SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES

Smart growth development is guided by a set of principles that promote strong communities offering a range of opportunities for all residents. These principles ensure a spectrum of housing, employment and transportation choices within walkable and livable neighborhoods.

MIXED LAND USES
The availability of homes, offices and residences in close proximity allows residents to work and shop close to home. A mixture of land uses promotes job creation, encourages healthy lifestyles and reduces dependence on the automobile.

COMPACT DEVELOPMENT
Building compactly maximizes energy efficiency while minimizing land consumption. Buildings with reduced footprints enable more land to be reserved for open space and recreation, as well as for absorbing stormwater. Compact development also increases the viability of public transit.

OPEN SPACE AND FARMLAND PRESERVATION
Open spaces, ecological resources and agricultural land are necessary parts of the community. Ready access to the natural environment and undeveloped land is an integral part of high-quality places.

WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOODS
Neighborhoods designed for pedestrians allow for less dependence on the automobile. In walkable neighborhoods, difficult street crossings and dead-end streets are minimized, and a network of interconnected streets and sidewalks is provided for pedestrians, vehicles and cyclists.

TRANSPORTATION CHOICES
Communities with a broad range of mobility options allow all residents to enjoy comfortable, independent mobility. Public transit, bicycle facilities and pedestrian-oriented streets can lead to improvements in community health, energy conservation and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

PREDICTABLE DEVELOPMENT DECISIONS
The practice of smart growth is dependent on private sector investment. Local governments can promote quality development by providing economic incentives for innovative projects, investing in vital infrastructure and maintaining efficient land use policies.

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION
To create great places, development should reflect the desires of the community. Collaboration between residents, developers and civic leaders promotes development that fits the community’s sense of how it wants to grow.

RANGE OF HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES
Great neighborhoods are composed of a diverse range of residents. Communities with a diversity of housing types, densities and levels of affordability meet the needs of families, singles, fixed-income households and residents with unique needs, such as the elderly.

DEVELOPMENT IN EXISTING COMMUNITIES
Locating new development within existing communities reduces sprawl and conserves open space and agricultural land. More importantly, infill development takes advantage of existing services and infrastructure while strengthening or revitalizing existing neighborhoods.

DISTINCTIVE, ATTRACTIVE COMMUNITIES
Communities with distinctive neighborhood character are desirable for residents, visitors and workers alike. Memorable places are designed with a careful understanding of their topographic and climatic contexts, as well as the character of existing development.