



Coalition for Smarter Growth

Better Communities...Less Traffic

Blueprint for a Better Region

The **Blueprint for a Better Region** is a technically sophisticated answer to the “how” of the Smart Growth debate. The Blueprint defines and promotes a positive vision to citizens, business community, local and state officials, media, and opinion-makers, and demonstrates the feasibility of the policies necessary to make this vision a reality. Instead of pursuing isolated responses to sprawl, the project is a coordinated and comprehensive strategy that helps put “growth in the right places.”

During the first phase of the project (development of a power point presentation) we have had the financial support of the Prince Charitable Trusts and the Surdna Foundation, technical expertise from the Surface Transportation Policy Project, and input from all of our member groups and over one thousand community and elected leaders across the region.

The **Blueprint** provides a compelling case that clarifies the principles of Smart Growth:

- To protect open space, farmland and the Chesapeake Bay watershed, you must target growth into existing town centers;
- Utilization of existing infrastructure is more cost effective and sustainable than the creation of new development in rural areas;
- Future job creation is going to remain largely within a 20 mile radius of the metropolitan core;
- Communities centered around mass transit, rather than construction of new highways, are the solution to traffic congestion;
- Providing a fair share of affordable housing in each jurisdiction allows people to shorten their commutes;
- Construction of livable communities next to mass transit stations must increase to meet demand; and
- Viable economic development is possible without further degradation of open space.

What the Blueprint recommends

The **Blueprint** encourages re-investment in existing inner-suburban and urban communities and the development of mixed-use communities centered at existing and future transit stations and historic town centers in surrounding counties. This Smart Growth development pattern provides the most viable solution to the area’s traffic congestion by discouraging development in the outer areas that would require additional highway construction and would increase vehicle miles traveled and air pollution. The **Blueprint** also promotes a walkable lifestyle, reduces the growing acres of impermeable surface detrimental to the region’s water supply, provides for a larger share of affordable housing and allows for the preservation of remaining open space in Virginia and Maryland.

The **Blueprint** provides specific visual examples of how Smart Growth is not “no growth,” but a means of encouraging balanced economic growth in the right places. Developed using technical information from a high quality analysis of regional growth, these visuals use sophisticated graphics

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that have the power to rally a community that largely understands the problem of sprawl, but sees no achievable solution. The **Blueprint** is designed as a dynamic tool that can be further developed as we take on new partners. Its malleability allows the Coalition graphically convey detailed future scenarios for the metro area and outlying communities under various growth policies, and to produce variations of these scenarios tailored for specific localities.

The Coalition for Smarter Growth, Piedmont Environmental Council and other partnering organizations are committed to a four-tiered approach to furthering the goals of this initiative:

- The **Blueprint** team will organize and/or locate funding for an estimated 30-40 design charettes throughout the region. Inclusion of residents and top land-use planners, architects, economists, and transportation experts in these meetings will result in a sustainable growth plan tailored to each community.
- With the understanding that successful implementation of Smart Growth policies requires that we reach out at the grassroots level to educate communities, our staff will make frequent **Blueprint** presentations, while also training other organizers to speak to community leaders and elected officials, neighborhood associations and faith-based organizations, the development community and business leaders.
- We will continue to be outspoken in supporting good concepts and proposals from the development community, with the goal of moving Smart Growth development from a niche market to a mass market, while integrating that effort with our ongoing work to discourage damaging transportation projects that increase the loss of rural land.
- The Coalition's implementation strategy will use the media and public presentations to bring this viable solution to the forefront of the public debate. This will encourage active citizen participation in local and statewide decisions for better land use planning.

Additionally, the Coalition will:

- Actively pursue new partners, increasing the reach of the Coalition;
- Organize a network of citizens who will advocate, promote, and participate in the implementation of the principles and policies described in the project, and
- Provide advice and guidance for the application of this project to other regions

To arrange for a presentation of the **Blueprint for a Better Region** in your community or to get CD-Rom with a narrated version of the **Blueprint**, please contact Laura Olsen, Assistant Director, Coalition for Smarter Growth at: laura@smartergrowth.net or 202/588-5570. As of October 8th, you will also be able to view it on the Coalition for Smarter Growth and Piedmont Environmental Council websites at: www.smartergrowth.net and www.pecva.org