

# LG Division of Local Government Services

## Smart Growth



David A. Paterson  
Governor

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Secretary of State

The Department of State defends the public's safety, protects and develops a sustainable environment, strengthens local communities, and serves the business community.

The Office of the Secretary of State was established in 1778, making it, other than the Offices of Governor and Lieutenant Governor, the oldest agency in the administration of New York State government. Known as the "Keeper of Records" for more than two centuries, the Department of State continues to perform its historic responsibilities, as well as oversee a wide range of additional functions and evolving programs.

The Division of Local Government Services provides training and technical assistance to local governments and community organizations throughout the state, and helps local officials to solve problems involving basic powers and duties, public works, municipal organization, planning, land use and regulatory controls, and community development. One of the goals of the Division is to serve as a principle resource for New York local governments.

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## Smart Growth Protects the Environment

Sprawling development patterns consume farmland and open space at an alarming rate. Upstate New York, for example, has experienced "Sprawl Without Growth;" that is, developed land increased 30% between 1982 and 1997, while the population increased just 2.6%. Most parts of the state have experienced a similar imbalance between the rate of development and the rate of population growth.

These development patterns are simply not sustainable – economically, fiscally or environmentally. And if they are allowed to continue unchecked, vital natural resources, ecosystems and open space will be severely threatened.

The way we plan and build our communities also has an effect on global warming. Buildings account for 40% of all greenhouse gases in the U.S. Another third comes from automobile travel, which increases with sprawling, automobile-dominated development patterns.

Smart Growth helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and reverse global warming, in two important ways: by promoting "green" buildings and by designing communities that reduce the amount of miles we must drive.



## Smart Growth

The Governor's Smart Growth Cabinet was created by Executive Order in December 2007. The Cabinet consists of representatives from all state agencies that affect land use. The Department of State's Division of Local Government works with state agencies and local governments to carry out the Governor's vision for Smart Growth.

## What is Smart Growth?

Smart Growth is sensible, planned growth that integrates economic development and community quality-of-life. Smart Growth encourages growth in developed areas with existing infrastructure to sustain it -- municipal centers, "Main Streets," urban cores, historic districts, hamlets, and older "first-ring" suburbs. Communities and regions built on Smart Growth principles are becoming increasingly attractive to workers and businesses.

## Top Principles of Smart Growth

- Compact, Mixed-Use Community Design
- Re-Use and Re-Development of Existing Buildings
- Regional Planning
- "Green" Buildings and Infrastructure
- Mobility Choices — Walking, Biking, Public Transit
- Well-Planned and Well-Maintained Parks and Public Spaces
- Targeted Investments in Affordable Housing
- Age-Integrated Communities
- Collaborative, "Bottom-Up", Stakeholder-Driven Planning

## Smart Growth is Smart Business

Smart Growth creates community quality-of-life. And community quality-of-life has become an engine that drives economic development in the Innovation Economy -- a high-tech, knowledge-based economy that thrives on innovative solutions in an increasingly competitive global market-place.

Market trends, demographic shifts and economic indicators favor the types of communities that Smart Growth builds. For example, the young "Knowledge Workers," who fuel the Innovation Economy, are choosing to live in interesting, attractive places with access to outdoor recreation and vibrant downtowns. At the same time, businesses are using quality-of-life factors in deciding where to locate.

Smart Growth also promotes regional planning and inter-municipal collaboration. Many towns and cities are finding it harder to compete on their own in an increasingly global and competitive market; in fact, economists are saying that the region has become the primary unit of economic competitiveness in the Innovation Economy. In this regard, Smart Growth will help New York remain economically competitive in the 21st Century.

## Smart Growth and Transportation

State and federal transportation policies have had an enormous impact on our development patterns. America's highway system, for instance, opened up tremendous housing and development opportunities in the suburbs, offering families what was once *The American Dream* -- a large house on a large lot with plenty of green space and little traffic, all far from the cities they left behind.

But 50 years of ever-expanding roads and highways has also created widespread sprawl. And sprawl is eroding the quality-of-life that drew families to the suburbs in the first place. This trend has led policymakers to rethink our transportation policies and the development patterns that they influenced.

Smart Growth uses wise, targeted transportation investments to create livable communities and reduce the amount of car travel necessary by offering mobility choices such as walking, biking and public transit. One example is Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), also known as "Transit Villages." TODs are compact, walkable/bikeable, mixed-use communities planned on a village scale and built around transit -- rail, bus or ferry. TODs create a strong sense of place and provide ready access to work, recreation, shopping and neighbors. Smart Growth also focuses infrastructure spending -- roads, sidewalks, transit, sewers -- on existing communities, which helps revitalize older neighborhoods.

