

SUSTAINABLE PLANNING

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INTRODUCTION

Smart Growth, Green Development, and Sustainable Planning practices typically encourage the same basic intentions and design principles: which are to stop wasteful land use patterns (sprawl) by protecting open space, while at the same time creating more compact, fully functional communities that are environmentally, culturally, and economically sustainable.

The planning issues involved in creating such a vision are diverse and interrelated, addressing a variety of planning topics and issues. The following outline is intended to illustrate the range of considerations relevant to sustainable planning practices.

TOPICS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Smart Location Principles-

- Reduce vehicle trips and miles traveled
- Conserve natural and financial resources required for construction and maintenance of infrastructure
- Encourage balanced communities with diversity of uses and employment opportunities
- Enable supported communities with access to essential public services
- Protect imperiled species and ecological communities
- Conserve water quality, natural hydrology and native plant and animal resource habitats and preserves biodiversity through protection of water bodies and wetlands
- Encourage reuse of disturbed or contaminated property, thereby reducing pressure on undeveloped land
- Inhibit "sprawl" and its related energy and environmental consequences

2. Sustainable Neighborhood Design-

- Incentivizes higher density, mixed-use development patterns which conserve land, promotes community, livability, alternative transit viability, while reducing sprawl, pollution, utility and roadway infrastructure cost and maintenance
- Supports physically connected development design, fostering community and connectedness beyond individual subdivision boundaries
- Encourages housing diversity in both density and affordability, creating healthier social and economic communities
- Promotes human-oriented, rather than car-oriented designs, supporting walkable neighborhoods and pedestrian safety, while reducing vehicle infrastructure needs
- Requires Public Space development, nurturing community while encouraging walking, physical activity, and time spent outdoors.

3. Water Management and Conservation Technologies-

- Minimize water use, reducing burden on municipal water supply and wastewater infrastructure systems Support alternative curb and gutter design for groundwater recharge and roadside vegetation health, minimizing storm water runoff and municipal wastewater capacity requirements
- Require stormwater management practices that preserve natural hydrology patterns, protect downstream ecological integrity, reduce waterway pollutant loads and stream channel erosion
- Incentivize Xeriscape and Permaculture landscape technologies to promote increased vegetation, CO₂ and pollutant absorption, land stabilization, and ground water retention

4. Energy Efficient Planning Strategies-

- Support "district" energy distribution technologies where appropriate, to reduce air, water, and land pollution
- Encourage on-site renewable energy, reducing environmental, economic, and political impact of fossil fuel energy use
- Recommends thoughtful development patterns that support proper building orientation necessary for high performance, energy-efficient buildings
- Model energy conservation by selecting infrastructure equipment (traffic lights, street lights, water and wastewater pumps) utilizing energy-efficient light emitting diode (LED) technology, energy-efficient and/or solar-powered technologies.

5. Local Food Production Support-

- Promotes community-based and local food production to minimize the environmental impacts from transporting food long distances and increase direct access to fresh foods
- Encourages development and preservation of neighborhood farms and gardens
- Supports Community Supported Agriculture
- Supports access to local Farmer's Market(s)

6. Progressive Waste Management-

- Protects the environment by requiring proper disposal of hazardous commercial and consumer waste products
- Generates income and reduces landfill load by promoting neighborhood recycling centers and infrastructure
- Saves financial resources, reduces wastewater system demand, and provides community amenity by supporting constructed wetlands technologies in lieu of traditional wastewater treatment facilities
- Creates revenue and reduces landfill demand by promoting community composting programs

7. Public Transportation Linkage-

- Promotes bike lane easements for safer bicycling, transportation alternatives, and greater transit efficiency
- Supports alternative transit modes by requiring thoughtful car / bicycle / and pedestrian interfaces
- Requires transit easements to support future adaption to public transportation alternatives

- Fosters continued coordination with transit agencies (CYMPO) for integration of multi-modal transit options

8. Open Space Protection Strategies-

- Require dedicated public squares, parks, and playgrounds
- Support Transfer Development Rights (TDR's)
- Protect Agricultural and Conservation Easements
- Encourage Land Trust programs

RESOURCES:

- LEED-ND (Neighborhood Development) <http://www.usgbc.org/LEED/nd>
- Smart Growth Leadership Institute <http://www.sgli.org/communities.htm>
- Smart Growth Network <http://www.smartgrowth.org/about/principles>
- New Urbanism <http://www.newurbanism.org/>
- Urban Land Institute <http://www.uli.org>
- Green Development- Integrating Ecology and Real Estate; Rocky Mountain Institute publication