

NAS Workshop Session: Innovations in Urban Policy and Research

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EPA's Smart Growth Program

- EPA's mission is to protect human health and the environment
 - EPA can't meet its goals by regulation alone
- OSC's approach: to improve the environmental outcomes of local land use decisions by:
 - Changing the conversation
 - Changing the rules
 - Helping the willing
 - Working with partners

Smart growth communities...



Multiple transportation options, infill, mixed-use compact buildings, and use of existing infrastructure characterize the redevelopment effort around the Navy Yard metro station in Washington DC

Protect air and water quality

Clean up and redevelop contaminated land

Control stormwater and encourage the use of green infrastructure

Reduce auto dependence and make public transit, walking, and biking practical alternatives

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Address housing, transportation, and environmental protection holistically

Respond to demographic shifts that increasingly demand short commutes, easy access to amenities, and a mix of housing options

Are more economically competitive

Can be found in rural, suburban, or urban settings



Changing the conversation

What we do

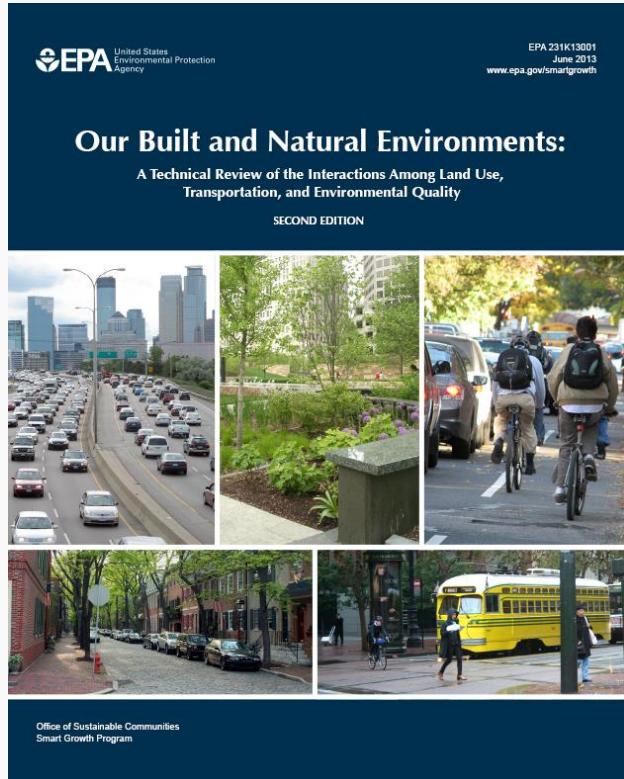
The Smart Growth Program helps communities shift the conversation from “Any growth is good growth” to “We need growth that provides multiple benefits to the entire community and is cost-effective in the long term.”

How we do it

- Speaking engagements (hundreds)
- Annual conferences (15)
- Annual awards (52 communities since 2002)
- Publications (150+)
- Websites (smart growth and green building)
- Webinars
- Support for the Smart Growth Network (44 organizations working on smart growth issues)



Changing the conversation: *new update to EPA's foundational research on land use*



Release date: June 17, 2013
www.epa.gov/smartgrowth

Highlights (?):

- Population per square mile of urbanized area decreased by >50% (1950-2010)
- Homes in 2000s are 29% larger than those built in 1980s, while average household size decreased
- Building sector's energy use quadrupled 1950-2010
- GHG emissions from transportation grew 19% 1990-2010 due largely to VMT
- Reductions in VMT of up to 25% are possible with changes to density, design, land use changes and greater transportation choice



Changing the rules

What we do

The Smart Growth Program helps communities identify and change codes, standards, and guidelines that prevent them from growing more sustainably.

How we do it

- Helping local and tribal governments change their zoning or building codes
- Helping state governments develop approaches that direct federal formula funds to more sustainable investments
- Working with federal agencies to help them change rules and requirements
- Working with outside standard-setting organizations
- Engaging nongovernmental organizations that set rules on green building



Helping the willing

What we do

- OSC works only with those tribal, local, state, and regional jurisdictions that ask for help.
- The demand is far greater than we can accommodate. This year, for example, OSC received 80 letters of interest from communities for the Smart Growth Implementation Assistance program, which typically serves 3 to 4 communities a year.

How we do it

- OSC has leveraged resources at levels disproportionate to its size and budget through four technical assistance programs:
 - Smart Growth Implementation Assistance
 - Governors' Institute on Community Design
 - Greening America's Capitals
 - Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities
- OSC has provided technical assistance to 284 communities since 2005.

Helping the willing in Arkansas, Iowa, and Vermont



A redesign option for Main Street in Little Rock incorporates rain gardens and improved crosswalks

- EPA provided designs for streetscape improvements in **Little Rock** that have helped catalyze redevelopment of the main street corridor and leverage millions of dollars from other sources.
- In **Iowa City**, EPA helped the community plan for and revise its codes to support the sustainable redevelopment of the 10-block Riverfront Crossings district, which upon build out will host 2000 residential units in a mixed-use, multimodal corridor.
- In **Vermont**, EPA worked with the Governor on rebuilding after flooding caused by Hurricane Irene. Follow-up OSC efforts with state agencies and the Mad River Valley Planning District are coordinating recovery across several small villages, improving state-level floodplain management, and helping Vermont become less vulnerable to natural hazards.



Working with partners

What we do

- OSC leads EPA's efforts in the HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities, formed in 2009.
 - As of May 2013, the Partnership has funded more than 750 projects in all 50 states plus DC and Puerto Rico with approximately \$4.5 billion.
- OSC also partners with FEMA, GSA, HHS, NOAA, and USDA.

How we do it

- Align policies around six livability principles
- Coordinate federal programs (grants and technical assistance)
- Leverage other federal investments



Urban Institute: on the role of federal agencies in promoting urban innovation

- April 2013 Urban Institute report examined if PSC has succeeded in breaking down silos between federal agencies
- Found success at federal and regional levels

Highlights include:

- Clear policy objectives
- High level of agency commitment
- Response to input
- Adherence to NOFAs
- Modeled de-siloing for regional governments



Urban Institute: on the role of federal agencies in promoting urban innovation

Challenges persist

- Uncertain political fate
- States/feds getting in the way
- Lack of capacity/time (“more meetings”)
- Ideological opposition

What more needs to be done?

- Mirror efforts through legislative change
- Enlist philanthropy
- Engage states
- Institutionalize regional interaction



Working with partners: *what is next for the Partnership for Sustainable Communities?*

- Expand use of common RFP/NOFA language
- Expand resources on economic linkages
- Build capacity of regional staff
- Advertise our successes

In FY14...

- Reorgs/staff changes
- Proposed next round of TIGER (DOT)
- Proposed next round of SCRP (HUD)
- Future TA (EPA et al)



More info at:

www.epa.gov/smartgrowth

www.smartgrowth.org

www.sustainablecommunities.gov

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