



Manifesto

2007

We believe that environmental change is fast approaching a tipping point and radical change is needed. A hundred years of suburban sprawl fuelled by cheap oil and free availability of land has done untold damage. We have spread ourselves around our over-crowded island as if it were boundless, we have created a completely unsustainable transport system and, somewhere in all of this, we lost our sense of community.

In the 21st century we must do things differently. We must change the way we develop our towns and cities and give renewed attention to how we use our countryside. We must rehumanize our towns and we must protect our countryside from sprawl. We must find ways of getting about that don't drain our resources and wreck our environment. We must rebuild our urban communities, protect and value our urban fringes and restore our sense of society.

If we are to rise to these challenges, business and investment practice and public policy must be reviewed. The old order of separated land use, exclusive property investment categories and development which relies on road and air transport is drawing to a close. It is time for new property products to meet new market conditions and new policies to meet these challenges.

We believe these challenges can be met. It's time for development that's environmentally benign, ecologically efficient and socially equitable. It's time for Smart Growth.

Smart Growth Objectives

We believe the principles developed by the Smart Growth movement should underpin our future development.

Smart Growth is an ethic of spatial development that is sustainable economically, environmentally and socially. It does not trade off long-term well-being for short-term gain and it considers the contribution that physical development makes to that well-being. It is about "place making" - but that will overwhelmingly be remaking our existing places rather than new ones.

Smart Growth Principles

Plan Compact Communities

- Smart Growth promotes well-designed, compact, functional communities and rejects land-hungry sprawl and wastage of greenfield land.

Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities

- Smart Growth emphasises use of communities' existing infrastructure and resources and conserves open space and urban fringes.

Provide sustainable transport choices

- Smart Growth reduces dependence on road transport and increases opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport. Towns, cities and villages should be pedestrian-friendly and rail-accessible.

Protect the unbuilt environment

- Smart Growth believes our countryside and open space is a precious environmental, social and economic resource. It should be protected and husbanded if we are to move towards a more sustainable society. Squandering it will create, not solve, problems for our towns and will do nothing for our national economy.

Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place

- Smart Growth encourages communities to develop their own identity and vision, respecting their cultural and architectural heritage. It supports human-scale development and opposes large, monolithic developments, out-of-town retailing and "big box" architecture.

Mix land uses

- Smart Growth supports a sensible mix of land uses to suit communities and which meet their daily needs.

Encourage communities to flourish and grow

- Smart Growth supports mixed-income, mixed-age, inclusive communities that take responsibility for their own development. Local economies should be developed to make them more self supporting.

Create a range of housing opportunities and choice

- Smart Growth supports quality living for people of all income groups, ages and needs. We want human-scale development at appropriate densities to support sustainable transportation and local facilities.

Make development decisions fair and economically inclusive

- For communities to successfully implement Smart Growth they must ensure all three sectors of the economy – public, private and community - function successfully and sustainably.

Values

- character, distinctiveness and authenticity;
- maximum use of existing buildings and infrastructure;
- most economical and efficient use of land;
- minimum consumption of scarce natural resources e.g. minerals, water;
- minimum contribution to emissions that lead to climate change, with full cognisance of the probable effects;
- mixed, thriving communities.

Means

- attention to, and conservation/enhancement of, existing assets and qualities;
- effective fiscal and management incentives to efficient use and adaptive re-use of property; accessibility and proximity of daily needs;
- urban concentration, optimal housing and employment densities;
- green techniques in 1) planning, design, construction/maintenance and conservation, and then in 2) management, to enable green living and working;
- minimising and reducing the need to travel, especially by car, lorry and aeroplane; minimising necessary energy consumption;
- a range of employment opportunities and housing types and tenures;
- the public, private and community sectors should review their operational requirements in the light of walkable or rail-served neighbourhoods.