulations preclude locating commercial areas near residential neighborhoods.

Before the age of the automobile and mass transit, people lived near their jobs and businesses. Zoning and separation of land use arose out of a need to protect citizens from factories and hazardous industrial sites. Some zoning codes also stemmed from social policies. In the 1950s and 1960s, many municipalities wrote segregated-use codes that designated downtown districts for commercial development and

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Creative downtown development— Memphis, Tennessee

The city of Memphis and Shelby County, Tennessee, have worked together to sustain residential development in the heart of the city. Many existing hotels and office buildings have found new life as downtown housing. One infill development, Harbor Town, has been heralded as an example of creative downtown development as well as a model of traditional neighborhood development (see sidebar on new urbanism). Harbor Town was built on Mud Island, an area along the Mississippi and Wolf Rivers. The 320-acre island supported a mix of industrial and commercial uses, including barge loading and cement making, but it remained largely undeveloped because it lacked direct connection to downtown Memphis. In the early 1980s, a recreational and educational theme park, Mud Island River Park, was built on its southern tip. The park included the Mississippi River Museum and a World War II B-17 bomber, the Memphis Belle. In 1986, the city completed the Auction Avenue Bridge linking Mud Island to the downtown and opening the island to a $150 million mixed-use development project on 135 acres.

The project's land plan is based on a grid pattern of narrow streets, many of which terminate in small parks fashioned after village squares. The plan provides for a broad, highly integrated mix of housing types, sizes, and price ranges, along with a school, offices, retail shops and restaurants, a nature and jogging trail, and a yacht club. Finally, expecting that sales to families with children would be difficult because there was no public school, the developer initially offered homebuyers a lot-price concession of $1,200 per child. This strategy, in combination with the early development of a private school, proved successful: about 20 percent of the homebuyers to date have at least one child. As a result of this and other projects, Memphis can now claim approximately 22,000 residents in the four-square-mile downtown area.

Source: Based on an interview with John Lawrence, Memphis Center City Commission, Memphis, Tenn., April 8, 1999, and information from the Henry Turley Group Web site.

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actively discouraged, or even prohibited, market-rate housing downtown.

However, information age businesses operate without smokestacks. And mixing residential, commercial, and retail uses gives people easy access to shops, restaurants, and commercial centers. In fact, as mentioned earlier in this report, several recent surveys show that many people prefer well-designed mixed-use development. Many municipalities are rewriting their codes to create mixed-use overlay districts, streamlined variances, zones with special criteria, or project unit developments.

Compact development. Compact development serves many of the principles of smart growth: It can create neighborhoods that offer transportation options because multiple uses can be located near one another and transit can be cost-effective. It can foster more affordable housing because a variety of housing options can provide more choice. It can minimize infrastructure costs because it is cheaper to provide services to a compact neighborhood. It can also reduce the amount of time residents spend in their cars. A 1990 study by Florida traffic specialists compared a conventional subdivision with a more compact, mixed-use new urbanist development and found that the compact design would generate only 57 percent of the vehicle miles traveled by people in the conventional subdivision plan.[25]

Compact design can also help preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas. Finally, it can foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.

Tourists flock to places like Charleston, South Carolina; New Orleans, Louisiana; Alexandria, Virginia; San Francisco, California; Nantucket, Massachusetts; and New England villages because of their unique sense of place, achieved largely through a mix of uses and compact development. Yet many communities block this kind of development through zoning and development restrictions.

New developments with these characteristics are now cropping up. Addison, Texas, partnered with a local development firm to create a mixed-use district with a high-density urban neighborhood of 3,000 units, as well as supporting retail and employment along a proposed transit line. The Addison project features a grid of narrow streets, ten acres of pocket parks, and a town center.

Cluster development or open-space design concentrates development in one area of a parcel while leaving the remaining space open. The open space can protect green areas or natural systems, allowing for recreation, wildlife habitat preservation, or even agriculture. Cluster developments tend to have a

higher resale value than traditional development and may generate value for the community.

Housing prices tend to decrease as density increases. The Haile Plantation, a development near Gainesville, Florida, offers a variety of lot sizes and home prices. Many residences in moderate and lower income open-space developments are priced well below the national average.[26] However, local governments often need to adapt zoning and development codes to allow for such development.

Housing opportunities and choices. The desire for affordable housing has been one of the reasons that so many people flock to the suburbs. With cheap land and the bundle of subsidies that support suburban development, homes are often more affordable in outlying areas than in close-in neighborhoods. Most people, however, do not account for the other (often hidden) costs that are part of the suburban package.

Local governments can use smart growth principles to promote housing for a mix of incomes. As mentioned, more compact communities can also make housing more affordable: each unit requires less land, less site preparation, less infrastructure, and typically less floor and wall area. Affordable housing can also be included as "granny flats" or accessory flats above garages or in outbuildings.

Some communities include affordable housing requirements as part of their growth management plan. Key West, Florida, which limits the number of dwelling units built each year to either 7 percent of the total units that can be constructed before the island is built out or to 300 units, also requires that at least 40 percent of all residential housing units must be constructed as affordable housing, with annual rental rates less than 30 percent and sales prices less than three times the median household income. Developers must sign an agreement with the city guaranteeing that affordable units will remain affordable for a period of five to twenty years, depending on the project.

Finally, communities can design a mix of housing choices that reflect the incomes and needs of a range of age groups. Keeping older and younger residents together in integrated neighborhoods pays off in social benefits for both groups.

Walkable neighborhoods and transportation options. In large measure, accessibility depends on the mix of land uses and design elements that contribute to a pedestrian-friendly environment. A grocery store close to housing makes a bike ride a feasible alternative to the "burn a quart of gas to buy a quart of milk" drive.

Transportation comes in many forms. Cars are clearly one part of the mix, but walking and bicycling can get commuters to transit or to their destinations. Cities and towns in the Netherlands emphasize "appropriate modality," that is, cars, bicycles, transit, and walking all have their place in transportation design.[27]

New urbanism

New urbanism focuses on a community's physical infrastructure in the belief that community design can create or influence particular social patterns. Elements of new urbanist design include

- Walkable neighborhoods—all residents are within a quarter of a mile, or a five-minute walk, from public transit, so that they do not have to depend on private automobiles
- Integration of land uses within neighborhoods—housing, shops, workplaces, and schools are near one another

Basic tenets of new urbanism were outlined by leading architects, designers, and planners in the 1991 Ahwahnee Principles (see the appendix).

New urbanism encompasses two major design schemes for new communities: traditional neighborhood development (TND) and transit-oriented design (TOD). TNDs prescribe the physical form of the community through the use of a site-specific master plan and detailed codes that regulate the buildout of the community. Components include a finite village or neighborhood center that is within a five-minute walk from anywhere in the neighborhood, public open space, a mix of land uses, and high-density housing at the center. Neighborhoods are still designed for car access, but priority is placed on having a mix of options for mobility, a mix that offers alternatives to private motor vehicles.

TNDs often require a revision of local zoning and building codes. Because TNDs are new in many parts of the country, developers may have a hard time obtaining financing for them. However, as more TNDs are built, their benefits are being documented. At least 22 TNDs are under way in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

TODs also prescribe a compact, mixed-use community but require transit at the heart of the community. TODs include higher density at the core but assume low-density development such as single-family detached housing, low-intensity employment uses, large community parks a quarter mile beyond the center, or all of these. Such uses may help market the higher density of the TOD area and may help address preferences for single-family homes. TOD areas can have a significant effect on the amount of driving and cost of transportation. Peter Calthorpe's study of two San Francisco communities showed that in Rockridge, a transit-accessible and walkable neighborhood with eight units per acre, households averaged 15,000 vehicle miles traveled (VMT) annually. Households in Danville/San Ramon, a community with more typical sprawling development, registered 30,000 VMT each year. At an average cost of 30 cents per mile, Rockridge residents spent $4,500 less on transportation than their Danville counterparts. (For purposes of comparison, San Francisco households averaged 11,000 VMT.)

Source: William Fulton, *The New Urbanism: Hope or Hype for American Communities* (Cambridge, Mass.: Lincoln Institute for Land Policy, 1996); Peter Katz, "New Urbanism," in Willem van Vliet, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Housing* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1998), pp. 397-400; and Dwight Young, *Alternatives to Sprawl* (Cambridge, Mass.: Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 1995).

Higher densities support transit service. Well-designed, safe sidewalks encourage walking and use of transit. Bike lanes and safe integration with automobile traffic encourage bike riding.

Local governments can design to change behavior. Arlington County, Virginia, created land use and development guidelines for a subway stop that support a mix of commercial, office, and residential uses. Dense development is concentrated around the Metro station, tapering down to existing single-family residential neighborhoods. The county attracted developers and lenders by issuing industrial development bonds to co-finance a 3,200-car garage three blocks from the station. Sixty-nine percent of residents living within 500 feet of the station now commute to work by rail. Of the residents who work in Washington, D.C., 88 percent commute by rail.[28]

The city of Bozeman, Montana, adopted design objectives for its entry-way corridors that encourage pedestrian access and orientation as well as public open spaces. Bozeman even nudged Wal-Mart to modify its standard big-box design in several ways to make it distinctive, including the addition of a sidewalk for pedestrian access.

Pedestrian and bicycle-friendly neighborhoods may reduce the number of car trips. If residents can walk to the video or grocery store or bike to a restaurant, even infrequently, the number of car trips is reduced. Many people prefer to do errands on foot. In a national survey conducted by American Lives, Inc., a San Francisco-based consumer research firm, more than 80 percent of those surveyed said that they would accept higher home prices in a neighborhood with small corner stores. Almost 75 percent said they would prefer to live in a community "where [they] can walk and bicycle everywhere."[29]

Local governments can also eliminate or reduce parking requirements that contribute to sprawl. Parking lots often require significant amounts of land that stretch the distances between structures so that walking becomes prohibitive. Because of their expense, parking lot requirements in Atlanta were shown to provide a major barrier to development in the urban core.[30] Shared parking, combined with transit, may promote transit use and may reduce the amount of land devoted solely to parking.

To make walking and biking a real option, communities can employ several "best practices":

Preserving open space—Gunnison County, Colorado

Gunnison County is a rural county of 12,000 people, located 120 miles southwest of Denver. Between 1990 and 1995, the population grew by 16.1 percent. This rapid growth has resulted in what Crested Butte town manager Bill Crank calls a "bare knuckles fight" between the people moving into the county and those who are interested in preserving the county's traditional way of life. Some of the conflict was diffused by a series of dialogues between the ranching community and county newcomers and the use of new tools to create balance.

In northern Gunnison County, around Crested Butte, where the number of housing units rose 14 percent between 1993 and 1995, efforts to guide growth have relied on both planning and land protection. In 1991, Crested Butte residents approved a 1.5 percent real estate transfer tax to fund open-space acquisition and, with the help of the Trust for Public Land (TPL), organized an independent land trust to hold easements and properties that might be purchased with the new money. So far, Crested Butte and the Crested Butte Land Trust have protected 642 acres of open space. In its largest effort with the town, TPL negotiated, bought, and financed 184 acres previously considered for a 300-home development at the very doorstep of the town. Part of this land will be used for a new high school, but about 150 acres will remain in permanent open space.

In their planning efforts, Crested Butte officials have stressed clustered development, an increasingly popular way of accommodating growth while protecting open space in the rural West. Maps were created to show where development would be unsuitable because of geology, wetlands, avalanche or wildfire danger, visual resources, or wildlife habitat. For developable areas, officials stipulated that as much as five acres of open space be protected for every housing unit built. Town planning documents include requirements for parks, trails, and open space and stipulate that 25 percent of new residential units must be affordable housing.

Clustered development techniques are also helping to preserve land in more rural parts of Gunnison County. While under state law county planners can not prevent the subdivision of lots 35 acres or larger, planners do encourage clustered development through the subdivision review process. One recent proposal calls for 17 houses on 290 acres; another for 30 houses on 1,400 acres. In both cases, the remaining open space can be leased for agriculture.

Perhaps the most promising efforts to guide growth and preserve agriculture in Gunnison County have been launched by a small group of citizens calling themselves the Gunnison Ranching Legacy Project. In 1995, the group began asking local ranchers what types of conservation mechanisms might help keep family ranches in agriculture. The research is being funded in part by a $28,000 planning grant from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), which may eventually grant more money to accomplish the actual preservation. In 1996, GOCO granted $6 million for a similar community-based land-protection effort in the Yampa River Valley, in the northwest corner of the state. Purchase of development rights figures prominently in that program.

So far, the Gunnison Ranching Legacy Project has contacted 75 ranching families that control 65,000 acres of agricultural land. "We've had interest from every valley in the Gunnison Basin," says local biologist Susan Lohr, who has been part of the effort. "This is the first time there's been funding to actually buy development rights instead of asking ranch families to donate them, which most of them are not in a situation to do. But in many cases, ranchers really care for their land and want to protect it. Now it looks like we might be able to help."

Whether such efforts will ultimately preserve the qualities of their community most prized by Gunnison County residents remains to be seen. Here, as elsewhere in the booming West, time is short and the stakes are high. "I think the biggest fear is that we're going to wake up some morning and it's all going to have changed," says former Gunnison city manager Bob Filson. "I don't think the barn door has closed yet in Gunnison County. I think there's still hope to keep this from becoming a rich person's playground, to keep it available to folks, to keep it pretty."

Source: William Poole, "Corralling the Boom," *Land and People* (Trust for Public Land, fall 1996).

- Provide sidewalks along through-streets in developed areas.
- Use traffic-calming measures to slow traffic and make streets safer for pedestrians.
- Allow narrow streets (see sidebar on page 8).
- Use a grid system of streets to provide multiple options for cars and pedestrians—allowing numerous cut-through options to get from here to there.
- Encourage or require office buildings to provide showering and changing facilities for employees who commute by bicycle.

Preservation of open space. Issues such as long-term maintenance and funding for acquisition or preservation of open space can be addressed creatively. Local governments need not be the owner of open space to realize its benefits for the community. They can establish partnerships with conservation groups and land trusts to acquire land, administer its protection, or ensure long-term maintenance. State legislation determines which strategies will be most useful for a particular local government.

The first step in preserving open space is identifying what kinds of open space the community

needs, what land should have top priority, and how land could serve multiple values at once.

Conservation easements are a tool for open-space preservation. A conservation easement is a partial interest in private property that is transferred by gift or purchase to a government entity or a nonprofit organization. Easements help remove the development pressure from prime agricultural land and unique ecosystems by separating the right to development from other property rights. According to the Land Trust Alliance, about 740,000 acres of land are covered by conservation easements. Maryland alone has about 70,000 acres.[31] Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, has preserved more than 30,000 acres of prime farmland through a combination of urban growth boundaries and easements.[32]

In 1992, the GreenSpace Alliance (GSA) convened stakeholders in the Philadelphia region to work together to preserve the region's open space. GSA is made up of a 25-member steering committee of land trust preservationists, developers, planners, elected or appointed city and county officials, and government agencies. Pennsylvania's "fair-share" laws discourage regional and county-level planning by requiring local governments to accommodate a portion of the region's total expected growth in all zone types. These laws led to difficulties in trying to accommodate all land uses within the jurisdiction's bounds. GSA pioneered the development of "jointures," zoning structures that allow municipalities to spread required land uses across their combined territories. The North Chester County Federation Project is applying jointures by concentrating development while preserving agricultural and other environmentally sensitive lands. And Buckingham Township is promoting municipal land-use regulation that increases density in some areas while protecting open space elsewhere.

Development in existing communities. As explained earlier, many government policies support or even subsidize growth on the fringe of established communities. And yet, downtown areas represent the historical focal point of the community and are usually the location of civic and business headquarters, historic buildings and streetscapes, compact and walkable streets, and higher-density housing. Downtowns also provide a sense of community uniqueness. In addition, downtown areas often provide ready access to infrastructure. Maintenance or revitalization of these areas is important to maintain community businesses, services, and population. Some places without a village center, such as Schaumburg, Illinois, tired of being called "sterile and soulless," are undertaking efforts to create a center.

Local governments can promote commercial and residential development, or infill and brownfield redevelopment, in downtown areas. Downtown revitalization strategies can include the formation of a business improvement district or other cooperative association of business owners, revival of downtown housing, tax relief for businesses, catalyst projects such as sports or cultural venues, identification of market niches that are not being served, and business incubation. The first step to revitalizing the downtown is identifying the unique character of the community. Historic buildings and streets often reflect community character and should be considered along with other physical assets.

Main Street programs. The local business and political leaders of Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin, formed Sheboygan Falls Main Street, Inc. (SFMS), to organize its renewal efforts and take advantage of state-provided technical assistance, training, and advice. SFMS recruited volunteers to help property owners fix up their buildings. It converted a dilapidated woolen mill to affordable housing. It created a new center of small offices from three vacant buildings. As a result of those efforts, downtown vacancy rates dropped from 30 percent to 1 percent. The project created a 19 percent increase in jobs (89 new jobs) and a 30 percent increase in new businesses (42 new businesses). For every dollar the city spent, private businesses and investors contributed $104.[33]

Split-rate tax. Some cities have used a "split-rate" property tax to encourage development in the center city. Pittsburgh taxes building values at one-sixth the rate for land values. The split-rate tax promotes clustering of development adjacent to existing infrastructure, prevents land speculation, and reduces development pressure on outlying areas. It discourages owners from leaving land in the city vacant, including parking lots—the higher taxes on undeveloped land provide more incentive to develop rather than hold. Indeed, contrary to national trends, development inside Pittsburgh's city limits exceeded development rates in the suburbs. Fifteen other Pennsylvania cities that have adopted the split-rate tax have seen more development than neighboring cities.[34]

Downtown housing. Both housing and commercial operations are necessary components in a safe and lively downtown. Downtown housing provides a market for a number of community services necessary to sustain a vibrant 24-hour streetscape. Downtown housing can attract a blend of residents. Memphis's downtown housing, for example, includes a mix of low-income tenants and wealthier residents, empty-nesters, and students, single adults, and young couples.

Washington, D.C., encourages residential development in the city by offering a one-time tax credit of $5,000 for home purchases. Baltimore, Maryland, created a downtown housing council that provides property tax relief, maintains a loan fund, and employs a downtown housing coordinator. The state of

Reusing vacant buildings—Aiken, South Carolina

Under a program called Aiken 2000, city manager Steven Thompson and the city council put together a package of cash or tax incentives aimed at encouraging occupancy of vacant commercial buildings, economic development in the central business district, and a higher population density downtown. Under the program, developers and owners of commercial buildings can qualify for a cash payment or a tax deferment for starting new construction downtown or for moving a new business into a vacant building. The incentive is doubled for those who add apartments in the upper floors of commercial buildings within a targeted downtown area. Under a related plan, the city has begun a ten-year tax break for property owners who restore historic buildings downtown.

For those who meet the Aiken 2000 guidelines for new construction, the city will pay the property taxes through 1999—beginning as soon as construction is completed. The incentive check will cover new taxes generated as the result of the construction or renovation.

Both commercial and residential properties can qualify for this incentive. Apartments qualify at twice the incentive rate for other construction. All projects must be located within the city's downtown tax increment financing district.

Moving back into a vacant commercial building can bring a cash incentive for up to five years. Thompson says that the incentive for moving into a vacant building downtown "is intended to bring business back into these buildings and to reduce sprawl." There are a few more rules to this part of the plan. The building must be adapted for—or have been last put to—commercial use. It must have been vacant continuously for at least two calendar years, during which time it must also have been on the market. It must change ownership and can qualify only once. Finally, the new owner must use the property as a bona fide business in any way that fits the zoning for that building.

The cash incentives for using an empty commercial building are based on the number of years the building has been continuously vacant and marketed. If it has been vacant for five or more years, the new property owner could be reimbursed each year for all city real property taxes paid over the next five years.

Another downtown development incentive comes from the Aiken Corporation, a nonprofit organization formed to stimulate both commercial and residential development downtown. Under its plan, the group will provide up to $5,000 per unit as a no-interest loan to owners of downtown property that convert vacant space into housing. The primary goal is to create second-floor apartments above downtown stores. Payback of the loan will be over a maximum of five years. The Aiken Corporation also will assist property owners with permitting and variance issues involved in the conversion to apartments, and other city financial incentives may be available.

Source: Reprinted with permission from Stephen D. Hale, *Urban Land* (Washington, D.C.: Urban Land Institute, June 1998).

Maryland has increased a tax credit and created new financial incentives to encourage downtown housing development. Tulsa, Oklahoma, earmarks some of its sales tax revenue for downtown housing. Kingston, Ontario, created a low-interest revolving loan program to encourage the conversion of vacant downtown commercial space into residential units.

Tax incentives. The Memphis Center City Commission (CCC), a downtown redevelopment agency and business improvement district, was formed by the city of Memphis and Shelby County, Tennessee. The CCC offers predevelopment tax rates for both commercial and residential infill development and renovation in the downtown. Essentially a tax freeze, this mechanism encourages the development of large, revenue-generating projects by keeping taxes at predevelopment rates. Closing fees generated by the real estate transactions in preparation for large-scale development fund a development loan program to assist smaller property owners with renovation.

Urban growth boundaries. Long used in Oregon as a growth management tool, urban growth boundaries are now used in more than 50 cities and counties across the country, including more than a dozen cities in the San Francisco Bay area. Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, recently became the first county in Pennsylvania to introduce growth boundaries. As of April 1999, more than 19 cities in Lancaster County have them. Lititz Borough, for example, created an urban growth boundary to promote development in areas already served by utilities. Lititz also uses a tax abatement program for new businesses to promote infill development in its central business and historic district.

A related concept is the *urban service boundary*, the limit of a jurisdiction's service area. Lancaster, California, adopted a municipal urban service boundary to prevent municipal funds from being used to extend utilities outside the designated urban core. Development can still take place, but the local government will not subsidize it. Urban growth boundaries and urban service boundaries both provide a physical border for development by removing development pressures on the land outside the boundary and by conserving infrastructure investments.

Infill development. Urban areas often have parcels of land that have been overlooked or abandoned. These parcels—whether undeveloped or ripe for redevelopment—are often near transit, downtown areas, and markets and are usually served by existing utilities and other infrastructure. Development at some infill sites may be complicated by perceived or actual contamination, but many communities have met such challenges through creative strategies. The federal government has provided funding for brownfield redevelopment. Several jurisdictions across the country have showcase projects. (See ICMA's May 1997 MIS Report "Brownfields: Options and Opportunities" for case studies.)

The closures of military bases and a municipal airport, as well as the transformation of a former railyard, have provided Denver with vast opportunities for infill development. The 7.5-square-mile site of former Stapleton Airport is being redeveloped as a regional employment center that will support more than 30,000 jobs with transit access for 25,000 residents. The development's urban villages, designed with a density of 12 units per acre, will support public transportation. A wildlife preserve or open space crosses one-third of the area. To encourage redevelopment of the site, the city and county of Denver entered into an agreement with the Denver Urban Renewal Authority to create a nonprofit development corporation that is intended to become financially self-sufficient from revenue generation.

Reusing vacant buildings. Just like vacant land, vacant, abandoned, and underused buildings can be reused. Commercial structures can find new life as downtown housing (see section on downtown housing above) and former government buildings can house businesses. Even industrial building can be converted to new purposes. At Denver's Stapleton site old airport hangars are finding new life as a roller skating rink and a film studio.

Brownfields redevelopment. More than 500,000 brownfield sites have been identified in U.S. cities. The U.S. Conference of Mayors estimates that the brownfields in just 33 major cities represent more than $200 million in lost tax revenues.[35] The expense of cleaning up those sites is one reason developers prefer the suburban fringe to the urban core. Local governments can provide incentives to help offset the costs of clean up and liability at contaminated sites.

For example, Baltimore, Maryland, is developing an eco-industrial park (EIP) on a 1300-acre brownfield site. Approximately 60 businesses already operate within the EIP's primary boundary. With ready intermodal transportation and mass transit opportunities available at the site, the city and county are working together to streamline development permits for the site, to encourage more businesses to come. In addition, city departments and the Baltimore Development Corporation are working together to develop an inventory of vacant and underused industrial properties throughout the city. When fully developed, it will serve as a tool for economic redevelopment and planning. Users can query for sites with desired specifications and search for opportunities to assemble developable sites. Interface with other systems such as Baltimore's real property files is also planned.

Predictable, fair, and cost-effective development decisions. Local governments can make the development process more certain through its rules and regulations. The market for suburban development is relatively certain. Many developers are used to creating the suburban home "product." To shift to downtown or infill development, developers need a predictable process with fair rules. Delays and uncertainties cost money. Local governments can help provide certainty by specifying the type and location of desired development and by adopting codes and ordinances that support those plans. For example, they can streamline the development permits process, or at least put development with desirable design elements on a fast track.

A quick permit process can be an attractive economic lure and can increase the area's competitive edge, whether the local government is pursuing infill development or simply trying to retain current businesses. As stated in the Ahwahnee principles (see the appendix), plans should follow specific standards outlined by the local government. Those that do should proceed with minimal delay.

The speed of development had begun to slow in Silicon Valley in 1992, and the local business community was concerned that the area would lose its competitive edge. Business leaders felt stymied by the construction permitting process. In a region of 27 cities and 2 counties, each jurisdiction had different building codes and permit review processes. The business leaders met with city managers to tell them they needed to modify their permit processes or risk losing business. The managers, in turn, challenged the companies to work with the local governments to modify the permit process.

As a result, Milpitas, chosen as the pilot city, quickly found ways to cut the time required for permit processes from weeks to hours. San Carlos reduced business registration from three weeks to ten minutes. Local governments and private companies also tackled the building code. The jurisdictions of the region met and cut the special amendments to the building codes from 400 to 14. Finally, they worked together on an all-electronic permitting process. The streamlining and building code amendments have reduced the time necessary to process permits in the participating jurisdictions from two or three months to less than a week. Local governments are touting their speedy permit processing to recruit higher quality businesses and convince existing businesses to stay.[36]

Citizen participation in smart growth planning

Local governments can use a variety of tools to involve citizens in development and planning decisions, including:

- Computer simulations of various development scenarios
- Guided tours of affected areas
- Design charrettes to determine possible futures
- Visual Preference Surveys™
- Visioning exercises
- Public relations and media campaigns
- Facilitated meetings
- Formal neighborhood groups
- Youth involvement
- Discussion groups such as study circles.

Source: C. Nicholas Moore and Dave Davis, *Participation Tools for Better Land-Use Planning: Techniques and Case Studies*, 2nd edition (Local Government Commission's Center for Livable Communities, June 1997).

Community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions. Public participation is essential to smart growth. One of the most basic objectives of smart growth is to identify and create development that serves the needs of the community. The community vision can then be incorporated into plans, development regulations, and other initiatives. To engage the community, local governments can use visioning exercises, design charrettes, Visual Preference Surveys™ (VPS), computer simulations, neighborhood planning, and so forth. Even children can—and should—be involved through school curriculum or surveys or "box city" exercises. The processes engage, and help educate, citizens. At the same time they often build a commitment for smart growth by creating ownership of the process.

Carson City, Nevada, used a VPS in 1994 to engage its citizens in land-use decisions. Carson City, a consolidated city/county government with 50,000 people, had been experiencing growth percentages in the double digits. With major development projects in the works, Carson City staff made slide presentations at community meetings to show citizens various site and land-use concepts and elicit responses from participants on their likes and dislikes. The slide presentation was also shown on a local community-access television channel. Local newspapers and radio stations promoted participation in the survey. More than 530 residents took part. As a result of the survey's findings, Carson City's board of supervisors increased its commitment to preserving open space and land use planning.

Local governments can often work with the media to communicate citizen input or proposed development plans. Residents of Sarasota County, Florida, participated in updating the county's vision and comprehensive plan. The county held a series of town meetings and a three-day design charrette. The *Sarasota Herald Tribune* included a special Sunday supplement on the issues raised in the charrette. The paper's publisher held a private meeting of key representatives of the business and environmental communities to build better understanding and communication between these groups and develop support for including the citizens' vision in official plans.

Orlando, Florida, helped its neighborhoods create project-specific neighborhood priorities. The city brought community planning workshops to neighborhoods to assess neighborhood conditions and develop solutions. The city also provided a pattern book of house plans that feature design elements appropriate for the Florida climate (such as prominent porches and overhanging eaves) and suit a variety of incomes. Plans are included for "shotgun" cottages of 1,000 square feet as well as for gracious two-story homes of 2,000 or more square feet.

The Importance of Regionalism

Fostering smart growth requires looking beyond the front gate to the neighboring community and even the community on the other side of the metropolitan area. While many smart growth principles can be instituted within a single local government, a regional approach is going to strengthen the overall plan and the region's competitive edge. Indeed, one jurisdiction's plans for smart growth may be stymied or develop unintended consequences because of the actions of neighboring jurisdictions.

There may be untapped support for regional solutions and action. The Citizens League Research Institute reported that 75 percent of residents of the Greater Cleveland area believe that local elected officials should make decisions based on what is good for the region. Seventy-one percent also supported cooperative efforts between local governments to solve problems.[37] In 1997, the Atlanta Regional Commission held forums to discuss development in the region. Of the more than six hundred people who attended, 66 percent preferred a concentrated development pattern, 21 percent wanted a corridor development pattern, and only 4 percent favored a continuation of sprawl.[38]

One approach is to develop both a regional strategic plan and accompanying neighborhood level plans. The regional plan should include physical design recommendations for the neighborhoods and districts that are determined to be of regional significance. But each of the region's neighborhoods should be encouraged to develop its own detailed neighborhood plan. Catalyst projects supported at the regional level, such as sports arenas or museums, can jump-start revitalization in neighborhoods.

The Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area uses a formal revenue-sharing structure to address the inequities of infrastructure investments that subsidize growth in outlying areas while leaving increased poverty and decaying substructures in the urban core. The region built a coalition to enact regional reforms in tax-base sharing, land-use planning, regional governance, and fair housing. To make property tax base growth more equitable across the region, 40 percent of the growth of the commercial and industrial tax base is pooled and redistributed to communities according to their inverse net tax capacity. The region has also consolidated all waste control, transit, and land-use functions into a single regional agency. A housing regulation sets priorities for regional infrastructure construction on the basis of individual communities' commitment to affordable housing. And the region has reduced development pressure on agricultural lands by protecting farmers from storm sewer and public road assessments.

APPENDIX: AHWAHNEE PRINCIPLES FOR LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

In 1991, a group of developers, architects, planners, and urban designers brought together by the Local Government Commission devised key community and regional principles that outlined alternatives to sprawl. Presented at a conference of local elected officials at the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite, the Ahwahnee Principles have become a bedrock of new urbanism.

Preamble

Existing patterns of urban and suburban development seriously impair our quality of life. The symptoms are:

- More congestion and air pollution resulting from our increased dependence on automobiles
- The loss of precious open space
- The need for costly improvements to roads and public services
- The inequitable distribution of economic resources
- The loss of a sense of community.

By drawing on the best from the past and the present, we can, first, infill existing communities and, second, plan new communities that will more successfully serve the needs of those who live and work within them. Such planning should adhere to these fundamental principles:

Community Principles:

1. All planning should be in the form of complete and integrated communities containing housing, shops, work places, schools, parks, and civic facilities essential to the daily life of the residents.
2. Community size should be designed so that housing, jobs, daily needs, and other activities are within easy walking distance of each other.
3. As many activities as possible should be located within easy walking distance of transit stops.
4. A community should contain a diversity of housing types to enable citizens from a wide range of economic levels and age groups to live within its boundaries.
5. Businesses within the community should provide a range of job types for the community residents.

6. The location and character of the community should be consistent with a larger transit network.
7. The community should have a center focus that combines commercial, civic, cultural, and recreational uses.
8. The community should contain an ample supply of specialized open space in the form of squares, greens, and parks whose frequent use is encouraged through placement and design.
9. Public spaces should be designed to encourage the attention and presence of people at all hours of the day and night.
10. Each community or cluster of communities should have a well-defined edge, such as agricultural greenbelts or wildlife corridors, permanently protected from development.
11. Streets, pedestrians paths, and bike paths should contribute to a system of fully connected and interesting routes to all destinations. Their design should encourage pedestrian and bicycle use by being small and spatially defined by buildings, trees, and lighting; and by discouraging high speed traffic.
12. Wherever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of the community should be preserved with superior examples contained within parks or greenbelts.
13. The community design should help conserve resources and minimize waste.
14. Communities should provide for the efficient use of water through the use of natural drainage, drought tolerant landscaping, and recycling.
15. The street orientation, the placement of buildings, and the use of shading should contribute to the energy efficiency of the community.

Regional Principles:

1. The regional land-use planning structure should be integrated within a larger transportation network built around transit rather than freeways.
2. Regions should be bounded by and provide a continuous system of greenbelt/wildlife corridors to be determined by natural conditions.
3. Regional institutions and services (government, stadiums, museums, etc.) should be located in the urban core.
4. Materials and methods of construction should be specific to the region, exhibiting continuity of history and culture and compatibility with the climate, to encourage the development of local character and community identity.

Implementation Strategy

1. The general plan should be updated to incorporate the above principles.
2. Rather than allowing developer-initiated, piecemeal development, local governments should take charge of the planning process. General plans should designate where new growth, infill, or redevelopment will be allowed.
3. Prior to any development, a specific plan should be prepared based on these principles. With the adoption of the specific plans, complying projects could proceed with minimal delay.
4. Plans should be developed through an open process, and participants in the process should be provided visual models of all planning proposals.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Organizations

The Smart Growth Network is a coalition of developers, planners, government officials, lending institutions, community development organizations, architects, environmentalists and community activists. The 21 partner organizations include ICMA, Urban Land Institute, American Planning Association, American Farmland Trust, National Association of Counties, Trust for Public Land, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The network's purpose is to build coalitions and partnerships, develop information and analytical tools and programs, and establish dialogue among development stakeholders, in order to encourage more environmentally and fiscally responsible land use, growth and development. Begun in 1995, the network now has more than 500 members. Members receive the smart growth video, *Getting Smart!*; a bimonthly newsletter covering smart growth topics; a membership kit that contains two primers on smart growth and other materials throughout the year, and notification of regional conferences and workshops. For membership information, contact Noah A. Simon at ICMA, 777 North Capitol St., NE, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20002; 202/962-3591; *nsimon@icma.org* or www.smartgrowth.org.

The Joint Center for Sustainable Communities is a collaboration between the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National Association of Counties. Its primary mission is to provide a forum for cities and counties to work together to develop long-term policies and programs that will lead to job growth, environmental stewardship, and social equity. The center helps local elected officials build sustainable communities through community leadership initiatives, technical assistance, and training. Contact Nick Keller at National Association of Counties, 440 First St., NW, Washington, DC 20001; 202/942-4224; http://www.usmayors.org/sustainable.

The Local Government Commission is a 20-year-old nonprofit membership organization that offers education, training, and technical assistance to local areas seeking to implement innovative long-term solutions that further economically and environmentally sustainable land-use patterns. The LGC began working on land use and community livability issues in 1991 with the drafting of the Ahwahnee Principles for Resource-Efficient Communities. Through its national initiative, the Center for Livable Communities, the LGC offers assistance on key issues, including compact development, infill development, transit-oriented and mixed-use development, and public participation tools. The LGC also produces slide presentations, workshops, and conferences, and through the Center's hotline (800/290-8202), it offers resources, networking, and referrals, including guidebooks on residential street design and smart economic development. For more information, contact Paul Zykofsky at LGC, 1414 K Street, Suite 250, Sacramento, CA 95814; 916/448-1198; http://www.lgc.org.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation formed the National Main Street Center in 1980 to help local communities reclaim their downtowns. This comprehensive economic development program helps downtowns use their unique sense of place, including their historic buildings, to gain a business advantage. The program provides training, technical assistance, and other activities. For more information, contact the National Main Street Center, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036; 202/588-6219.

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) is a nonprofit education and research institute whose mission is to provide responsible leadership in the use of land. ULI cosponsors an annual Partners for Smart Growth conference. ULI also conducts regional conferences and is focusing research efforts on smart growth. For more information, contact Michael Pawlukiewicz at ULI, 1025 Thomas Jefferson St., NW, Suite 500-West, Washington, DC 20007; 202/624-7028; http://www.uli.org.

Publications

Together with the Florida Design Initiative, ICMA has compiled a list of useful resources, including books, articles, videos, CD-ROMs, Web sites, and other materials related to smart growth for local governments. To do an online search, access the Web site at http://sustainable.state.fl.us.

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