

# MUNICIPAL CLIMATE ACTION OPPORTUNITY

## SMART GROWTH LAND AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Smart Growth land use principles promote compact development and discourage sprawl through zoning, ordinances, and other municipal decisionmaking and regulatory tools. One of several sustainability benefits of smart growth approaches is a reduction in vehicular use resulting from directing new growth to existing developed communities and taking other steps to promote pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit options. In light of the fact that one-sixth of America's greenhouse gas emissions can be attributed to the use of automobiles, the field of sustainability planning has been looking to Smart Growth policies as an important tool for reducing a community's carbon footprint. Reflecting this, since 2009, the Pennsylvania state Climate Action Plan has called for the 'accelerated adoption and implementation of existing transportation and land use policies and best practices that follow more sustainable smart growth principles' that generate less vehicle traffic.



Source Smart Growth On-line

Some counties in the Kittatinny corridor are already promoting and/or implementing Smart Growth policies, especially directing development projects and investments to designated growth areas, promoting infill development, mixed use development and a compact urban development, encouraging features to make communities more walkable and cycling-friendly, and promoting policies that reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled. Encouraging mixed-use areas – having schools, shops, and other businesses and parks near resident's homes – reduces vehicular use while giving a boost to the vitality of a neighborhood, by allowing people to live, shop and recreate within the same area. Smart Growth policy thus provides an array of community benefits beyond the reduced greenhouse gas emissions that make Smart Growth part of the solution to climate change. Smart Growth approaches have proven popular in Pennsylvania; planning documents enacted by Berks, Cumberland, Dauphin, Lehigh, Northampton, and Perry counties contain a number of Smart Growth provisions, including recommendations for municipal actions.



Source EPA

### Where to get more information

County plans in the region that address and encourage Smart Growth practices include the Berks County Comprehensive Plan, the Tri-County Growth Management Plan, and the Lehigh Valley Climate and Energy Plan. Goal 4 of the Lehigh County Climate and Energy Plan itemizes an array of steps that municipalities can take to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions through land use, development, and transportation planning.

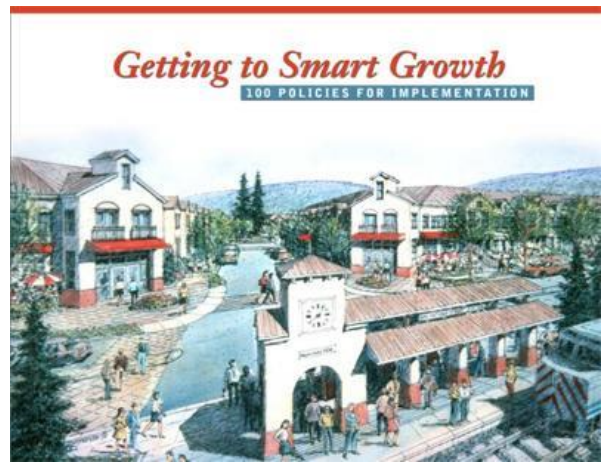
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**Smart Growth Online** provides comprehensive information produced by members of the Smart Growth Network, including best practices, a workbook, and examples of communities that have implemented an array of Smart Growth policies and actions, an ongoing webinar series and information on funding opportunities. <http://www.smartgrowth.org/>

**EPA' s Smart Growth Program** website has tools and resources, including *Essential Smart Growth Fixes for Urban and Suburban Zoning Codes*. There is also a resource section on Smart Growth for Small Towns and Rural Communities with reports, webinars, and a link to the Sustainable Communities grants program. <https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth>

**The Smart Growth Network** and the International City/County Management Association published *Getting to Smart Growth: 100 Policies for Implementation*, which provides information on how to promote compact building design, direct development toward existing communities, and create walkable communities. <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-01/documents/gettosg.pdf>



*Innovations in Zoning for Smart Growth* by the **Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission** (DVRPC) is another guide to implementing zoning that supports smart growth. <http://www.dvrpc.org/Products/07029/>

DVRPC also issued *Municipal Resource Guide 2012* to assist local and county governments and other stakeholders in identifying sources of funding for smart growth, open space, transportation, and related endeavors. <http://www.dvrpc.org/reports/12003.pdf>

**The Leadership for Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program** has a community certification program that assesses the community form, transportation and related attributes of smart growth. <http://www.usgbc.org/articles/getting-know-neighborhood-development>

The **Pennsylvania Land Trust Association** and **Natural Lands Trust** provide information on Conservation by Design approaches using local codes and planning. <http://conservationtools.org/guides/9-growing-greener-conservation-by-design> and [https://natlands.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2011/10/GGBrochure2009\\_ImagesToCopy.pdf](https://natlands.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2011/10/GGBrochure2009_ImagesToCopy.pdf)