Smart Growth Encyclopedia Article

Smart Growth

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Smart Growth

The "smart growth" movement arose in the 1990s to combat the perceived negative aspects of the dominant growth patterns of the time: rapidly spreading development that tended to draw people and resources away from existing neighborhoods and created new, look-alike communities where vehicle use was mandatory and walking was discouraged. Proponents of smart growth—a group that includes city planners, environmentalists, urban designers, neighborhood activists, and others—do not try to stop development, but instead work to make development improve life in existing cities and towns, rather than degrade it. They generally agree on several core principles:

1. Revitalizing communities by directing public investment toward areas where the **infrastructure** to support development is already in place or planned.
2. Creating walkable neighborhoods by locating housing, shopping, schools, and offices in closer proximity to each other and providing sidewalks and attractive streetscapes.
3. Offering a choice in transportation modes, whether by foot, car, bike, bus, or train.
4. Involving citizens in deciding how and where their community should grow.
5. Fostering distinctive, attractive communities with a unique sense of place.
6. Providing housing for people of all income levels in close proximity to jobs and activities.
7. Preserving open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.
8. Saving taxpayers the unnecessary cost of building the infrastructure required to support spread-out development.

Internet Resource

Smart Growth Online. Available from http://www.smartgrowth.org.