

Smart Growth & Your Quality of Life

What are the principles of Smart Growth?

- Create Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices
- Create Walkable Neighborhoods
- Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration
- Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place
- Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective
- Mix Land Uses
- Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas
- Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
- Strengthen and Direct Development Towards Existing Communities
- Take Advantage of Compact Building Design

Source: www.smartgrowth.org

How does Smart Growth help my Quality of Life?

- Access to services (grocery, restaurants, transit, etc.) within easy walking distance
- Improved health because of more exercise from walking
- Increased safety by increased “eyes on the street”
- Reduced traffic because people are not forced to drive to everything
- More relaxed lifestyle because of less stress from being “stuck in traffic”
- Improved air quality because of less traffic
- Invigorated businesses because of nearby customers

Read about example of Suisun City turnaround on www.smartgrowth.org

What is the SACOG Blueprint?

In December 2006, The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) adopted a bold vision for growth that promotes compact, mixed-use development and more transit choices as an alternative to low-density development. It will become part of the long-range transportation plan for the six-county region. It also will serve as a framework to guide local government in growth and transportation planning through 2050. The Blueprint recommends more attached and small lot homes, thus saving 230,000 acres of open space & farmland from development.

	Rural Residential ≤ 1 home/acre	Large-lot Single-family 2-8/acre	Small-lot Single-family 9-24/acre	Attached Homes ≥ 25/acre
Existing	5%	63%	3%	29%
Base Case	5%	68%	2%	25%
Preferred Scenario	3%	45%	17%	35%

Source: www.sacregionblueprint.org

What is the Sacramento County General Plan & the General Plan Update?

The Sacramento County General Plan guides land use decisions. It was last updated in 1993. Unincorporated Sacramento County is expected to add nearly 100,000 homes by 2030. The General Plan Update is seeking to accommodate this growth consistent with Smart Growth principles. Starting in 2003, multiple public workshops have been scheduled. Final adoption is expected in 2008.

Source: www.planning.saccounty.net

Why do neighbors often oppose Smart Growth?

- NIMBY – not in my back yard
- Fear of increased traffic
- Fear of something different – fear of “mixed use” – yet vibrant cities have always been mixed use.
- Fear of rentals, poor maintenance, & lowered property values
- Fear of loss of privacy

What can I do?

For a community to be successful in implementing smart growth, it must be embraced by the private sector. If investors, bankers, developers, builders and others do not earn a profit, few smart growth projects will be built. Despite regulatory and financial barriers, developers have been successful in creating examples of smart growth. The process to do so, however, requires them to get variances to the codes – often a time-consuming, and therefore costly, requirement. By creating a fertile environment for innovative, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use projects, government can provide leadership for smart growth that the private sector is sure to support. Source: www.smartgrowth.org

You can make it clear to your County Supervisor that you support Smart Growth and you want the County to provide leadership in updating zoning codes and in offering incentives to speed approval of Smart Growth projects. For example, in Sacramento County, the zoning codes badly need updating. The planners say they are “archaic.” You can also show up at hearings to support Smart Growth projects, thus counteracting the NIMBY opposition.