



Unit 1- Introduction to Smart Growth

Welcome to this complimentary first installment of the *Planner's Moments* video-series! This series is designed to help you – a planning and zoning official in Northwestern Lower Michigan - learn about smart growth concepts and new ideas to help you be as effective as possible in your role. Along with the option of participating in the *Planner's Moments* video-series, all planning commission members will be continually invited to valuable training opportunities highlighting the *New Designs for Growth Initiative*.

This month's topic - Introduction to Smart Growth

The ten smart growth tenets are the backbone of future educational installments your commission will see and hear during the next year, given an annual subscription to the *Planner's Moments* video-series. These concepts aren't new – they've been around awhile and are now widely accepted as an important framework for promoting strategic growth in our new economy.

Our experts

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Do we look a little awkward on the big screen?

Well, it's because we are!

Planner's Moments is a new way to present planning and zoning information and we're learning how to best use this media. As we gain more experience, you will see greater use of interesting pictures and other graphics. We will probably look a bit more at ease in front of the camera, too!

What to do

- Play the 15-minute DVD **at the beginning** of your meeting. Don't wait until the end when everyone is tired and wants to go home.
- Spend a little time discussing the content as a group (see the questions below).
- **Complete the simple assessment on the last page of this packet** (hint: fill it out while you are watching the DVD), collect them all and return them to the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments main office. These assessments will help us gauge future educational outreach associated with the *Planner's Moments* video-series as well as the *New Designs for Growth Initiative*.

Please see the next page ➡



Discussion Questions

- What do you like, or not like, about the smart growth tenets?
- To what extent do you think that smart growth tenets are reflected in your master plan or zoning ordinance?
- If you had to pick just one tenet to focus on in your community, which one would it be?

Additional resources

New Designs for Growth - New Designs for Growth represents a collaboration of efforts promoting planning and development best practices that accommodate growth and maintain quality of life in Northwest Lower Michigan. www.newdesignsforgrowth.com

National Smart Growth Network – An excellent resource to learn more about smart growth concepts and how they are applied around the nation. www.smartgrowth.org

Smart Growth Readiness Assessment tool - This tool helps communities learn about Smart Growth, the benefits of applying Smart Growth principles and assess whether or not your community is ready to practice Smart Growth. www.landpolicy.msu.edu/sgrat/

Next Month

The next topic in the *Planner's Moments* video-series is 'Work Force Housing' with our experts Matt McCauley and Sarah Lucas from the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments. Even with the current downturn in housing prices, workers in some of our communities cannot afford to live in the community where they are employed. Finding solutions to these issues impacts both rural and urban communities.

Need more information? Contact:

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Planning Moments was recorded in Traverse City at the Northwest Michigan Community Media Center, operated by the Land Information Access Association.

Short summary of smart growth concepts.

GROWTH TENETS

The council recommends the following actions to foster strategic, long-term, coordinated planning and development regulation at the local, regional, and state level in Michigan. These recommendations are founded on the vision and goals as defined in Chapter 3 of this report,¹ paying particular attention to the smart growth tenets.

The council used the following smart growth tenets² for many of the recommendations contained in this report. These ten tenets can form the basis for establishing a set of state land use goals.

1. Mix Land Uses
2. Compact Building Design
3. Increase Housing Choice
4. Encourage Walking
5. Offer Transportation Variety
6. Create Sense of Place
7. Protect Farms, Unique Natural Features, Open Spaces
8. Direct New Development to Existing Communities
9. Make Development Process Fair, Predictable, Efficient
10. Involve Stakeholders

What is Smart Growth?

- Smart Growth is development that serves the economy, community, and the environment.
- It provides a framework for communities to make informed decisions about how and where they grow

Why Smart Growth?

It makes Dollars and Sense

- Financially Conservative
- Environmentally Responsible
- Socially Beneficial

Financially Conservative

- Responsible use of public money
- Reuse existing buildings
- Use existing roads and highways
- Use existing water/sewer infrastructure

¹*Michigan's Land, Michigan's Future: Final Report of the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council*, August 15, 2003, Prepared for Governor Jennifer Granholm and the Michigan Legislature. Submitted by The Michigan Land Use Leadership Council

²Smart Growth Network. *Getting to Smart Growth*. Washington, D.C.: Smart Growth Network. [Online, cited 8/3/03.] Available: <http://www.smartgrowth.org/PDF/GETTOSG.pdf>
For more detail and examples see <http://www.smartgrowth.org/pdf/gettosg.pdf>.

- Use higher density to maximize the value of publicly funded facilities and services
- Keep taxes and public service costs low

Environmentally Responsible

- Use and/or reuse developed areas
- Keep impervious surfaces to a minimum by concentrating dense development
- Build to fit existing land rather than changing the land to fit what is built
- Avoid oversized lots and yards to reduce excessive mowing, fertilizing, etc

Socially Beneficial

- Encourage people to live close enough to one another for comfortable interaction
- Design residential areas for conversation from the sidewalk to the front porch
- Encourage “eyes on the street” at all hours to reduce crime and fear of crime

The Smart Growth Network is comprised of a broad range of interested organizations, for example:

- USEPA, National Association of Realtors,
- Natural Resource Defense Council,
- International City County Management Association,
- Urban Land Institute,
- National Association of Counties,
- NOAA (Sea Grant)... many others

The 10 Smart Growth Tenets In detail:³

1. Mix Land Uses

- Allow mixed use options with zoning ordinances
- Zone areas by building type, not by building use only
- Convert abandoned malls to mixed use
- Provide financial incentives for mixed use projects
- Protects water quality and natural resources
- Health and quality of life

2. Compact Building Design

- Talk about Design not Density
- Protecting Water Quality and Minimize runoff (minimizes impervious surfaces)
- Balance street type and building scale
- Ensure ready access to open space
- Ensure privacy with yard designs
- Health and quality of life

3. Increase Housing Choice

- Identify and market vacant buildings
- Revise codes to widen choice by builders

³*Introduction to Smart Growth*, Purdue University Land Use Smart Growth Module Team. Jeff Burbrink, Jon Cain, Bernie Dahl, Jonathan Ferris, Bill Hoover, Bob McCormick, Mark Spelbring.

- Enact an inclusionary zoning ordinance
- Support community land trusts for home buyers

4. Encourage Walking

- Connect neighborhoods with pathways
- Sidewalks alone will not be enough
- Put conveniences near homes
- Make walking safe (crosswalks, traffic calming, speed bumps, islands)
- Connect shopping areas with pathways
- Health and quality of life

5. Offer Transportation Variety

- Provide auto, bicycle, pedestrian and transit
- Link modes of transportation
- Build higher density around transit stops
- Think outside the car
- Health and quality of life

6. Create Sense of Place

- Change school siting formulas to avoid fringe area building
- Encourage adaptive reuse with tax credits
- Plant trees, protect older trees during construction, leave open spaces, preserve scenic vistas
- Allow sidewalk vending, dining, kiosks, etc.
- Create opportunities for community interaction
- Use visual cues to define neighborhoods
- Establish revolving loan funds for historic preservation
- Developing “wayfinding” systems in town centers
- Highlight cultural assets through public art and event nights
- Use transportation enhancement funds to create places of distinction

7. Protect Farms, Unique Natural Features, Open Spaces

- Inventory special places and make plans to protect them
- Improves water quality and minimizes runoff
- Establish zoning to encourage clustering
- Protect farmland and open lands with PDR/TDR
- Work with land trusts
- Connect greenways

8. Direct New Development to Existing Communities

- Facilitate programs that encourage home renovation and rehabilitation in existing neighborhoods
- Locate new public buildings in town center, not on fringe
- Strengthen infill and brownfield programs
- Upgrade existing infrastructure first

9. Make Development Process Fair, Predictable, Efficient

- Conduct a Smart Growth audit to clean up local codes
- Assist developers who try smart growth ideas
- Use point-based project evaluation to encourage Smart Growth
- 10. Involve Stakeholders
- Seek professional help in citizen outreach
- Seek a broad audience
- Use visioning
- Take citizen ideas to heart
- Work with the media
- Consider new ideas

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Vision and goals for Michigan land use, drawn largely from the smart growth tenets.

Chapter 3: Vision & Goals⁴

INTRODUCTION

Land use is often considered a topic that covers a complicated maze of interrelated issues—and it is. The complexity of land use issues makes them hard to understand, but it is important to try because land use decisions shape the communities we live in and our opportunities for the future. In the simplest sense, the arrangement of land uses (e.g., farms, residential neighborhoods, commercial shopping centers, industrial parks, government, recreational areas, and others) creates the patterns on the landscape that define Michigan. That pattern has changed dramatically in the last half-century. Where the pattern reflects compact, economically viable communities with a unique character and surrounded by farms, forests, and other open spaces, we usually like it. No one is far from jobs, recreation, schools, or shopping, and there is a range of affordable housing choices. We could call this a pattern that supports livable communities—these are places where people want to live.

In contrast, when the land use pattern converts farms and forestland to low-density development that spreads across the landscape with little identifiable form, we call it sprawl. In recent decades, Michigan has built more sprawling communities than compact communities. Surveys tell us that Michigan's citizens want compact, livable communities, yet they continue to express their living choices by moving out of urban communities and into rural areas; they abandon small lots in cities for large lots in the country. Some say the “pull” of open space, low taxes, and rising home values combined with the “push” of crime, poor schools, and concentrated poverty helps to drive this process. Others say it is how and where government spends its money on new roads, sewers, water lines, and schools that attracts new development. Research shows that all these factors are partly responsible and that if we want less sprawl, we need to create more livable communities, protect the lands our resource-based industries depend upon (and which provide society with valued open space), and stop spending public money in ways that support sprawl.

Government policies in the past have not been neutral and many have directly or indirectly encouraged sprawl. In Michigan, sprawling growth has had a negative effect on large urban core areas, older suburban areas, and the downtown areas of many medium sized and small towns. It has resulted in disinvestment in central cities, a decrease in tax base, and an increase in the costs of basic services. It has irreversibly converted valuable farmland, wildlife habitat, and open space to support development at a pace that far exceeds the needs created by population growth. Sprawl has added to the cost of constructing and maintaining public infrastructure as it serves a less dense population, while at the same time it has caused underutilization of schools, sewers and water supply systems, and other infrastructure in the older developed areas.

Out-migration from older urban core areas has also concentrated poverty and led Michigan

⁴Chapter Three of the *Michigan's Land, Michigan's Future: Final Report of the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council*, August 15, 2003, Prepared for Governor Jennifer Granholm and the Michigan Legislature. Submitted by The Michigan Land Use Leadership Council

communities to be ranked as the most racially segregated in the country. Racism, while not necessarily the primary force leading to sprawl in Michigan, can be an impediment to revitalizing Michigan cities unless it is forthrightly addressed in the development of government policies and programs. Whether expressed subtly through exclusionary zoning practices, or more explicitly through attacks on cities and those who live there, it is wrong. Efforts to divide Michigan by race or class hinder our progress, hurt our competitiveness, and diminish our spirit. Our diversity should be capitalized upon as one of our strengths.

While an overall Michigan land use vision is needed, it is important to recognize that current land uses, land resource potential, and expected growth vary across the state and that multijurisdictional approaches are needed to develop coordinated planning efforts that best fit the needs of particular areas while helping to achieve the vision for sustainable land use in our state as a whole.

VISION STATEMENT

The principal purpose of the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council is to make recommendations to reform land use decisions in Michigan so that we create sustainable⁵ and more livable communities—large and small—in the both the Upper and Lower Peninsulas, from Lake Michigan to Lakes Erie, Huron, and Superior. Land use in Michigan is about maintaining and, where necessary, restoring or creating communities that people want to live in and providing housing choices that do not now exist for many. At the same time, land use in Michigan is about preserving open space, farmland, and forestland. It is about:

- Vibrant, “hip” cities that combine the best of the old with new redeveloped housing and worksites, where people can move about easily by means of a variety of modes of transportation and feel safe and secure while doing so
- Suburban cities, villages, and townships that are conveniently accessible to jobs and cultural facilities in the core city while also being close to recreation and open spaces in the country
- Small towns that serve as the economic and cultural center for surrounding agricultural, forestry, mining, and tourist economies
- Healthy, vibrant agricultural and forest products industries in the state
- Stimulating economic prosperity so that there is enough new income and tax revenue to provide needed public services and to preserve, protect, and improve environmental quality
- The protection of Michigan’s important scenic vistas
- Communities that understand a healthy environment and a healthy economy go hand in hand
- Communities that are inclusive in their zoning practices and efficient in their use of existing infrastructure

⁵**Sustainability** (variation of “sustainable” and “sustainable development”)—The practice of decision making in a manner that ensures the needs of the present generation are being met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

(Adapted from G. Bruntland (ed). 1987. *Our Common Future: The World Commission on Environment and Development*. Prepared for the United Nations. Oxford: Oxford University Press.)

- Communities where public and private renewable natural resources such as valuable agricultural and forested lands are managed to sustain long-term use while providing open space and wildlife habitat at the same time
- Communities that are energy efficient, support energy conservation, and promote the use of innovative technologies including the use of renewable energy resources
- Preserving ecologically significant natural habitats and unique scenic resources that enhance the quality of life for state residents, attract visitors, and maintain biodiversity
- Walkable communities where community design promotes healthy lifestyles
- Communities where green spaces are linked via trails and pathways for human and animal use
- Communities that provide a wide range of choices in types and cost of dwelling units, lot sizes, jobs, and modes of transportation in relatively close proximity to where people live
- Communities where quality public services can be cost-effectively provided
- Government policies that support the enhancement of existing urbanized areas, discourage sprawl, broaden living choice options, and increase the value of all land
- Convenient communities where citizens have access to most of their daily living needs in close proximity to where they live and work
- Fairness and equity in decisions about where locally unwanted land uses are sited and the opportunity for all to enjoy the benefits of new growth and development
- Communities that preserve relevant elements of their history, traditions, and culture
- Supporting home ownership to encourage the creation of individual wealth, complement sustainable communities and citizen involvement, and contribute to economic prosperity
- Providing expanded housing choices for individuals and families that are affordable within a range of prices and in a variety of locations in close proximity to employment opportunities and in communities that can support a full complement of essential public and private services and facilities
- A “Michigan solution” to the issues of land use that recognizes the unique character, history, economics, and culture of our state
- Effective local, multijurisdictional, and state planning done in a collaborative manner—involving government, business, and institutional sector organizations sharing a common long-term vision for the community—to: (1) enhance the quality of life for Michigan residents without adding layers of government bureaucracy; and (2) promote sustainability and balance among economic prosperity, environmental integrity, and social equity

Improving land use decisions in Michigan is about all these things—it is about achieving this vision for Michigan.

THREE FUNDAMENTAL GOALS UNDERLYING THIS VISION

Aside from its people, Michigan’s land—and how it is used—is the state’s most valuable asset. Historical uses of land in Michigan have played a major role in the settlement and economic development of the state, and to a large extent, Michigan’s economic growth and quality of life in the future will be defined by how well land and associated natural resources are managed. As

demonstrated in the previous chapter, land use trends in Michigan over the last half-century and those projected for the first half of the twentyfirst century have raised serious concerns about the future of Michigan.

The land use concerns expressed by Michigan residents focus on three areas: (1) the economy—the future economic strength of the state in light of increased global competition and the associated rising cost of providing public infrastructure and services; (2) natural and cultural resources—the stewardship of Michigan’s environment, natural resources, and cultural assets; and (3) equitable distribution of benefits—the need to assure that all Michigan residents have the opportunity for and access to high-quality education, employment, housing, health care, transportation, and recreation. These areas of concern are rooted in three fundamental goals shared by nearly all Michigan residents: economic prosperity, environmental and cultural integrity, and social equity. These three goals are interdependent and require government leadership in guiding public and private land use decisions and related policies that reflect the importance of balancing each goal in achieving sustainability.

Economic Prosperity

The resources needed to provide appropriate stewardship of the state’s assets and to assure equitable distribution of benefits to all residents on a sustainable basis will be largely dependent upon the state’s ability to compete successfully for economic development and related employment opportunities with other states and nations. Making Michigan an attractive place for private investments will take more than the strategic allocation of limited public dollars to support the siting of a specific facility in our state.

It involves a set of factors that the private sector uses in determining where to invest in new or updated facilities and offices. The availability, quality, and maintenance of the public and private infrastructure (e.g., transportation, sewers, water, communication, and energy); the efficiency and cost of government; the quantity and quality of the existing workforce and the ability to attract and retain highly skilled employees; the proximity and quality of research and training facilities; and the timeliness, predictability, and cost of assembling needed land and meeting environmental, recreational, and land use requirements are all important factors.

For those private investments linked to the production of products derived from private and public land-based natural resources (e.g., tourism, agricultural and forest products, and mineral extraction), the public policies and commitment to preserve the resource base for providing renewable resources and reasonable management of nonrenewable natural resources are critical. For some emerging economic sectors that are not tied to specific locations, the ability to attract and retain a highly skilled workforce is directly related to the quality of life accessible to employees near where they live and work. The goal is to manage our land resources to create sustainable economic prosperity.

Environmental Integrity

The sustained quality and safety of the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the land we use are essential to the health of Michigan residents. The stewardship of our air, water, land, and related natural, cultural, and historic resources defines the quality of life and our sense of place whether we

live in core cities, suburbs, small towns, or rural areas.

Environmentally healthy and attractive places to live, work, and recreate are important to our well-being and can help attract people to Michigan. It is important to be responsible stewards of the tremendous assets of our state found in our existing parks, recreation areas, open spaces, agricultural and forested lands, tribal lands, and waterways to provide renewable products, recreational opportunities, and the biodiversity required to sustain these natural systems. Cultural and historic resources throughout Michigan also play an important role in defining who we are and in building community pride. In some cases, creating open space and recreation areas and supporting or restoring cultural and historic resources can be a key element in maintaining and revitalizing our existing urban areas.

The goal is to maintain the integrity of environmental and cultural assets to sustain a quality of life that Michigan residents can point to with pride and pass on as a legacy to future generations.

Social Equity⁶

Growth patterns in Michigan have resulted in concentrations of poverty in some rural areas and in most of the state's older core cities. Michigan residents in these areas have little opportunity to live in communities with adequate, safe, affordable housing; quality schools; appropriate public services; attractive recreation facilities; good employment opportunities; dependable public transportation; and other factors associated with the quality of life. This disparity has in many cases been exacerbated by public policies that have encouraged and subsidized urban sprawl, leading to private disinvestments in older urban areas. It has been encouraged by exclusionary local zoning practices that restrict new housing to high-priced developments. It has isolated large segments of our state's population from employment opportunities, public services, recreational facilities, and retail centers by failing to recognize and provide for public transportation systems that meet the needs of many who do not drive and/or who cannot afford an automobile. The goal is to make public land use decisions that result in a more socially equitable distribution of benefits to all Michigan residents.

Balancing for Sustainability

Striking the appropriate balance of economic prosperity, environmental integrity, and social equity is the key to sustainability. The Michigan Land Use Leadership Council recommends, consistent with balancing these three fundamental goals, that the state provide leadership in the use of land to achieve economic prosperity through wise stewardship of natural and cultural resources that will provide equitable distribution of benefits to all Michigan residents on a sustained basis.

⁶**Social Equity**—Fair and impartial access to social or public services regardless of economic or social status. (Sustainable Development Indicator (SDI) Group SDI Inventory, Organized by Issue, Working Draft, Version 3, October 8, 1996). Note: the SDI Group reports to the Council on Environmental Quality in the Executive Branch of the Federal government.

MICHIGAN LEGAL FRAMEWORK REFLECTED IN THIS VISION

The leadership role of government in guiding land use in Michigan must take into account numerous components of our state’s constitutional and statutory framework, including civil rights protections and environmental protections, among others. Two of those important components of our legal framework are *private property rights* and *local governance*, as manifested in the concept of *home rule*. Council members are well aware of the importance of private property rights and recognize that government does not have unbridled authority to control the use of privately held lands. Similarly, the council is cognizant of the long-held tradition in Michigan that has placed planning and zoning at the local level, where decisions of primarily local concern can be made by government units closest to the areas affected. This legal framework must be respected if we are to achieve improved land use decision making in Michigan.

Private Property Rights

Private property rights are guaranteed under both the United States and Michigan Constitutions. The Michigan Constitution, Article X, Sec. 2, states, “Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation therefore being first made or secured in a manner prescribed by law.” In a series of individual cases, state and federal courts have determined what constitutes *taking* that requires compensation, but the issue remains a source of legal debate, particularly as it relates to government regulation of private property and the extent to which compensation is required, if any, when government imposes restrictions on existing or proposed uses of land. While not an issue of taking, government actions, or lack thereof, indirectly affect the value of private property. For instance, government actions can deflate the value of private property by failing to consider the consequences of public policy decisions and infrastructure investments that encourage development in new areas while abandoning the needs in already developed areas. Similarly, the failure of government to properly plan and regulate incompatible uses through local zoning can deflate property values. Finally, at times government takes the concept of incompatibility to extremes, resulting in segregating communities by income and isolating residential uses from compatible businesses.

In recognition of the importance of private property rights, the unresolved legal issues surrounding government regulation, and the role of government in preventing one landowner from harming another, the council has developed its recommendations with an emphasis on state policies and decisions that focus on investments in public infrastructure (transportation, water supplies, and sanitary systems); state taxing policies; public information, education, and technical assistance efforts; management of publicly owned lands; and other government policies and decisions that indirectly affect the use of land.

Where recommendations are made that could involve new regulation of private property, they have been carefully considered to ensure that (1) there is a documented, compelling need sufficient to warrant their inclusion, (2) the negative impacts on private property are minimized, and (3) the identified problem is not amenable to a nonregulatory solution.

Home Rule

Like many other states, Michigan has long relied upon local government to make decisions that are primarily of local concern, such as those related to land use planning and zoning. Home rule is based on the theory of self-government that encourages local decisions and regulations to be adopted by the governmental entity closest to those affected. The Michigan Constitution and state statutes define the delegated authority for local government decision making. The council understands the importance of the home rule concept in Michigan, and its recommendations reflect its interest in enhancing the capacity of locally elected officials to effectively plan and zone land uses of primarily local concern. The council's recommendations also reflect its interest in assuring that local governments coordinate their land management decisions with neighboring jurisdictions by reducing competition and encouraging cooperation to achieve common objectives and statewide goals. The council endorses the concept that government decisions should be made at the most cost-effective and efficient level of government that best serves the public, and believes that in most cases decisions on planning and zoning for land use should continue to occur at the local level of government.

[September 13, 2006; C:\Documents and Settings\Kurt\My Documents\wp\PlanningGuidelines\SmartGrowth LandUseLeadershipCouncilGROWTHTENETS.wpd]

Planner's Moments
Unit 1: Introduction to Smart Growth

This short assessment must be completed by each member of your group.

Your Name _____ Community _____ Date _____

1. Why should we care about smart growth?
 - a. It is cost effective
 - b. It is important for the new economy
 - c. It helps attract jobs
 - d. It is environmentally responsible
 - e. all of the above

2. Name two smart growth tenets.

3. When encouraging collaboration the planning commission should develop the plan, then, and only then, ask for community input. True or False?

4. According to Kurt Schindler, one of the best ways to encourage community participation is to:
 - a. Put a color advertisement in a local newspaper
 - b. Create a Facebook page
 - c. Identify who the important organizations and stakeholders are, and then send each a personal invitation, charging them with helping to develop part of the plan
 - d. Post the meeting announcement on the township, village or city hall door

5. The term "sense of place":
 - a. Applies only to cities like Paris and New York
 - b. Defines what is distinctive about a community that sets it apart from the next community
 - c. Means constructing colorful signs where you enter a city
 - d. Is a "squishy" concept that really has no meaning

6. To apply the ten smart growth tenets, we really need to be thinking regionally, not just within our own community. True or False?

7. Smart growth should be implemented starting on the state and regional level, then trickling down to the local level. True or False?

8. According to Matt McCauley, is there such thing as "dumb growth?"
 - a. Yes, if development is not consistent with the smart growth tenets, it must be dumb
 - b. No, development is really a matter of context – the right development in the right place

9. This Planning moment installment was:

1	2	3	4	5
not at all				very
informative				informative

10. Comments? _____

Please return to: **Northwest Michigan Council of Governments**
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