

SMART GROWTH IN ARIZONA



Many aspects of our lives are affected by planning and development decisions — the distance to the nearest hospital or health care clinic, the location of elementary and high schools, the length of our daily commute, the price of a new home, and the safety of our neighborhoods. What, where and how we implement land use decisions have a major impact on every resident of every community.

As one of the country's fastest growing states, Arizona remains committed to assisting cities, counties and Tribal governments to guide quality growth and development, growing a sustainable economy. Growth presents a tremendous opportunity for progress, but Arizona must work toward balancing the benefits of growth amid an array of interconnected impacts on our economy, environment, infrastructure, and quality of life.

Comprehensive planning to develop, build and revitalize communities is critical to ensuring that Arizona's growth is well-managed. This means maximizing infrastructure investments while also preserving natural lands, farmland and environmental resources, protecting water and air quality and reusing already-developed land without overburdening transportation and other infrastructure systems. Most importantly, smart growth encourages diverse citizen involvement in planning and development decisions.

Maintaining the uniqueness of each community, while improving infrastructure enables Arizona's cities and towns to stay economically competitive, building a foundation for increased business opportunities and a better quality of life for current and future residents.

ARIZONA'S SMART GROWTH SCORECARD

The Arizona Smart Growth Scorecard is a community self-assessment tool to help cities, towns, counties, and Tribal communities evaluate their growth planning efforts. It was designed with significant input from public and private stakeholders to strengthen the ability of local officials to plan for future development and to adopt comprehensive and regional planning strategies. State discretionary grant, loan, and approval programs are using the Scorecard to award additional incentives to communities growing smarter and technical assistance to those needing support.

Arizona's Growing Smarter planning statutes, the Growing Smarter Guiding Principles, and smart growth techniques provide the foundation for Arizona's Smart Growth Scorecard. The Growing Smarter Guiding Principles were developed by the Growing Smarter Oversight Council in 2006 through an extensive statewide process and provide a vision for managing Arizona's rapid growth and long term planning for the next 100 years. The Guiding Principles are organized into six sections:

- Responsibility and Accountability
- Preservation of Community Character
- Stewardship of Natural Resources
- Opportunity for Broad Choices
- Essential Service Infrastructure
- Economic Development

The Scorecard questions are divided into three categories for different size communities and counties based on the Growing Smarter population statutes (A.R.S. §9-461.05 and §11-821) and state population estimates for the last five years to reflect current growth trends.

SMART GROWTH INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE

The Smart Growth Interagency Committee (SGIC) is comprised of representatives from fifteen state agencies most affected by population and demographic shifts. The Committee provides planning expertise, tools, training and assistance to help local, county, and Tribal communities with the various aspects of smart growth and self-assessment related to the Arizona Smart Growth Scorecard while also institutionalizing smart growth in state government through policies, procedures, special projects.

To learn more about the Arizona Smart Growth Scorecard and the Smart Growth Interagency Committee, visit www.azcommerce.com.

For additional information on smart growth in Arizona please contact

Arizona Department of Commerce Office of Smart Growth
www.azcommerce.com/SmartGrowth/Office
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SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES

Encourage regional, community and stakeholder collaboration

Greater community spirit is encouraged and nurtured when citizens, civic and business groups, institutions and regional representatives come together to identify their shared values and common vision of what they want their communities to be. Readily accessible information leads to greater public involvement and transparency.



Mix land uses

Mixing land uses is critical to increasing pedestrian mobility. In appropriate locations, building stores, offices and residences next to or on top of each other allows people to work and shop close to where they live. Additionally, increasing accessibility to a variety of transportation options is not only more convenient but also contributes to environmental and energy conservation by reducing dependence on automobiles.

Adopt compact building patterns and efficient infrastructure design

Denser development and compact building patterns are more energy efficient. By embracing this type of development, the amount of land that is consumed for development is reduced, leaving more for future generations. This method also minimizes the municipal and state infrastructure necessary to support communities, translating to lower costs and tax rates.



Create a range of housing opportunities and choices

Not everyone has the same housing wants or needs. Some singles prefer to rent apartments, young couples may need starter homes and empty nesters often look for condominiums close to town. Most prefer to be within a short distance to their workplace. Thus, neighborhoods should offer a range of options: single-family houses of various sizes, duplexes, condominiums, accommodations for dependent elders and homes that teachers, firefighters and nurses can afford near employment centers.

Create walkable neighborhoods

Walkable neighborhoods are designed with the pedestrian in mind: storefronts close to sidewalks, wheelchair ramps, benches with shade and traffic calming design. These areas offer not just the opportunity to walk but also a place to walk to: the corner store, transit stop or school. A walkable neighborhood encourages healthier lifestyles and saves energy by reducing dependence on automobiles. They are also safer for children (they can walk/bike to the park and not have to dodge high-speed traffic) and are healthier environments for seniors (they can get their exercise by walking to friends' homes or nearby businesses).



Foster distinctive and attractive communities with a strong sense of place

A community's unique sense of place is encouraged and developed through welcoming public spaces, preserving spectacular vistas, creating well-designed focal points, including civic buildings, and encouraging appropriate architectural styles and neighborhood scales. These community characteristics are one driver of economic development. Communities with a strong sense of place must reflect the character and values of the people who live there.

Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas

Protecting the environment means keeping the air, water and soils clean, conserving valuable farmlands, preserving critical areas while also safeguarding the public's health. Communities that care for the environment invest not only in the beauty that surrounds them, but also preserve the very wealth and resources that contribute to our quality of life and that of future generations.



Direct development towards existing communities

A community maximizes its investments in public infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) and saves tax money when development is directed toward already established areas. Neighborhoods are revitalized when communities encourage and facilitate infill development, redevelopment of underutilized or neglected properties, rehabilitation of brownfield sites and adaptive reuse of older structures.



Provide a variety of transportation choices

Providing a variety of transportation options - such as safe and reliable public transportation, sidewalks, bike paths and walking trails - promotes and improves health, reduces time spent commuting, conserves energy and safeguards the environment. Furthermore, there are community residents that are unable to drive or don't have access to a car. Providing transportation options creates communities where all citizens have a real choice on how they get around and where seniors, young people and people with disabilities can live comfortably.



Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective

Development tends to follow the path of least resistance, so the development that is the most desirable should be the easiest to do. There should be as few barriers as possible to restoring historic buildings and creating infill development. Design and construction standards, review and approval processes and finance and fee strategies should be clear for all types of development. Uncertainty creates misunderstandings, aggravates disagreements, costs developers money and ultimately serves no one in the community.