



II Smart Growth Tools: Turning Principles into Practice

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The challenge facing smart growth advocates is to find effective means to influence land use planning and urban design to encourage the building of smarter communities. One way to do this is by sharing information with respect to the costs of sprawl, as well as smart growth alternatives, with those that direct community and land use planning.

4 Steps to Building Smarter Communities

The SMART GROWTH TOOL KIT presents a 4-step approach to community development based on the simple premise that understanding precedes action, and that organization and collective effort are more effective than individual effort.

The four steps are:

1. Learning How Smart Growth Strategies & Tools Work

Start by becoming more familiar with the issues, topics and strategies and discuss these with your neighbours and colleagues. Clarify your understanding and position on the various subjects included here.

2. Participating in Planning & Land Development Processes

Land use and urban development decisions impact people where they live. Market forces, public attitudes, and political agendas support these decisions. Since neighbourhoods do not change over-night, long-term citizen participation is needed, one that includes broad based input that translates smart growth concepts into policies and standards to guide local government and developers.

3. Monitoring Implementation and Compliance with Smart Growth Principles

Holding local government accountable to its commitments is a crucial aspect of smart growth community action. Community groups and individuals need to monitor the progress of their community in achieving its smart growth goals.

4. Organizing for Change

Achieving smart growth on the local level requires a collective vision, a shared decision-making framework, procedures for dealing with conflict, skilled leadership, strategic planning, and a substantial commitment of time, energy, and skills from volunteers. Organization and collaboration are the keys to sustaining your efforts to promote and implement viable alternatives to uncoordinated growth.

Local government must be shown the concrete, measurable evidence that confirms sprawl makes no fiscal or environmental sense, and that alternatives exist. Citizens can regularly re-affirm these alternatives during community planning activities and they can promote policies that support smart growth. They can

monitor the implementation of these alternatives and report progress to the rest of the community, helping decision-makers to honour their commitments.

Part II of the TOOL KIT starts with a brief overview of local government procedures for establishing bylaws and guidelines that relate to the land development process. This is followed by a variety of tools and strategies arranged in five separate categories; Growth Management Strategies; Land-Use Planning And Urban Design; Economic Incentives; Demand Management Tools, and; Ecosystem Planning. Because the Local Government Act provides the authority to achieve many of the smart growth objectives listed earlier, some of these local government functions are referred to here as Smart Growth Tools.

In addition to explaining how the tools work, each category makes reference to the opportunities that smart growth advocates have for getting involved at different stages of the land development process. Part II also includes several Issue Sheets that provide additional detail or examples with respect to the tools presented within its respective section. Issues Sheets have been submitted by leading experts in their field.

Introduction to Local Government

Since growth and development issues are dealt with at the local level, smart growth advocates need a solid understanding of how local government operates. Success requires they work effectively within existing land development and public participation procedures. Local government operates within the confines of written law, called *the Local Government Act*. Parts of the *Act* are either enabling (allows local government to carry out certain functions if they choose) or mandatory (requires local government to follow specific procedures as laid out in the *Act*). The *Act* also requires all local governments to enact a number of procedural bylaws that govern land-use, financial management, public participation, and other functions of government. These bylaws must be deliberated in open public meetings, voted on by council, and set down in written statutes that are accessible to the public.

Key Resources within Municipal Governments

The following positions within a local government can provide invaluable information about how the local government deals with growth and development. Ask them how they operate and strive to build positive relationships with everyone you encounter.

Municipal Council

- Mayor Leadership role. Decides which advisory committees are appropriate for dealing with specific issues, and appoints committee chairs.
- Councilors Vote on all matters related to land use, zoning, development permits, public participation, infrastructure spending, etc. May appoint committees to inquire into any issue and report to council.

Municipal Staff

- Clerk Main source of information for general public on all statutory and procedural issues. Distributes meeting agendas, keeps records of all decisions, minutes, resolutions, bylaws, etc.
- Finance Director Allocates available budget among city departments, in consultation with council and public.
- Planner Responsible for setting residential / business parking standards, building codes, land use (zoning, density). May set general policy climate (e.g. pro or anti-smart growth), and land-use patterns. May draft development bylaws for council approval.
- Planning Analyst Conduct literature reviews, collect and analyze data, coordinate the work of planning assistants in preparing presentations, and assist planners in writing policy and technical reports.
- Engineer Responsible for municipal infrastructure (roads, water & sewer, storm water); traffic (signs, noise, streets, street parking, sidewalks, on and off-street bike facilities); bikeways and greenways; transit facilities (benches, shelters, queue jumpers). Implements the general policy directions, pours the concrete and puts up the signs.

Mayor and council, and area directors, are elected to make decisions. They depend on staff for expertise and information. Staff does not set policy. They recommend alternatives, and see that civic policy is interpreted and implemented correctly. While they act on behalf of all citizens, municipal staff must work within the boundaries set by Council in terms of budget, policy, etc. For more information on the statutory operations of local government, see pages 27-47 and pages 144-161 of *The Smart Growth Guide to Local Government Law and Advocacy*.

Important Things to Know About...

Procedures for Establishing Bylaws

- Each bylaw requires three readings by council before it can be passed
- Some bylaws may require assent of electors (e.g., referenda on borrowing)
- Bylaws must be available for public inspection
- Under some conditions, an elector may apply to the Supreme Court to set aside a bylaw

Bylaws Regulating Public Participation Procedures

Smart growth supporters want bylaws that clearly spell out how local government receives input from the public on land-use and capital spending decisions. They also want bylaws that increase the number and type of consultation opportunities provided to citizens to promote their smart growth vision. To lobby for these bylaws, citizens need to:

- Work with municipal staff (they know the politics and government structure, can provide information and help suggest effective strategies).
- Know when key decisions are made (e.g. council & committee meetings).
- Be familiar with *Local Government Act* provisions related to:
 - Procedures for Establishing Bylaws
 - Development Approval Processes
 - Counter Petitions
 - Citizen Involvement Procedures

Citizen Involvement Procedures

- Public matters discussed by council are held in open public meetings.
- Votes on reading or adoption of a bylaw must be in open meetings.
- Public hearings are held prior to adopting OCP, zoning or rural land use bylaws.
- Council and / or municipal staff may, at their own discretion, provide additional opportunities for public input on various matters.

Counter Petitions

- The *Local Government Act* provides opportunities for municipal citizens to file a counter petition against a proposed bylaw, including zoning and borrowing bylaws.
- A counter petition may hold up a proposed bylaw if it is signed by at least 5% of the electors of the area to which it applies.

Development Approval Process

- A local government that has adopted an *Official Community Plan (OCP)*, zoning bylaw or rural land use bylaw is required to define procedures under which an owner of land may apply for an amendment to the plan or bylaw, or for the issue of a development permit.
- A local government must consider every application for an amendment to the plan or bylaw and every permit that requires a council resolution.
- Local government must make information available regarding
 - every bylaw in effect under Part 26 (Management of Development)
 - a general description of the purpose of the bylaw
 - every bylaw that has been given first reading

The Land Development Process

A developer (or community) wanting to develop land in BC must follow a number of planning and referral stages during a typically lengthy approval process that involves several layers of complex procedures, regulations, and negotiations. The planning stage involves local government, private sector interests, and financing agencies, while the referral stage may involve government regulatory or protection agencies at all levels (including First Nations if development is adjacent to a reserve), as well as crown corporations and utilities. The approval stage involves local government, neighbourhood residents directly affected by the development, organized community groups representing the public interest, and the media.

Not all stages provide effective opportunities for smart growth advocates to become involved. It is important to find out specifically how the land development process unfolds in your community and to seek the earliest possible opportunities for addressing smart growth issues. The SMART GROWTH TOOL KIT can only begin to address these complex issues in a superficial way. It is left up to smart growth advocates to work with municipal planning staff and other development experts to figure out the most appropriate means of getting involved.

Table: Stages in the Development Process

There are a number of stages in the development process involving the main stakeholders: Public sector (governments, regulators); Private sector (developers, architects); Community (neighbourhood groups, community organizations, ratepayers, stewardship groups, individuals). The general sequence of development process stages and the types of involvement from stakeholders is depicted below.

Stages	Developers	Local Government	Community Actions
Regional Planning (growth mgt.)	Market Analysis	Census & Demographics	Information Programs
Local Planning (and policy development)	Site / project feasibility analysis Land Assembly Pro-forma budgets	RGS OCPs City-wide Plans Greenways Transportation Park Development Community Energy Planning	Public meetings and hearings, Visioning, Idea fairs, Advisory boards, Interest group discussions, Council meetings
Project Specific Planning	Lobbying	Neighbourhood Plans Zoning Bylaws Greenways Transportation Park Development Community Energy Planning	Public meetings and hearings, Visioning, Idea fairs, Advisory boards, Interest group discussions, Council meetings
Site Planning	Site Planning Use of Design Guidelines	Official / Site Dev't Plan Create Design Guidelines	Public meetings and hearings, Advisory boards, Interest group discussions, Council meetings
Subdivision application (out of sequence)	Subdivision application	Subdivision processing and approval (referrals to other agencies)	Generally little public involvement, but may involve public hearings
Rezoning procedures	Rezoning/proforma refinement etc. Certificates of approval from Senior Gov't - environmental review	Rezoning approvals Design Guidelines	Interest Group discussions, Public info meetings, Strata Council meetings, Public Hearing with Council
Development Application	Site and Building (detailed design) Certificates of approval from Senior Gov't - environmental review	Development Application Permit	Participate in Development Permit Board meeting presentations; ensure application fits OPC policies
Permits	Construction Drawings and Permits	Building / Occupancy Permits	Little to no input unless big problems emerge
Post-construction Monitoring process	Watch, participate & lobby - particularly landowner issues	Environmental Monitoring Compliance with permits, etc	Monitor process and adherence to policies and design guidelines

Note: This table does not address post-occupancy changes, redevelopment, retrofitting, or renovation.

A Word to Those Working with Local Government

Elected officials, planners, and developers who are already familiar with how local government operates, can assist smart growth advocates in many ways. As decision-makers, they can adopt formal policies and create a development climate that supports smart growth. As planners and other municipal staff, they can share information, suggest ways to participate in formal procedures, and generally support smart growth in their daily routine. As developers, they can provide opportunities for citizens to comment on development plans. The aim is to work together to create win-win-win situations where all stakeholders can achieve their goals.

Additional References About Government

Local Governments in British Columbia

Civic Net Info (UBCM)	www.civicnet.gov.bc.ca
Civic Net Advice (UBCM)	www.civicnet.com
Ministry of Municipal Affairs	www.marh.gov.bc.ca
Governments of British Columbia	
Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks	www.gov.bc.ca/elp/
Land Use Coordination Office	www.luco.gov.bc.ca
Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries Resource Management Branch	www.agf.gov.bc.ca/
The Farm Practices Board	www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/fppa

Government Related Agencies and Committees

TransLink	www.translink.bc.ca
BC Transit:	www.bctransit.com
Transportation Financing Authority	www.tfa.gov.bc.ca
Energy Aware Committee	www.energyaware.bc.ca/toolkit.htm
BC Environmental Assessment Office	www.eao.gov.bc.ca
BC Land Reserve Commission	www.landcommission.gov.bc.ca

Government of Canada

DFO Habitat Enhancement Branch	www-heb.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca
Environment Canada	www.ec.gc.ca

Growth Management Strategies

Some Basic Points

Growth management policies are aimed at making choices about where and in what way urban development will take place. Growth management policies involve:

- Expressing goals for regional and community development
- Stating objectives
- Defining, evaluating and selecting policies
- Taking action to achieve results
- Monitoring and reporting on performance

An RGS must cover a period of at least 20 years and contain social, economic and environmental objectives for the region, population and employment projections, and actions to provide for the needs of the projected regional population in relation to:

- housing;
- transportation;
- regional district services;
- parks and natural areas; and
- economic development.

This process leads to the achievement of regional and community aspirations about the quality of life—from social, economic and environmental perspectives—and in doing so it provides certainty for public and private sector, as well as individual, investment decisions. Periodic reviews will keep growth management strategies up to date. Toward achieving these ends, local governments in British Columbia make use of several fundamental planning tools:

- Regional Growth Strategy
- Regional Context Statements
- Urban Growth Boundaries
- Official Community Plans

In addition, more detailed *Neighbourhood Concept Plans* (or Local Area Plans) and associated guidelines can also be produced with citizen input to assist planners in addressing smart growth policies at the neighbourhood, street, and site levels. Although these are voluntary planning exercises, they are important tools for guiding the specifics of development at this scale.

Regional Growth Strategy

Growth has important regional impacts—watershed functions, air quality, transportation, economic development, etc.—making citizen involvement at the regional level critical. Effective growth management starts with the regional long term view—i.e. 20 years—before focusing inward to city, town, neighbourhood, and individual site. The *Local Government Act* permits and encourages regional districts across the province to develop a *Regional Growth Strategy (RGS)* to as-

sist them in coordinating their planning and growth management efforts. In fact, the province will pay for part of the cost of developing an *RGS*.

An *RGS* has the potential to address the entire range of smart growth issues: building complete communities, protecting important environmental resources, reducing the cost of infrastructure, providing affordable housing, and ensuring that settlement patterns support transit. In fact, the provincial goals set out in the *Local Government Act* with respect to growth management and *Regional Growth Strategies* read like a “wish list” of smart growth objectives, including:

- Avoiding sprawl
- Designing communities that reduce car use
- Encouraging public transit and other transportation alternatives
- Protecting environmentally sensitive areas
- Reducing and preventing air, land and water pollution
- Preserving and creating greenspaces

See *Smart Growth Guide to Municipal Law and Advocacy*, pages 28-33, for more information on legal effects of an *RGS*, Regional Context Statements, and implementation agreements.

An *RGS* is normally an optional planning requirement (although Cabinet can require a Regional District Board to prepare an *RGS*). Given its potential as a smart growth document, citizens are encouraged to lobby the regional district to develop and adopt one. All regional districts in BC have one or more municipalities within its borders, as well as a number of electoral areas. If you live within a municipality, lobby Mayor and Council to encourage the regional district to initiate an *RGS* and educate the public on the value of an *RGS*. If you live within a regional district, talk to your electoral area representative and/or the entire Board of Directors (see Part III for lobbying strategies).

Once an *RGS* process is underway, some form of a Public Advisory Committee is often appointed to oversee the review and adoption components of the process, but this committee does not deal with content. Smart growth supporters can be actively involved in this committee, as well as seeking other opportunities for consultation. For example, whenever the *RGS* comes up for discussion at a Regional Planning Committee or Regional Board meeting. Smart growth supporters can use the goals contained in the legislation to challenge whether the regional district has done enough to meet these goals. Citizens can set out their own blueprint for what they want to see in the *RGS*. They can build community support and get as many other community groups as possible to sign on.

Regional Context Statement

In places where an *RGS* has been adopted, each municipality within that regional district must amend (within two years) its *Official Community Plan* to comply with the *RGS*. This is achieved by preparing and adopting a *Regional Context Statement* within the *OCP*. The regional context statement must address:

- Housing
- Transportation
- Regional district services
- Parks and natural areas; and
- Economic development

Additional Growth Strategy References

Regional Growth Strategies

Fraser Valley Regional District (RGS)

www.fvrd.bc.ca/growth/growth_strategies

Ministry of Municipal Affairs

www.gov.bc.ca/marh

Urban Growth Boundaries

Adapted from the Greenbelt Alliance's *Urban Growth Boundaries*.

An urban growth boundary (UGB) is an officially adopted and mapped line that separates an urban area from its surrounding greenbelt of open lands, including farms, watershed, and parks. UGBs are set for significant periods of time (typically 20 years or more) to discourage real estate speculation at the urban or suburban fringe.

A UGB is more than just a line separating cities from countryside. It is a pro-active growth management tool that seeks to contain, control, direct or phase growth in order to promote more compact, contiguous urban development. The other key purpose of an UGB is to protect farmlands and other resource lands - like watershed or wildlife habitat- from scattershot or low-density development. There are dozens of advantages to establishing UGBs, including:

- Affirming a community's identity by assuring it doesn't merge with nearby communities
- Promoting urban and suburban revitalization
- Saving taxpayers' dollars by using public facilities more efficiently
- Encouraging the development of more affordable housing

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- Stimulating community development patterns that support more accessible public transit
- Enabling quick open space retreats from urban centres
- Bringing together diverse interests, such as environmentalists, developers, and farmers - who want more certainty about which land can and cannot be developed
- Encouraging long-term strategic thinking about a community's future

A number of U.S. and European jurisdictions have successfully used Urban Growth Boundaries. In B.C., the municipality of Saanich has had an urban growth boundary since 1964. The Saanich UGB is a sanitary trunk sewer limit. In 1993, the municipal council adopted a policy to maintain the boundary until at least the end of 2001. Any major extensions of the UGB after 2001 must be approved through a municipal referendum. In addition, both the City of Nanaimo and Greater Vancouver Regional District have adopted UGBs. In British Columbia, the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) serves as a de facto UGB.

Key Issues for Urban Growth Boundaries

In BC, past concerns about urban encroachment leading to the loss of agricultural and forest lands have been addressed by provincial legislation which established and maintains the Agricultural and Forest Land Reserves.

In recent years intergovernmental partnerships have been forged to integrate habitat protection, restoration and enhancement with regional and community planning. Even with these initiatives, urban growth places unrelenting pressure on resource lands and natural ecosystem features and functions. Urban growth policies provide helpful reinforcement and complementary support for maintaining these resources.

Pursuing urban growth policies means addressing several primary economic, market and social forces that shape urban areas, including the tendency for:

- Business, industry and institutions to often concentrate their activities in strategic locations at the edge of urban areas, to achieve economies of scale and accessibility
- Land values to be higher in urban areas, thus encouraging the pursuit of affordable single family housing at the commuter edges of major metropolitan areas
- Resistance to residential densification within existing urban and suburban neighbourhoods

Urban Containment as Growth Management Policy

A community or region that wishes to pursue growth management must start a process of informed dialogue. This starts by determining needs (housing, greenspace, etc.) and then relating these to existing supply (see References for BC Stats web-site on population and economic growth).

The following list from a State of Washington, Department of Community Development publication, "*Issues in Designating an Urban Growth Area*" outlines a useful approach to obtaining information essential for determining land supply:

1. Identify lands that are potential candidates to accommodate future growth.
2. Subtract all parcels that your community defines as not developable because of physical limitations.
3. Subtract lands that will be needed for other public purposes.
4. Subtract all parcels that your community determines are not suitable for development for social and economic reasons.
5. Subtract all parcels that you assume will not be available for development within your plan's 20-year time frame [or other time frame you are considering].
6. Build in a safety factor.
7. Determine total capacity.
8. Draw the urban growth boundaries for your jurisdictions which meet criteria you have set.

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Containing Urban Growth Is Not Enough - it's just the beginning

Using the type of analysis outlined above to establish boundaries for urban growth is just the beginning. Urban growth boundaries need a set of supporting policies that attract and support development inside the urban growth boundary and discourage it outside. Associated policies and programs must be strong and thorough enough to offset the economic, market and social forces that result in urban sprawl. They need to combine a range of approaches that involve public education (to support voluntary choices), financial programs (to provide incentives or outright financial support) and regulation.

Additional Urban Growth Boundary References

Green Belt Alliance	www.greenbelt.org
BC Stats	www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca
GVRD "Green Zones Regional Centres Strategy"	www.gvrd.bc.ca/services/growth/lrsp/lrsp_toc.htm
City of Nanaimo	www.city.nanaimo.bc.ca/speed/plan/index.htm

Official Community Plans

An *Official Community Plan* (OCP) is a bylaw adopted by a municipal council or regional district board. According to the *Local Government Act* (Sec. 876), it is a “general statement of the broad objectives and policies of the local government respecting the form and character of existing and proposed land use and servicing requirements in the area covered by the plan.”

Practically, the *OCP* is a strategic document whose contents set the vision for how a community will grow over the long-term, ensuring that future development takes place according to a community's wishes. With the efforts of smart growth advocates, the *OCP* can be used as a “blue-print” for guiding the future development of smart growth communities. The *OCP* helps determine where specific types of development, such as greenways, multi-family dwellings, and mixed-used town-centres will be located.

An *OCP must* contain map designations and policy statements on the following issues:

- Residential housing
- Commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational and public utilities
- Location and areas suitable for future sand and gravel extraction
- Restrictions on the use of land subject to hazardous conditions or environmentally sensitive to development
- Location and phasing of major roads, sewer and water systems
- Location and type of public facilities such as schools, parks and waste treatment and disposal sites
- Policies for affordable housing, rental housing, and special needs housing

The *OCP* may also address optional issues such as social planning and farming. It cannot regulate development outside of the municipality's boundaries, and has only limited effect on some lands (e.g. Agricultural Land Reserve, First Nations, or Crown Land). It can refer to development issues that may occur at the municipal boundary. In establishing or revising an *OCP*, local governments must follow the procedures laid out in the *Local Government Act*. Smart growth supporters can familiarize themselves with these, either through communications with the Municipal Clerk, or by reviewing the latest edition of the *Local Government Act*.

Important Things to Know about the OCP...

- Public consultation is required during the development of the *OCP*.
- The fourteen provincial goals for an *RGS* also apply to an *OCP*, and can be used by smart growth advocates as a check list for promoting smart growth in community plans.
- In highly contested decisions, delay can allow smart growth advocates to make undesirable development an election issue.
- Area plans or *Neighbourhood Concept Plans* (specific to part of a municipality or regional district) must conform to the *OCP*. These plans tend to function on a local scale so members of the public can work with planners during the drafting process.
- Community members can engage in the *Neighbourhood Concept Plans* process by participating in public hearings and planning meetings which must be held throughout the plan development process.
- Members of the community can contribute by drafting proposals for additions to the *OCP* or *NCP*. See *The Smart Growth Guide to Municipal Law and Advocacy*, pages 33-35, for more information on citizen's legal rights to participate.

Shortcomings of the OCP

There are two primary deficiencies in the provisions for *Official Community Plans*. First, *OCPs* do not directly regulate the specifics of land development, nor authorize capital expenditures (they generally guide what type of development will go where). Second, *OCPs* contain policy statements, usually imprecise language open to interpretations (courts deal with law, specifically worded statutes).

Smart Growth and Official Community Plan Reviews

Because its legal effect on development is clear, the *OCP* is an important tool for ensuring smart growth practices. The *Local Government Act* states that all new zoning bylaws or development permits must be *consistent* with the *OCP*. The courts have said there must be a "direct conflict" between the *OCP* provision and the zoning bylaw before there is an inconsistency. Therefore, *OCPs* need more specific policy statements, including smart growth guidelines and site-specific development standards. These will better inform local government staff and decision-makers, thus avoiding interpretations that are inconsistent with community wishes.

Official Community Plans are constantly fine tuned with a major review every five years. When they are reviewed, *Official Community Planning* procedures may offer many opportunities for public involvement. Smart growth supporters should study the municipality's procedures well before the start of the review to determine the adequacy of public involvement. If needed, they can then request additional opportunities and means for having their say.

Some examples of public input opportunities include:

- Stakeholder consultation (with specific community groups and interests)
- Open houses (display zoning and other maps, plans, collect input)
- Workshops (focus on specific *OCP* issues, e.g. greenways, density, etc.)
- Committees (council appointed groups to research & survey community)
- Special council meetings (in addition to public hearing)
- Survey questionnaire (from those who don't normally attend meetings)
- Official *OCP* web-site (interactive ability to survey viewers)

Smart growth supporters also have other key roles to play before, during, and after the *OCP Review* process. These are:

- Do their homework before start of *OCP Review* (identify vision & priorities)
- Participate in large numbers in all stages of the *OCP Review*. To promote smart growth alternatives use the Smart Growth Check List in Part III.
- Ensure general policy statements are supplemented by specific objectives, targets, standards and guidelines. (review *OCP* web-site references below)
- Monitor local government and developer's implementation of, and compliance with, *OCP* policies to ensure consistency between the plan and new development (see Section III: Monitoring Tools).
- Document and share success stories with Smart Growth BC and other communities
- Conduct ongoing public education on the importance of implementing *OCP* policies

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Innovative OCPs Containing Smart Growth Principles

Burnaby	www.city.burnaby.bc.ca/planning/planning.htm
Chilliwack	www.gov.chilliwack.bc.ca/government/finance/budget/10year.cfm
Nanaimo	www.city.nanaimo.bc.ca/speed/plan/index.htm
Kelowna	www.city.kelowna.bc.ca/
Surrey	www.city.surrey.bc.ca/
North Vancouver	www.cnv.org/ocp/
Campbell River	www.dcr.bc.ca/divisions/community/planning/ocp/index.shtml

Alternative Development Standards

by Stefan Bjarnason

In municipalities across Canada there is a \$45 billion shortfall in revenues required to maintain existing infrastructure. As a result, citizens and planners are developing alternatives to the way we provide municipal infrastructure.

A variety of terms have been used to describe these alternative development patterns, including: “smart growth”, “complete communities”, “village or cluster development”, “the new urbanism,” “neo-traditional” neighbourhood design or “green development”. Whatever the name, innovative builders are using *Alternative Development Standards* (ADS) to accomplish their ecological, community and cost-reduction goals.

Alternative Development Standards are simply different ways of designing and developing. They cost less, are less wasteful, and are more environmentally and culturally friendly. Communities that are designed with ADS tend to be more compact. They have a variety of land uses, mix uses in single buildings, and integrate a variety of housing types. These communities are friendly to pedestrians, bicycles, and transit. They also use fewer materials for municipal infrastructure such as pipes, roads, parking lots, etc.

Widespread use of ADS can:

- Reduce cost of dwelling units by 25-40% (increase property values)
- Increase efficiency of land uses (fewer wasted spaces)
- Reduce per-dwelling unit cost for neighbourhood streets and utilities
- Reduce disturbance of eco-systems during infrastructure construction / maintenance
- Increase community interaction through housing clusters & mixed-use zones
- Reduce energy use by building transportation infrastructure (walking, cycling, transit)
- Reduce per-capita production of greenhouse gases by 30-50%
- Preserve natural habitats, ecosystem integrity through site design that fits landscape
- Provide cost-savings to developer and consumer by relaxing parking requirements in new developments (e.g. fewer stalls in development near public transit)
- Improve local business (more customers living nearby)

- Enhance community well-being and quality of life (exercise, safety, interaction, visually attractive neighbourhoods)

How Alternative Development Standards are Used

In contrast to sprawl, *ADS* lead to community designs that do not exceed local ecological constraints. Projects designed on the basis of *ADS* focus on the needs of residents, and undertake development with sensitivity to regional and site-specific ecosystems. More like traditional towns than sprawling suburbs, these developments include more open space in the midst of clustered mixed-use neighbourhoods, a mixture of shops, attached homes and apartments above retail stores, outbuildings and alleyways, as well as recreation and employment at a scale that encourages walking. Along with a grid-pattern of streets, narrower road widths, smaller lots, and rear-alley car access, *ADS* innovations can contribute to an “outdoor living room” effect, reminiscent of pre-World War II communities.

One serious ecological problem associated with sprawl is that it greatly reduces the ability of soils to absorb stormwater. In areas with a high ratio of impervious groundcover (pavement), water runs more quickly into drainage waterways without filtering into the ground. This not only lowers the water-table and prevents water from being naturally filtered and cleansed by soil, but the period of concentrated runoff causes higher peak flows than normal, which can result in flooding, erosion and scouring of fish-bearing streams. During warmer months a severely lowered water table can cause streams to run dry, causing further habitat and ecosystem disruptions.

Alternative Development Standards increase site permeability by reducing the amount of impermeable rooftop, driveway and parking surface, and by using partially permeable construction materials for necessary roadways and parking lots. In addition to protecting water permeability, green development strategies help maintain habitat and preserve natural and agricultural resources by maximizing maintenance of vegetative cover, and protecting the integrity of riparian vegetation, hydrological systems and water quality.

ADS also lower development and maintenance costs of municipal infrastructure, helping to reduce local taxes, while providing a richer, more community-oriented lifestyle for residents. When stormwater is handled on-site, or when road widths are narrower and parking located at the rear of homes, or when transit is encouraged over car use, thus reducing the need for parking spaces and therefore the amount of pavement created, then a neighbourhood spends less on municipal

infrastructure. It reduces its tax bill and creates a more walkable, interactive community.

However, *ADS* are often considered new and un-tested, and those responsible for ensuring public safety seek to limit the liability of local government in case of accident, or the failure of municipal infrastructure. For example, property damage due to inadequate flood control. Because development standards have evolved over decades of use, and have a legal status in common law, most engineers and many planners are reluctant to approve the use of anything different. Unfortunately, conventional back-up systems are often also required, raising the cost of alternative designs, and making them too expensive to build. To resolve this impasse, approving professionals need to learn about alternative designs that have worked well elsewhere. As alternatives are tried, tested, and found effective, they will gradually become the standard in designing and constructing municipal works.

What Citizens Can Do

While ecological and quality-of-life considerations may be the most significant benefits of shifting to the widespread use of *ADS*, emphasizing the financial benefits may prove the most effective strategy in stimulating decision-makers and developers to institute the needed changes to legislation and practice. Smart growth supporters can promote *Alternative Development Standards* in several ways:

- As prospective home buyers, citizens have a vital role to play shifting public attitudes. Developers are in business to make money. Once they perceive a market for homes in green developments, their construction efforts will begin to reflect this influence.
- Lobby local politicians, engineers and planning staff to persuade them to make the changes in policy necessary to introduce and establish *ADS*.
- Participate in OCP Review, zoning and other bylaw development processes. These can be revised to ease some of the traditional constraints on builders, with which *ADS* may be at odds (building codes, minimum setbacks, lot sizes, parking requirements, road width, storm water systems, etc.).
- Acknowledge and reward public servants for taking 'smart' risks that produce community benefits.
- Research 'best practices' examples from other jurisdictions and share these with developers, local government planners and elected officials.

- Encourage local government to enact new legislation that provides rewards and incentives to foster the use of *ADS*. Smart growth supporters need to attend planning department meetings, design charrettes and city and regional council meetings armed with arguments and statistics, and be prepared to make their voices heard.

Promoting ADS

Development Standards span a number of local government responsibilities like planning, engineering, parks and recreation, and risk management. Part of the challenge and efficiencies obtained from using *ADS* come from an integrated and flexible approach to standards. The following are some areas where the potential of *ADS* can be promoted:

Planning

- *Official Community Plan, Neighbourhood Planning and Zoning* (clustering, permeability/lot coverage, small lots, minimum yards, performance standards, density bonusing, mixed-use and other zones, and Environmentally Sensitive Areas)
- Other bylaws and guidelines (tree protection, heritage conservation, etc)
- Covenants and development agreements
- Approval process (speedier approvals for smart growth development)
- Programs (Tree Trust)
- Financial & other incentives / barriers (e.g. development cost charges)

Engineering

- Road right-of-way standards (narrower road dimensions, traffic calming measures)
- Pavement standards (permeable pavement)
- Bikeway and pedestrian standards and materials (combining with roadway)
- Parking standards (cash in lieu, relaxed standards, maximum requirements)
- Stormwater standards (on-site handling, permeability, combining with parks and green spaces, protecting environmentally sensitive areas)
- Construction standards (erosion control)
- Wastewater standards (community septic, solar aquatic systems, etc.)
- Financial & other incentives / barriers

Parks and Green Space

- Open space dedication requirements
- Stream stewardship standards

- Conservation of natural features
- Recreation, school and cultural facilities integration
- Cluster development to preserve/create green space
- Financial & other incentives/barriers

Risk Management

- Methods of reducing risk and liability for innovation
- Process and tools for innovation (financial and otherwise)
- Senior government funding for demonstration projects

Additional Alternative Development Standards References

Web-sites

- Smart Growth Network www.smartgrowth.org
 Alternative Development Standards
 www.marh.gov.bc.ca/GROWTH/NOV1996/alt
 Ontario Professional Planners Institute
 www.ontarioplanners.on.ca/hot_tops
 Urban Development Institute
 www.udi.bc.ca/#aboutudi
 Center For Livable Communities
 www.lgc.org/center_livable/
 James Taylor Chair in Landscape and Livable Environments
 www.sustainable.communities.agsci.ca

Publications

Alternative Development Standards, by Patrick Condon (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1999).

Better Not Bigger, by Eben Fodor (Stony Creek, CT: New Society Publishers, 1999).

The Geography of Nowhere, by James Howard Kunstler (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1993).

Planning and Urban Design

Planning informs actions to ensure equitable and sustainable human settlements now and into the future; urban design deals with concrete and measurable facts about the shape and function of the urban footprint, especially in terms of the needs of people, and not cars.

In addition to regional long-term policy and planning functions such as the RGS and OCP, local governments can employ a number of other local planning functions in their efforts to encourage the creation of smarter communities. These functions involve municipal budgets, development regulations and standards, and technical procedures and guidelines that direct overall development.

Urban design guidelines offer a finer tool for crafting particular types of developments at the site level. Because they combine the qualities of buildings with the features of the land they sit on, urban design guidelines—and not just the official plans—are an indispensable tool to influence the livability of neighbourhoods.

In addition to highlighting planning and urban design tools, the following section presents a number of Issue Sheets by different authors on various related topics.

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Zoning Bylaws

Zoning bylaws are regulations, in the form of legislation adopted by a local government, which allow or prohibit different types of land uses within a municipality or regional district. Zoning is intended to guide the orderly development of growth in specific areas by regulating the use of land such as residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional. Municipalities may have dozens of different types of zones, each zone meant to encourage certain kinds of uses, such as town centers, ground-oriented multi-family neighbourhoods, commercial or central business districts, etc.

In addition to land use, zoning bylaws may also regulate:

- Parcel size (implications for density & built form)
- Buildings and structures (site, size, dimensions, height)

- Location of those buildings and uses (set-backs, buffers, etc)
- Landscaping requirements
- Works and services (sewer, water, transportation, etc.)
- Other siting circumstances (streams, hazards, etc)
- Agricultural, forests, and land-uses related to mining

How the various parts of a community are zoned can have a major impact on the way those areas grow and develop. For example, single-use or exclusionary zoning, which has been used for over a hundred years to segregate residential, commercial, and retail facilities, contributes to sprawl. Low-density, single family subdivisions on the outskirts of an urban area also ensure that most services and amenities will be located beyond a desired walking or cycling range, thus requiring:

- 1) the average commuter to travel a considerable distance each week,
- 2) kids to be driven to soccer practice and piano lessons,
- 3) a car to get a litre of milk from a mega-store next to the freeway on the edge of town.

On the other hand, mixed-use, high-density zones can promote vibrant, compact communities, with more opportunities for contact and interaction with neighbours, where residents enjoy the benefits of a five-minute walk to most services, amenities, and transit, and where a sufficient amount of greenspace is put aside for the lasting enjoyment of residents.

Supporting Re-zoning for Smart Growth

Zoning is perhaps the single most effective tool for shaping the look, feel, and function of a community. Just as the human geography of every community has been shaped by land-uses historically determined by specific zones, so is the future shape and efficiency of our neighbourhoods open to zoning's influence. Therefore, zoning bylaws should clearly deliver on the intent of development and growth management policies, as stated in the *Regional Growth Strategy* or *Official Community Plan*.

Since zoning directly influences density, built form, transit use, and the protection of important environmental resources, the smart growth supporter's role is to understand how it hinders or encourages the development of compact communities. Supporters must also become knowledgeable about the development implications of each zone in different parts of the community. Understanding which uses, permitted densities, lot coverage, and other development standards are allowed and which are prohibited, reveals growth patterns and trends within

particular neighbourhoods, and inform citizens as to whether these bylaws are consistent with policy statements.

Citizens can actively promote smart growth zoning that accommodates new dwelling units on re-developed land in core areas or in village or town centres that are easily serviced by transit. Smart growth zoning should include a number of different types of residential densities interspersed with commercial services and adequate amounts of greenspace at the perimeter of the municipality (if suburban), as well as protecting key environmentally sensitive areas in the centre.

Planning and Urban Design Check List

Density

Density is regulated through the number of dwellings in a zone or on a parcel or lot, through lot size, or by the dimensions, shape and area of buildings. It can also be influenced by Density Bonus provisions that allow developers to increase density on one section of a parcel, while protecting important environmental resources on others. Smart growth supporters can lobby for zoning bylaws that encourage increased density through:

- In-fill & re-development on compact lots
- Cluster housing that protects green space and environmentally sensitive areas
- Design guidelines that intensify land use on a lot or parcel

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Design Guidelines

Design Guidelines are the tools used by planners to direct key aspects of the design of buildings and open space. Guidelines can be set to just about any level of detail and can be “attached” to different stages in the development process, generally from a Local Area Plan all the way to a Development Permit. Local government generally creates the design guidelines for a particular development based on established policy (e.g. *OCP*). Design guidelines have important implications for promoting smart growth, including regulating:

- Building dimensions (full lot coverage, increase density)
- Setbacks (buildings right up to sidewalks intensify use of land)
- Streetscapes (pedestrian friendly, visually attractive, spaces for interaction)
- Building facades (present a friendly face to the street, preserve heritage)
- Buffers and landscaping (careful separation of public-private spaces)
- Building materials (re-cycled)
- Energy efficient siting (solar capture)

Smart Growth Urban Design Principles

Adapted from a presentation delivered by Patrick Condon, entitled “Building Better Compact Cities and Protecting and Restoring the Green Infrastructure”

1. Different dwelling types in the same neighbourhood and even on the same street. Different family types and incomes can be accommodated in neighbourhoods that retain a “single family district” feel.
2. Buildings that present a friendly face to the street. Rear lanes allow porches and trees out front, parking out back, and a mix of housing types.
3. 5- minute walking distance to transit and shops. Research suggests that North Americans will leave the car at home if they can walk to the store or transit in five minutes or less. If we are serious about reducing auto dependence, we must design neighbourhoods with this principle in mind.
4. Interconnected streets ensure that all trips, whether in a car, on a bike, or on foot, are made using the shortest route possible.
5. Smarter infrastructure. Every dollar spent on pavement creates one dollar worth of damage to the environment. Green streets and lanes use less pavement. They save money and allow storm water to seep naturally into the ground.
6. Natural drainage systems where surface runoff infiltrates into the soil. Until now, communities have been engineered to keep water from returning to the soil. There are simple ways to correct this expensive mistake.

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Mixed-use Zones

Mixed-use zoning encourages smart growth development patterns, such as vibrant, walkable, live-work neighbourhoods, where most day-to-day services and amenities are conveniently located. During an *OCP Review* and zoning bylaw revision, participants must specify the appropriate mix of housing, commercial, institutional, and other compatible uses on each street and in each neighbourhood in their communities.

Development Permit Areas

Development permits are required in certain areas to ensure the developer works closely with city staff on developing a design that fits with city policy and directions. Zoning includes general directions regarding built form but a DP goes into a very high level of detail on the building and site's landscape design. An *OCP* can designate development permit areas for one or more of the following reasons:

- Protect the natural environment, its ecosystems and biological diversity

- Protect development from hazardous conditions
- Protect farm land
- Revitalization of an area in which a commercial use is permitted
- Establish conditions for residential intensification
- Establish conditions for commercial, industrial or multi-family development

If an *OCP* designates Development Permit Areas, then a permit must be obtained before subdivision, new construction, or alteration of land. In addition, the local government may, by resolution, issue a development permit that:

- Varies or supplements an existing zoning or subdivision bylaw
- Includes additional requirements, conditions, or standards related to form and character of development, preservation of natural features, dedication of natural water courses, construction of works to preserve, protect or enhance natural watercourse features, and other protection measures related to fish habitat, drainage, and erosion.

Comprehensive Development Zones

Zoning generally comes in two types:

- 1) “blanket zones” that cover relatively large areas, thereby setting the same rules for all development sites in that area (i.e.: RS-1 ~Single Family Residential) and;
- 2) Comprehensive Development Zones, called CD, that are site-specific zones.

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In a CD zone, city planners and an applicant start with a blank slate with respect to zoning and build a unique zone for a specific site. A CD zone can have any level of detail, and once approved, none of the details can be changed without a complete “rezoning” of the site.

The benefit of a comprehensive development zone is that zoning can be tailored to the particular needs of the site. For example, the streamside protection and stormwater standards can be much higher beside a creek than normally required in that zone. Likewise, a CD zone can be used to create mixed-use (residential, commercial and institutional) communities all on one site such as the redevelopment of an old industrial area or unused urban site.

Development Approval Procedures

A local government must maintain, and make available to the public, a current list of bylaws in effect, including a general description of such bylaws. It may also prepare and provide a procedures manual that describes permit approval and bylaw amendment procedures. If a manual is prepared, it must include informa-

tion on types of permits, approval and amendment provisions, applicable authority, sample application forms, statement of fees, and more. Smart growth supporters can lobby their local government to make such a manual available if not currently in existence.

Development Approval Information

This refers to a new bylaw that would require developers to provide council (and the community) with specific information about the anticipated impact of the proposed activity or development on the community. Such information could include, but is not limited to impacts on:

- Transportation patterns, including traffic flow
- Local infrastructure
- Community services
- Local economy
- The natural environment of the area affected

Smart growth supporters can make recommendations specifying the circumstances and areas where development approval information may be required. However, because it's new and some local government councils or regional boards may not yet be familiar with it, smart growth advocates should bring this tool for development approval information to the attention of their local government. Once established, the bylaw requires specific procedures for obtaining and publicizing development approval information.

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Some examples of the scope of such information include: socio-economic studies, environmental impact assessments, etc. Smart growth supporters can also help identify suitable areas for designating *Development Permit Areas* in their community, and recommend objectives and guidelines for land with this designation, i.e. environmentally sensitive areas, multi-family residential development, etc. If one does not already exist, they can lobby for the creation of a *Development Permit Areas* bylaw.

Subdivision Bylaws

Although regulated in an entirely different manner than zoning, subdivision bylaws are important nonetheless. Smart growth supporters can and should intervene in subdivision applications to argue that an application either promotes or is against the public interest. Case law has affirmed that the term "public interest" includes aesthetic and environmental concerns. When considering whether the subdivision application is in the public interest, one source of information is the

OCP. For example, a subdivision that results in higher density in an appropriate area to prevent sprawl, is in the public interest, while a subdivision that simply consumes fringe rural land, maintains automobile dependence, and requires costly infrastructure extensions, is not in the public interest.

Greenways

Establishing greenways helps to protect greenspaces, provide habitat for wildlife, and create recreational opportunities. Greenways are corridors that link parks, agricultural land, forest land and other greenspace; they are contiguous corridors that allow movement of animals and people. Greenways can also include bicycle, roller-blading and walking facilities. Greenways are most successful when they are comprehensively planned before development takes place.

Affordable Housing

by Kimiko Karpoff

There is a growing concern in BC that people from all walks of life cannot afford to live in the communities where they work. Good, affordable housing is the foundation of community.

Without it, it is difficult for people to sustain a healthy, active and participatory community life. Affordable housing is a key indicator in good health; it prevents individuals and families from becoming homeless, and it allows people to live and work in the same community. A range of housing helps create stable communities. Look around your neighbourhood with this question in mind, "Where will my children live? Where will my parents live?" Sadly, in many neighbourhoods the answer is "somewhere else," since many neighbourhoods have only one type of housing in one type of price range.

Affordable housing has broad implications in the smart growth community. If people are forced to live "somewhere else", this can put stress on other aspects of individual and community lives. As people move farther and farther away from their work in an effort to find more affordable housing, traffic congestion increases, contributing to the deterioration of several 'quality of life' issues, from health to time spent with family.

What Is Affordable Housing?

Housing is generally considered to be affordable if it costs less than 30% of a household's income. But affordable housing is also the range of housing needed to accommodate the needs of the diversity of people who live in urban and suburban centres. It can be not-for-profit or market delivered, rental or one of a variety of ownership models, such as co-ops. Secondary suites suggest both rental and ownership since the suite provides a rental accommodation as well as income that supports the homeowner in paying the mortgage.

The key issue with respect to affordable housing is that each community needs a range of housing options for different incomes, ages, and family needs. If you think of a person's entire lifetime, the type of accommodation she or he might need is not the same at every stage. A bachelor apartment may be perfect for a student, whereas a young family with children may prefer something bigger with access to a yard. As the children grow older and leave the family home, something smaller may again be preferable, or some type of group living arrange-

ment. The continuum of housing also includes crisis shelters, housing for low-income singles and supported or second stage housing.

Tools for Creating More Affordable Housing

Tools, such as government funding, community partnerships and better land-use policies can help in the creation of affordable housing. When the question of building or facilitating affordable housing is raised, there is often concern about the cost. There is no question that housing is expensive, it's the biggest budget item for most households. But there is value to communities in investing in affordable housing.

Government Supported Housing

Most non-profit housing is built with some type of financial support from government, usually at the provincial level, although sometimes with municipal land or other contribution. Government supported or not-for-profit housing addresses needs that are not filled by for-profit or market development. Citizens can:

- Lobby municipal council to support not-for-profit projects
- Support specific developments as they come before council
- Support the retention of existing affordable housing

Retention Of Existing Affordable Rental Housing

Loss of affordable rental housing has become a growing concern in BC. Very little purpose-built rental housing has been developed in recent years because it does not provide enough profit to make it worthwhile for developers. Existing rental stock is aging and much is run down and in need of repair.

As these buildings face redevelopment, there is concern that they will be replaced by non-rental housing. Some buildings have been stratified, forcing residents to either purchase a unit or move. Many people were displaced because they could not afford to buy their suite. Rental housing is a crucial part of affordable housing and it is important to support community initiatives to ensure we don't lose that stock.

Land-use Policies

Affordable housing is not simply about building cheaper homes, but about how we design and plan our communities. Planning for smart growth is an opportunity to make more economically sound decisions about our land use, for exam-

ple, by creating new housing through zoning bylaws that encourage densification instead of sprawl.

Densification can be achieved through the creation of secondary suites and granny flats, and in-fill development. Mixed-use zoning also provides an opportunity to create housing in commercial districts, for instance, by allowing housing over stores. Because infrastructure already exists for these developments, this new housing does not create the added costs that new infrastructure requires. We get more value for our money by making better use of existing infrastructures. The cost of building new roads and sewers are added to the purchase price of a home, or sometimes to our tax bills.

Densification doesn't necessarily mean building more high-rises. Medium density housing, such as townhouses, reduce the per-unit-cost of services. An example innovative land use is the Windsong development in Langley. Using land originally zoned for 34 single family homes, the Windsong community instead built 34 townhouses clustered in one corner of the property and left a large part of the land free for community gardens and green space.

Advocating for Affordable Housing

An active community voice is essential for the creation and retention of affordable housing. Although senior levels of government often provide funding for non-profit or social housing, local governments are responsible for zoning and land-use decisions with respect to housing mix and location. Therefore there needs to be a strong focus at the community level. The following are key issues to address:

- Transportation (work, shop and play walking or cycling distance from home)
- Better use of public funds means lower taxes (sprawl is expensive)
- Housing for our children (where are your children going to live?)
- Housing for our parents (or ourselves as we grow older)
- Safer, healthier communities
 - Fewer cars on the road means less air pollution
 - Compact communities means more "eyes on the street", less crime
- Stability (people can stay in community even as circumstances change)
- Commitment to community (less transience)
 - Less time commuting, more time to enjoy neighbourhood
 - Good health and less stress on our health care system

Smart growth and affordable housing supporters can start with a bit of research. The following are some questions they need answers to.

Does Your Municipality...

- Have a definition of affordable housing?
- Include a policy statement on affordable, rental and special needs housing in the Official Community Plan?
- Have a housing strategy?
- Have a housing task force or committee to address housing needs of the community?
- Have land that could be used for non-profit housing?
- Have a policy on retention of existing affordable housing stock such as one-for-one replacement or moratoriums on strata conversions?

Examples Of Specific Actions

1. As an *OCP* comes up for review, ensure that it contains strong support for affordable housing with specific policies and guidelines.
2. Create a “watch dog committee” to monitor new development proposals as they come before council to ensure they fit with the community’s affordable housing goals.
3. Build support for affordable housing issues in your community. Let your municipal council know that they have broad support for good land use and housing policies.
4. Demonstrate why affordable housing benefits the whole community.

Additional Affordable Housing References

Canadian Mortgage & Housing Corporation	www.cmhc.ca
The Land Centre	www.landcentre.ca
Urban Land Institute	www.uli.org
Neighbour Works Network	www.nw.org

Big Box Stores and Urban Sprawl

By Deborah Curran

The term “big box retail,” also known as “mega-retail discount chains,” refers to large-scale chain stores that offer a large selection of goods and services. These include Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Costco and Canadian Tire.

While popular with many shoppers for their low prices, big-box retail developments raise a number of smart growth issues for communities. As a result of the sprawl associated with its location outside of urban/village centres, big-box developments have been accused of:

- Contributing to environmental degradation (loss of fish and wildlife habitat due covering acres of land with buildings and paved parking lots)
- Increasing traffic (stores are located out of the way, near major roads)
- Decentralized land-uses
- Job loss (independent operators, union jobs)
- Decline of urban cores (downtowns find it hard to compete)

Environment

Big box retail store sites create a landscape of almost 100% impermeable surfaces. This includes the building and parking lots. All natural vegetation, habitats, hydrological flows and ecological processes are paved over. The siting of a big box store also creates an incentive for other commercial greenfield development in the area: one store could result in hundreds of acres of paved landscape.

Land Use and Transportation

Zoning for mega stores runs contrary to smart growth principles of supporting downtown commercial centres and village cores. The location of big box stores in suburban and rural locations makes public transit and cycling unrealistic, and encourages greater automobile use with a subsequent increase in traffic and air pollution.

Suburban locations pose additional servicing costs for municipalities that are often subsidized by existing property taxpayers. Municipalities often do not require big box stores to pay the full cost of road and other infrastructure construction. In the U.S., many local and state governments allow big box retailers to retain all sales taxes collected for a given number of years in order to help finance the construction and debt costs of the new facility. A DuPage County, Illinois study

found that the sales and property tax revenues generated from new Wal-Mart stores did not pay for the increased cost of roads, water and sewage, and other services to the suburban greenfield locations.

Community Economies

Competition from big box stores dominates smaller stores located in the urban or commercial centre of the community, thus drastically reducing the economic diversity of a region. Market share is transferred to the mega retail stores at the periphery of communities and the commercial core declines. Big box retailers also pit local governments against one another, as each attempt to out-bid the other to attract the mega-store. For example, the City of Oxnard in California spent \$30 million in tax money on a parking garage to attract Costco away from Ventura, another local government in the region.

The value of jobs in big box retail stores is lower than are jobs in smaller locally owned businesses. It is widely cited that for every 100 jobs created at Wal-Mart, 150 existing jobs in the community are lost. Likewise, a University of Massachusetts study found that income spent on a locally owned business had four to five times the economic impact as income spent at Wal Mart.

Community Action

While municipalities cannot regulate the type of business in a commercial area (for example, a bylaw could not state that no Wal-Marts may do business), detailed commercial policies and a commitment to infill and downtown development can help shape smart growth communities. The following are policies and bylaws that dictate the form and character of commercial development that smart growth advocates can promote in the *OCP* and during the development of other municipal bylaws:

1. Emphasize small-scale, commercial zones in neighbourhood centres.
2. Promote urban growth policies that discourage sprawl, such as
 - Growth boundaries
 - Development Cost Charges that require new development to pay full servicing cost
 - A priority for infill development
3. Establish Development Permit Areas for commercial land in the *OCP* (set strict development requirements on commercial zones, including a maximum square footage and limits on the number of parking spaces for new businesses)

4. Request that all new development projects provide Development Approval Information (require the developer to show the full economic, social and environmental costs of any new large-scale development)
5. Enact an impermeable surfaces bylaw establishing the maximum percentage of the area of land that can be covered by impermeable material (bylaw can be crafted to prevent large-scale, homogenous paving and building structures)

Barriers to Community Action

In addition to not being able to directly regulate the type of commercial development in a community, opposing big box stores is difficult. Both citizens and local governments often see them as necessary for economic development, and they are easy for a municipality to work with. Providing the permits for one big box store is much easier than working with 20 smaller retailers in a commercial centre. However, many communities have successfully opposed big box retail development through the work of committed citizens.

Additional Big Box Retail References

Websites

www.walmartwatch.com
www.walmartyrs.org
www.sierraclub.org

Publications

How Superstore Sprawl Can Harm Communities...and What Citizens Can Do About It by Beaumont (Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994)

The Impact of Big Box Grocers on Southern California: Jobs, Wages & Municipal Finance, by M. Boarnet and R. Crane (Orange County, CA: Orange County Business Council, 1999)

Better Not Bigger, by E. Fodor, (Gabriola Island, B.C.: New Society Publishers, 1999)

The Social Costs of Sprawl, by R. Freilich and B. Peshoff, (29 Urban Lawyer 183, 1997)

Wal-Mart: Global Retailer, by K. Mander and A. Boston, in J. Mander and E. Goldsmith (eds.) *The Case Against the Global Economy* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1996)

Wal-Mart in Vermont: The Case Against Sprawl, by W. Roper and E. Humstone (22 Vermont Law Review 755, 1998)

The Wal-Martians have landed: Effect of Wal-Mart on UK Consumers, by Rowell, *The Ecologist* (29:5 1999)

The Vermont Barrier: How Economic Protectionism Kept Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. Out of St. Albans, Vermont" by M. Schneider (20 Nova Law Review 919, 1996)

Economic Incentives

by Bernard LaRochelle and Lewis N. Villegas

Providing infrastructure through tax revenues is a key function of local governments.

Since local governments spend a considerable amount of money on infrastructure, and because how they choose to invest these tax dollars has a significant impact on the livability of communities, the economics of local government can be used as a key investment tool. Citizens must ensure these tools are used to support smart growth.

This section highlights a number of investment choices available to local government to encourage smart growth development in existing neighbourhoods and in the urban core. Rather than subsidizing sprawl, they can choose to invest in existing neighbourhoods. A variety of methods exist to support smart investments. Local governments can:

- Stream-line the development permit approval process for in-fill and re-development
- Prioritize public infrastructure investments for in-fill and re-development projects
- Provide Grants-in-Aid for non-market housing (e.g., co-ops, social housing)
- Waive portion of development fees for smart growth projects
- Lease municipally-owned land at below market value for innovative projects
- Introduce development conversion / demolition controls that preserve rental units

Besides these investment decisions, local governments may also use a number of fiscal strategies that are available to support these smart growth choices. These strategies are described in more detail in this section.

The literature available on economic incentives for smart growth is still emerging, and much of it is focused on environmental protection issues. TOOL KIT readers are invited to submit to SMART GROWTH BC their own examples of economic incentives that promote fiscally responsible smart growth land-use and infrastructure financing.

Stop Subsidizing Sprawl

Generally, governments subsidize sprawl through a number of means, including taxes, zoning practices, infrastructure investment, and regulations. Massive public investment in roads, highways, bridges, and other traffic management practices accounts for one of the largest subsidies to sprawl. Coupled with single-use zoning, and other regulations that ensure low-density development, the subsidy to the automobile ensures that people will drive further each day.

Smart growth supporters can lobby local government to use full-cost accounting practices, so that hidden subsidies and costs are made more apparent. Monitoring local government expenditures can ensure they are compatible and consistent with stated growth management policies. Supporters also need to promote smart growth investment priorities, such as:

- Affordable housing
- Alternative storm water infrastructure
- Public transit and non auto-dependent forms of transportation
- Greenways, trails, parks, and open natural spaces
- Detailed, up-to-date community mapping and inventories
- Extension limits on infrastructure & services beyond a designated growth area
- Differential infrastructure pricing formula that charges more for low-density, fringe development than for urban core in-fill, alternative development practices and innovative infrastructure technologies
- Limit new road construction and maintenance
- Relax parking requirements
- Charge parking fees, highway or bridge tolls

Invest in Existing Neighbourhoods

Building according to smart growth principles can cost less for developers, local government, and ultimately community residents and tax-payers. First, when local governments encourage in-fill and re-development in existing neighbourhoods, developers take advantage of the infrastructure that is already present (roads, sidewalks, parking, water and sewer lines, etc.) and save substantially by not having to construct additional facilities. Savings are passed on to consumers in lower home costs, or to investors as profit. Second, where local governments encourage the use of alternative development standards (e.g. mixed-used higher density zones, reduced impervious surfaces, integrated storm water and stream corridor management techniques), then new developments on raw land can cost less by using less infrastructure than in traditional development.

Tax Increment Financing

Local governments that are experiencing, or expect to experience rapid growth, can choose to borrow against the future tax revenues represented by anticipated new development. Governments can borrow against a specified 'increment' of growth expected to take place over a given period of time. For example, 3% growth per year over 10 years, nets a total 30% growth rate. In turn, the expected increase in total municipal revenues from this growth increment can be calculated. Typically, funds borrowed against anticipated future revenues are invested in the construction of new infrastructure, thus creating a comparative advantage for the improved site or neighbourhood.

There are some risks involved with this relatively new fiscal tool -i.e., some local government may use this tool to invest in infrastructure that encourages sprawl versus spending it on smart growth. However, this strategy has the potential to become a basic smart growth tool because it can be used to maintain infrastructure in core urban areas, thus supporting a high level of future in-fill and redevelopment projects, as well as providing other necessary community amenities, such as parks, greenways, community centres, etc. The key to its successful implementation will be to ensure high levels of community participation in determining investment priorities.

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Mortgage Helpers

Home ownership can be made more affordable in places where legal secondary suites are permitted in the Official Community Plan and zoning bylaws. Simply put, zoning that permits up to three units per lot opens up the possibility of having one or two legal suites to help pay the mortgage. Recognized by the local bank and credit union, the net effect is to increase the segment of the population able to afford their own homes. The provision of zoning that allows legal secondary suites also makes available a variety of rental opportunities. In any case, housing choice and affordability are improved by such in-fill strategies.

Government Incentives

Federal and provincial governments can promote investment in smart growth infrastructure through their various infrastructure grant programs. For instance, local governments can qualify for grants to draft urban design guidelines that enhance both liveability and safety.

Development Cost Charges

by Joanne Proft

In the past ten years our communities have become increasingly dependent on *Development Cost Charges (DCCs)* to finance the requisite local services and infrastructure (i.e., roads, drainage, water, sewers, and parks) required by new development.

Yet, while favoring development within urban areas where infrastructure costs are lower, *DCCs* currently act as a barrier to building sustainable communities, particularly in emerging urban areas outside the urban core—areas where the majority of growth is occurring.

In some cases it is argued that the current application of *DCCs* actually perpetuates conventional, unsustainable development patterns. As a result, there are clear inconsistencies between provincial and regional policy directives for achieving sustainability, and the necessary tools being developed to implement these directives on the ground.

Below is a brief overview of *DCCs*, followed by a discussion of some of the inconsistencies between current application of *DCCs* and wider sustainable development goals, and suggestions for alternative approaches for achieving greater consistency between these two imperatives.

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Provincial History

Under Sections 932-937 of the *Local Government Act*, local governments are permitted to collect *Development Cost Charges (DCCs)* from developers in order to recover capital expended on growth-related infrastructure. A one-time charge levied against residential (single family and multi-family), commercial, industrial and institutional developments, *DCCs* are designed to cover capital costs related to roads, sanitary sewers, water, drainage and parkland acquisition and improvements.¹

The evolution of *DCCs* in BC date back to the 1958 amendments to the then Municipal Act, which allowed governments, through “Excessive Subdivisions Cost Bylaws”, to refuse subdivision applications that bore excessive public costs due to the provision of new infrastructure related to growth outside existing serviced areas. By the early 1970s, further amendments gave local governments the authority to charge levies against new infrastructure costs. These amendments

marked a shift away from government-led infrastructure provision towards the primarily “user pay” or “developer-led” model of infrastructure financing currently practiced.

Location / Community Context

The primary factor affecting the impact of new development on infrastructure cost is the location of the development and the ability to utilize existing services. Many new developments are located outside existing urban cores and require new services to be constructed. It is the current recommended practice in BC to base rates for road and storm drainage infrastructure on a city-wide average; that is, to apply *DCCs* equally to developments in the city with no distinction regarding location or development type.²

However, it has been shown that smaller lot, more compact development has long term advantages over conventional large lot, sprawling development. Less infrastructure and land is required to service the same amount of population.³ Moreover, studies show that more compact development within the context of mixed-land uses and an integrated street system can result in a 30 to 40 percent reduction in vehicle use per person.⁴ In addition, combining usage of land for stormwater detention and parks, as well as facilitating increased infiltration of stormwater volumes to the soil can also reduce costs for drainage infrastructure.

Yet despite these cost efficiencies, in many cases, small lots that use less land, generate less storm drainage and demand less transportation infrastructure are generally charged the same levy as larger homes on much larger lots. And since building lots are sold as a commodity and since developers must extract the *DCC* out of the proceeds from the sale of the lot, it follows that they will favour the large lot over the small lot, since the *DCC* component of the cost for the small lot represents a proportionately larger share of the total. In addition, the current practice of charging *DCCs* for secondary suites on single-family lots creates further barriers to increasing land efficiency and neighbourhood diversity.

DCCs as a Supply-oriented Tool

DCCs have often been heralded as a promoter of infill and more concentrated growth in existing urban areas where infrastructure networks are already in place. Rational economic logic would predict that developers will go where costs are lowest. However, in the lower mainland, this doesn't seem to be the case.⁵ For example, the City of Surrey imposes a *DCC* of over \$19,000 for a typical residential unit (compared to approximately \$7,000 in the City of Burnaby, or \$10,000 in

the City of New Westminster)⁶. Regardless of this cost difference, in 1999, 43 percent of new urban residential development occurred in Surrey's emerging urban areas, which are located outside of the GVRD Growth Concentration Areas.⁷

No Incentive for Innovation

Some people argue that since *DCCs* are a cost recovery mechanism for municipalities, and the total infrastructure costs of a development are borne by the developer through *DCCs*, there is no incentive (political or economic) for the municipality to encourage alternative development practices or innovative infrastructure technologies that might result in infrastructure or cost efficiencies over the long term. It is suggested that this is due, in part, to conventional infrastructure financing approaches, which are characterized by standardized servicing fees and impact assessments, which themselves are shaped by a supply-oriented logic. While this "predict and provide" model emphasizes government certainty and cost recovery of new infrastructure, it does not take into account wider environmental, social and economic limits to the capacities of infrastructure over the long term.⁸

Conclusions and Recommendations

As local governments have become increasingly dependant on *DCCs* to finance infrastructure investment, it is imperative that these wider benefits be included in the calculation. Significant benefit would result if *DCCs* were restructured to provide incentives for developing more sustainable communities, particularly in emerging urban areas.

- *DCC* rates should reflect the impacts of more compact, land efficient development patterns;
- *DCCs* should be charged on buildable area (i.e, square foot of building) regardless of number of units provided; and
- Ways to better predict and isolate the real costs associated with more sustainable land development practices should be explored and incorporated into municipal infrastructure financing structures.

Smart Growth Advocacy

- Lobby local government to review its *DCC* formula
- Create an ad hoc citizen's committee to research best practices in other jurisdictions

Notes to the text

1. Local Government Act, Section 933 (2).
2. See Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Development Finance Choices Guide, (Victoria British Columbia: Province of British Columbia; Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. 2000). Development Cost Charge Best Practices Guide, (Victoria: Province of British Columbia, 2000).
3. The Development Cost Charge Best Practices Guide (2000) recommends that Road and Storm Drainage *DCCs* be established on a municipality-wide basis except where a significant disparity exists between those who pay the *DCC* and benefiting users, 17-18.
4. Patrick Mazza and Eben Fodor, Taking its Toll: The Hidden Costs of Sprawl in Washington State, (Seattle, Washington: Climate Solutions, 2000, 11); UBC James Taylor Chair in Landscape and Liveable Environments, " Technical Bulletin #2—Two Alternative Site Development Standards Compared," (Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia, 2001).
5. Criterion Engineers, Planners, Benefits of Neotraditional Community Development, (Coquitlam, BC: City of Coquitlam, 1996, 18); UBC James Taylor Chair in Landscape and Liveable Environments, " Technical Bulletin #8 - East Clayton Neighbourhood Concept Plan, Environmental Benefits," (Vancouver, British Columbia: University of British Columbia, 2001).
6. Ministry of Municipal Affairs, " Development Cost Charge Bylaws Approved," (Victoria BC: Province of British Columbia Ministry of Municipal Affairs, March 2001,).
7. City of Surrey Corporate Report No. C014, November 6, 2000.
8. Owens, S., 1995, " From Predict and Provide to Predict and Prevent?: Pricing and Planning In Transport Policy, 2.

Additional *DCC* references

DCC Best Practices Guide

www.marh.bc.ca/growth/publications/index.htm#development

Economic Benefits of Protecting Green Space

by Deborah Curran

Over the past thirty years many local governments have initiated new environmental policies and planning to integrate urban development into functioning ecosystems. A core strategy has been to acquire and/or set aside greenways and natural green space for stormwater management, habitat protection, recreation, aesthetics, groundwater capture, water and air quality improvements, non-motorized transportation, and enhancement of the surrounding residential neighbourhood.

The Importance of Natural Green Space Protection

These new policies bring benefits and costs to the community and local government, but are difficult to assess given the fluid nature of the environment and the difficulty in placing monetary value on non-economic features, such as aesthetics, environmental integrity and biological diversity. It is also difficult to place monetary values on environmental management functions that natural systems perform, including stormwater management and improvement of water quality. Benefits from natural green space also accrue to the community at large, and the common benefit of these spaces may exceed any price an individual landowner may be willing to pay for the benefit.

In addition, proximity to greenways, trails, and natural open spaces can also directly benefit the building industry and real estate market. Proximity may increase property values, increase the marketability of adjacent properties, and promote faster sales (U.S. National Park Service, 1995).

However, researchers have attempted to place a private property value on natural open space by comparing housing prices in areas near and adjacent to parks, greenbelts, lakes and oceans with similar residences without an open space amenity. While this methodology has several shortcomings (for example, the inability to account for ecosystem and community benefits), it continues to be employed as a means to demonstrate the benefit of natural open space in urban and near-urban areas.

How Greenspace Affects Property Values

Generally, studies from the past 25 years across the United States and Europe have demonstrated that natural open space has a positive effect on real estate values. Quantified benefits to communities include higher residential property values in areas proximate to, and/or with views of, natural open space. Higher urban and exurban property values are also experienced near the edge of urban growth boundaries and in ecologically sensitive areas, such as coastlines, where development has been limited and natural features preserved.

Home-buyers are willing to pay a premium for properties near natural open space, and residents will pay to permanently protect a natural open space in their neighbourhood. For example, in British Columbia, two studies have highlighted the importance of natural green space protection for private property values. However, few studies have been done in B.C. on the cost-benefit implications of greenspace proximity to commercial or industrial development. Indications are that current findings related to private residential property do not translate to these other uses.

A study of riparian suburban greenways by Hamilton and Quayle (1999) at the University of British Columbia indicates that proximity to greenways has a positive property value effect of around 15%. The authors studied the sales of single detached dwellings in four different areas, three in the Lower Mainland and one on Southern Vancouver Island. The authors conducted surveys of the residents to determine their views of the effect of the greenway, and also used a multiple regression analysis on house sales. From the questionnaire, 75% of the respondents believed that the greenways had a positive affect on their property value. They estimated the overall average impact of the greenway on their property value to be 21%. The regression analysis showed that in reality the proximity to a greenway increased their property value by 15%.

Likewise, Curran and Draeseke (2000) examined the property values of two natural areas in Saanich, adjacent to Victoria. The researchers concluded that there is a positive property value effect for properties within 100 meters of the natural open area.

How Greenspace Affects Local Government Revenue

The presence of natural open space also has property tax implications for local governments and communities. Several studies have shown that agricultural and open space land pays significantly more in taxes than it requires in servicing from

local governments. Likewise, the positive effect of natural open space on property values can result in higher assessments and thus property tax revenues for local governments. For example, in one Boulder, Colorado neighbourhood, the aggregate property value of the greenbelt was approximately \$5.4 million, which resulted in potentially \$500,000 annually to neighbourhood property tax revenue.

Citizen Action

- Insure policies in OCP for protecting green space and developing green ways
- Work with Real Estate Boards to protect green space

Additional References on Economic Benefits of Green Space Protection

Websites

Ecotrust Canada	www.ecotrustcan.org
Urban Development Institute	www.udi.bc.ca
The Trust for Public Land	www.tpl.org
The Land Centre	www.landcentre.ca/index.cfm

Publications

For a review of the literature, see Curran and Draeseke (2000) or Hamilton and Quayle (1999).

Benson, E.D. et al (1998), "Pricing Residential Amenities: The Value of a View," *Journal of Real Estate Finance & Economics*, 16:1, 55-73.

Curran, D. and R. Draeseke (2000), "Economic Benefits of Natural Greenspace Protection: The Effect on Real Estate Value" Report prepared for the District of Saanich.

Hamilton, S. and M. Quayle (1999), *Corridors of Green and Gold: Impact of Riparian Suburban Greenways on Property Values* (Vancouver: Fraser River Action Plan, Department of Fisheries and Oceans).

Lindsey, G. and G. Knaap (1999), "Willingness to Pay for Urban Greenway Projects" *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 65:3, 297-313.

United States National Park Service (1995), *Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance, Economic Impacts of Protecting Rivers, Trails, and Greenway Corridors*, (Fourth Ed.) Chapter 1 "Real Property Values".

Demand Management Tools

Inefficient use of our community infrastructure, whether public or private, increases household costs (energy & tax bill) and puts pressure on local governments to continually seek new development to finance previous growth. Extending infrastructure like roads, sewers, water lines, etc., into new areas encourages low-density sprawl, adding further to municipal costs.

To address these issues, smart growth advocates can promote a demand management approach for use of resources and services. Demand management means working to reduce the demand for a service, in this case roads, such that fewer roads are needed. This is only possible by developing compatible land uses near to one another and densifying urban centres. When demand management is combined with urban growth boundaries and the protection of agricultural land and greenspace, sprawl can be slowed and communities can take time to ensure that development is ecologically and socially beneficial.

The following Issue Sheet addresses the need to establish transportation demand practices that reduce the high economic and environmental costs of supplying an extensive system of roads, parking, and other automobile related transportation infrastructure. However, demand management practices can also be used by local governments to reduce demand for other municipal infrastructure, such as:

Storm Water & Sewer Systems

- Adopt on-site storm water management technology (permeable paving, detention ponds, bio-swales, roof-top gardens, re-cycled grey-water for toilets, irrigation)
- Integrate stormwater with stream corridor management
- Introduce water metering
- Reform building codes (efficient plumbing, deal with own waste)

Energy

- Adopt energy efficient building design guidelines
- Adopt energy efficient site design guidelines
- Conduct community energy planning activities

Transportation Demand Management

by Stefan Bjarnason

The average number of vehicle kilometers traveled per person has been growing since the 1940s and shows little sign of slowing down. With the ever-increasing costs of expanding the road network, our communities are increasingly auto-dependent.

Municipalities keep building, straightening and widening the supply of automobile infrastructure to keep up with this increase, with the apparent hope that creating more, bigger roads will solve our traffic woes. However, research shows that expanding road capacity can have the opposite effect. Far from easing congestion, new roads attract more drivers and soon become congested again. The recognition that this model of road construction does not work has led to the development of new strategies and policy tools to fight the costs, frustrations and inefficiencies of too much traffic.

These strategies and tools are called Transportation Demand Management (TDM). Integrated into regional and community planning policies, including development standards, urban design guidelines, zoning bylaws and other land-use tools, TDM can reduce the number of vehicles on the roads, alleviate urban traffic congestion, contribute to air quality improvements, and reduce a municipality's infrastructure costs.

Managing the Demand

TDM practices provide an alternative to the traditional approach to fighting congestion (i.e. expanding the supply of roads, bridges, and other traffic management infrastructure). The alternative is to reduce or redistribute the demand for transportation by increasing the range of choices for affordable, accessible transportation options, or by reducing the aggregate need for transportation. Smart growth supporters can support the following Transportation Demand Management practices:

- Transportation planning at regional level
- Inexpensive alternatives to cars (sidewalks, bike lanes, bike racks)
- Enhance pedestrian safety (road crossings, marking, signs, overpasses)
- Transit priority measures (bus bulges, smart traffic signals, HOV/bus lanes)
- Increase transit supply and service

- Reduction of parking supply (apply maximum parking requirements to new development versus current minimum requirements)
- Higher cost of downtown parking spaces to discourage use of autos
- High-occupancy vehicle lanes to facilitate carpooling
- Peak-period tolls to trim rush hour traffic
- Traffic calming (circles, funnels, landscaping, road texture, diverters, etc.)
- Streets reclamation (street parties, public art)
- Trip reduction programs (schools, employers)
- Flexible work hours
- Telecommuting to eliminate trips altogether
- Fiscal incentives (location efficient mortgages)
- Mixed use communities with shopping and transit within a 5 minute walk

Trip Reduction Programs

TDM strategies can be executed at a variety of scales. Although density increases and land use changes are government initiatives, one TDM application is at the employer or institute level, or at locations where there are a number of employers grouped together. These approaches provide employees access to programs and services, which encourage changes in commuting patterns. Strategies include incentives that make public transit or other non-auto modes more attractive, such as bus passes and showers for cyclists, as well as disincentives to solo commuting, such as parking charges. TDM programs can also be implemented on a regional basis, although experience has shown that the success of TDM programs tend to be sensitive to the employers' level of commitment. The most effective approach to developing successful TDM programs may be through cooperative partnerships between government agencies and local employers, with a mandate to reduce SOV travel and enhance commuter alternatives. Employer-based approaches have been shown to be much more effective with local government coordination and encouragement.

In addition to providing cooperative support to employers to implement business and institutional programs, municipal and regional governments can have significant impact on regional traffic conditions through legislative action. Municipal governments can require large employers and developers to provide a percentage of parking spaces for rideshare vehicles, and mandate maximum rather than minimum numbers of parking spaces in new developments. Research has shown that reducing the availability of free and low-cost parking is among the most effective strategies to get lone drivers out of their cars. Municipal governments can also encourage ridesharing and alternative modes by reducing the

number of public parking spaces available and increasing the cost for those which remain.

Other options for local government include the provision of financial and legislative support for ridesharing programs, the funding of improvements to public transit, bikeways and pedestrian infrastructure, the establishment of congestion pricing, and the levying of gas, parking and vehicle taxes. Though such measures have proven effective in encouraging single-occupancy drivers to alter their destructive travel behaviour, politicians can seldom be counted on to undertake such bold initiatives without encouragement. In addition to public support, such progressive changes often require the dedicated efforts of citizens committed to a better future.

In spite of obvious benefits, Transportation Demand Management programs can face obstacles to implementation. Workplace-based programs most likely to achieve success are those organized and implemented at the worker committee level, and with management support. The first step is to familiarize yourself with the details of approaches that have worked at comparable organizations, detail a similar TDM strategy with a committee of colleagues, and approach management with your proposal. Be prepared to explain the ways in which the organization will benefit, such as a reduction in the need for parking and healthier, happier employees.

Others strategies include public policy and regulatory schemes such as taxes and restrictions on auto use, and land-use approaches—perhaps the most effective long-term strategies—such as increasing densities and altering zoning patterns, land use mix and urban design. These and other TDM strategies can reduce traffic congestion and increase the range of travel options, but without the need for massive public investments that traditional capacity-enhancing measures require.

What Citizens Can Do

Smart growth supporters can lobby for TDMs in their *OCPs* and through other development bylaws. A number of these strategies can form the basis of a regional or municipal transit plan where alternative transportation is given priority over cars.

Additional Demand Management References

Web-sites

Northwest Environment Watch	www.northwestwatch.org
Surface Transportation Policy Project	www.transact.org
Smart Growth Network	www.smartgrowth.org
Environment Canada	www.ec.gc.ca/emission
National Academy of Sciences	www.cutr.eng.usf.edu
American Public Transit Association	www.apta.com
Institute of Transportation Engineers	www.ite.org
Urban Development Institute	www.udl.bc.ca
Victoria Transportation Policy Inst.	www.vtqi.org
Directory of Transportation	www.tac-atc.ca
The Land Centre	www.landcentre.ca/index.cfm
Center of Excellence For Sustainable Development	www.sustainable.doe.gov
Center for Livable Communities	www.lgc.org/freepub/land_use/index.html
Energy Aware Committee	www.energyaware.bc.ca/toolkit.htm
Green Builders	www.nrg-builder.com/greenbld.htm
Better Environmentally Sound Transportation	www.best.bc.ca

Ecosystem Planning

British Columbians value their natural environment. With increased population growth and development pressure on the land base, many green spaces, open areas, stream corridors, and other natural areas are increasingly vulnerable to degradation.

What is Ecosystem Planning?

It is important to identify areas worth protecting. Community groups can work with local and regional planners to set these areas aside from development. With the introduction of regional growth management strategies, the development of model stewardship bylaws, and the increasing use of sophisticated geographic information technology, many communities in B.C. now possess a number of effective tools for ecosystem planning and green development.

Ecosystem planning means that before development plans and decisions are made, local government—with the help of planners and smart growth advocates—first identify, inventory, map, prioritize, and plan the protection or restoration and enhancement key environmental features (adapted from *Programs for Land-Based Habitat Conservation in B.C.: a Report to the CRD Roundtable Sub-Committee on Land-Based Habitat*, 2001). Including:

- Water-courses, water-bodies, watersheds and groundwater recharge areas
- Flood-plains, riparian zones, and wetlands
- Critical habitat for significant species and for support of biodiversity
- Ecologically special areas, such as rare grassland, forest types, and productive soils
- Sensitive or hazardous terrain such as steep slopes, deserts and alpine regions that are susceptible to damage from some forms of development
- Natural recreation areas
- Natural lands with the potential to provide links with other green spaces

Publications on this subject are readily available. The SMART GROWTH TOOL KIT summarizes key ecosystem planning tools, making recommendations for promoting their effective use. Readers are also directed to *Environmental Stewardship and Complete Communities: A Report on Municipal Initiatives in British Columbia* (1999), by Deborah Curran, located in Part IV.

Ecosystem Planning Framework

Ecosystem planning acknowledges our dependence on nature, and accepts that such dependency is accompanied by a responsibility to appropriately manage ecological complexities, uncertainties and natural limits. Fulfilling this mandate means setting long-term goals, paying attention to future effects of current decisions, respecting local uniqueness and giving precedence to planning mechanisms that are flexible enough to adjust to the unexpected.

Like any planning process, ecosystem planning starts with the general and moves toward the specific. The following is a suggested ecosystem planning framework. Smart growth supporters can best promote smart growth principles during the first two stages.

1. Set broad goals
2. Develop clear policies & priorities
3. Collect information (inventory & map important natural features)
4. Establish management strategies and guidelines (protection & development)
5. Create or adopt stewardship bylaws (where required for stronger enforcement)
6. Apply, monitor bylaws

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Promoting Ecosystem Planning Objectives

Citizens can promote smart growth ecosystem planning objectives, such as those listed below during the development and review processes for *RGS* and *OCPs*:

- Long-term planning at the watershed scale
- Well-defined and permanently protected environmentally sensitive and hazardous areas, greenways and wildlife corridors
- Abundant supply of green, recreational open-space, designed to attract people at all times of day
- Water and sewage systems that make use of natural runoff and which help preserve site permeability by imitating natural watershed and water filtration conditions
- Alternative modes of travel, integrated into a multi-modal transportation system

The *Official Community Plan* is the fundamental document that guides development in a community and specifies guidelines with respect to the manner by which special environmental conditions or objectives are addressed. The *OCP* may also assign areas where development approval information is required and

define the conditions for providing that information. However, the *OCP Review* may not give community members enough time to identify all of the important assets they want to protect in their region for the next fifty years. As a result, these plans may be developed with an inadequate amount of information. Community groups may end up campaigning to protect particular streams, wetlands, woodlands, heritage buildings, important views and other significant assets on an issue by issue basis. This is highly inefficient, time consuming and often unsuccessful.

An alternative is to conduct the work *before* the official community planning exercises begin. Important assets can be identified, recorded, and mapped before protection strategies and development plans are drafted, thus ensuring the long-term preservation of these assets. In addition to the low-tech community mapping activities discussed in Part III, there are also several computer-based technologies that can be used to carry out geographic research and produce important inventories of community assets.

Geographic Information Systems and Computer Modeling

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Computer Modelling Software are computer-based programs that can be used to produce highly accurate, informative maps of significant community assets (e.g. fish bearing streams, view-scapes, heritage sites, agricultural soils, etc). These technologies can also help the community reach agreement about which assets should receive priority protection. Used imaginatively, computer-based tools can:

- Deepen community knowledge of natural landscape features
- Show ideal locations for development
- Reveal historical development patterns and future trends
- Record, track and display in maps a wide variety of smart growth indicators at various scales, from single neighborhood to entire region (e.g. soils, terrain slope, species diversity, hydrology, fire hazards, political jurisdictions, proposed development, land-use, housing density, employment density, transportation routes, infrastructure location, service levels, etc.)

Citizens can also use these tools to gain a greater understanding of the way planning decisions affect them over time. For example, a computer simulation can show the maturing of 50-year-old trees in just seconds, or the growth of a region 25 years into the future in response to different variables suggested by a live audience. Other *GIS* tools enable citizens to see their recommendations turned from thought to design within hours. This rapid response helps to achieve public consensus for innovative plans. Other tools may demonstrate an already existing

consensus around desired models of ecosystem protection in their community. These tools are used increasingly by various organizations carrying out ecosystem planning activities in British Columbia. As a result, a number of useful planning documents have been produced for different regions and communities. For example, The District of Saanich created an Environmentally Sensitive Areas Atlas that shows ecologically important areas in detail. When a development application is made, the Atlas assists the municipality and developer to suit the development to the site. Because the Atlas provides baseline information, any further studies of the site can be tailored for specific information.

Project Watershed, a non-profit organization in the Comox Valley on Vancouver Island uses several high-tech tools to develop an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Atlas that maps stream corridors, and other bio-physical features related to fish and other animal species. Like the Saanich Atlas, the Project Watershed Atlas is used as a planning tool by the Regional District and other government agencies to guide development.

The Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory (SEI) is a joint project of Environment Canada (Canadian Wildlife Service) and the B.C. Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, supported by the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund and Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative. The purpose of the SEI project is to identify remnants of rare and fragile terrestrial ecosystems and to encourage land-use decisions that will ensure the continued integrity of these ecosystems. The SEI systematically identified and mapped relatively unmodified ecosystems on the coastal lowlands of east Vancouver Island and adjacent Gulf Islands. It is the first inventory of its kind to focus on mapping remnant ecosystems in a highly disturbed landscape.

How Smart Growth Supporters Can Use Mapping & Inventories

Because many of these technologies are very expensive, few community groups can afford to purchase them without assistance. However, there are other ways to obtain their use. The following are just some of the ways available to smart growth advocates.

- Obtain existing maps and inventories from any community/regional organization that is already using these tools
- Seek funding to bring these resources into your community
- Create a non-profit organization dedicated to mapping bio-physical & other features

- Partner with local high school, regional college, or nearest university to create a practicum for geography or information technology students to conduct research
- Lobby for, and participate in, community mapping exercises held in your community
- Encourage municipal staff to use these technologies before planning new development
- Develop working partnerships with government agencies such as Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Ministry of Environment, etc. and share equipment.

Additional Eco System Planning References

Canada Land Inventory www.geogratis.cgdi.gc.ca

Urban Design Institute (UK) www.placecheck.com

District of Saanich www.gov.saanich.bc.ca/fpweb/municipal_departments/planning/environmentally_significant_area.htm

Project Watershed Sensitive Habitat Atlas

www.projectwatershed.bc.ca

Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory

www.elp.gov.bc.ca/rib/cbs/sei

Integrated Stormwater and Stream Corridor Management

Adapted from *Integrated Stormwater and Stream Corridor Management*, by Bill Derry & Kim Stephens, 2000

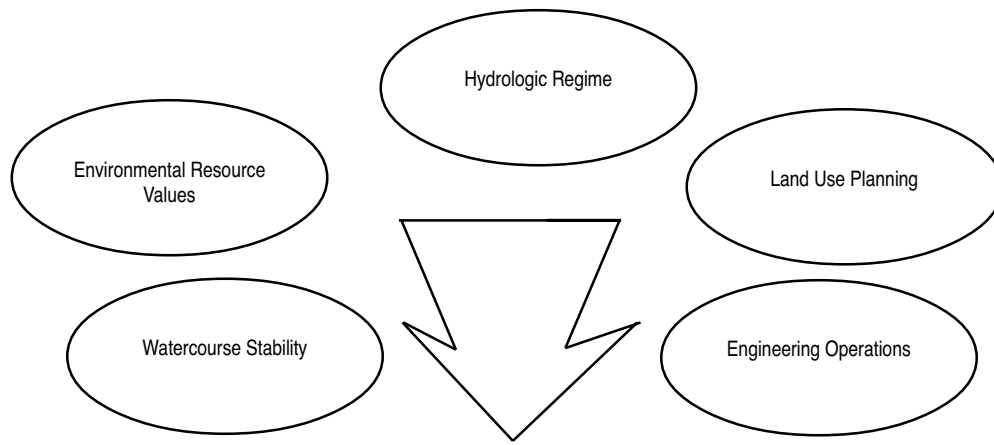
A comprehensive, science-based management approach that considers entire watersheds and their annual stream-flow patterns, along with the consequences of rainfall-runoff processes. Because the approach encompasses hydrological changes that result from the impervious surfaces that accompany urbanization, it is guided by planners, engineers, and other 'experts'. However, public involvement from smart growth advocates is an important early step in the process. Introducing this ecosystem-based approach to stormwater management involves:

1. Embarking on a comprehensive drainage planning process (*CDP*)
2. Developing an integrated stormwater management strategy
3. Implementing a comprehensive drainage plan

The fundamental question to answer during the first stage is, "How can the ecological values of our stream corridors and receiving waters be protected and enhanced by a Comprehensive Drainage Plan that also facilitates development and/or redevelopment?" The emphasis for smart growth is on reducing the percentage of impervious areas and building detention facilities to serve an environmental function.

The ultimate goal of Comprehensive Drainage Planning is to develop an Integrated Stormwater Management Strategy, and address the spectrum of runoff impacts. The purpose of the hydro-technical component is to protect property from the dramatic impacts of extreme storms; the environmental components protect ecosystems from the impacts of frequent storms.

An ecosystem-based approach to integrated stormwater management is built through a hierarchical or cascading process involving provincial legislation (which provides local government with enabling tools), the municipality's *Official Community Plan* (which defines community goals and livability objectives), and integrated stormwater management practices (which protect both property and ecosystems). The following diagram illustrates how all factors are combined to create a long-term strategy for stream corridor protection.



Integrated storm water management strategy	
Master Plan for storm drainage and creek stability	Best Management Practices for urban run off quality control and treatment
Policy Framework for developing greenways along stream corridors	Monitoring Program to determine environmental health of stream corridors

A *CDP* is an integral component of local government’s land-use development and growth management strategy because upstream activities have downstream consequences. Hence, a *CDP* is shaped by five objectives:

- To classify watercourses based on fisheries values;
- To route urban runoff from uplands areas through lowlands areas;
- To alleviate existing drainage, erosion, and flooding concerns;
- To protect major streamside resources, including riparian and aquatic habitat;
- To remediate existing and/or potential water quality problem areas.

CDPs can deliver three products:

- A complete inventory of the physical system;
- A plan to protect resources, resolve identified problems, accommodate growth;
- A management program that includes monitoring, education, maintenance activities, and financing.

These products should be developed in partnership with the community to engender public support for the comprehensive plan. Developing and implement-

ing a customized plan to suit local government concerns, needs, means, and priorities requires systematic consensus building to guarantee political commitment.

Developing Management Guidelines

Based on our current knowledge of the science of watershed management, certain guidelines can be identified. Goals must be established in each watershed and across the region based on the value of stream resources, the character of land-use in the watershed, and community values. We must understand the current condition of the watershed's salmon-supporting habitat, what is possible in terms of protection and restoration, and what our long-term commitment is to protecting healthy areas and restoring what has been damaged. Most importantly, watersheds that currently support wild salmon populations or that have the potential to support them must be protected. In the watersheds, constraints to development across the watershed include:

- Maintaining effective impervious surfaces close to zero;
- Infiltrating or reusing runoff from developing areas;
- Retaining significant forest cover across the watershed (numerical hydrologic modeling suggests that 60% to 70% is a minimum amount); and
- Maintaining broad buffers of undisturbed native vegetation for a substantial majority of the overall length of the riparian corridor.

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These criteria are not interchangeable; all are necessary. Most such watersheds in urban areas no longer meet these criteria. If development is to continue in watersheds supporting wild salmon, we need development to proceed in ways so that small and even moderate-sized storms produce no runoff, even from paved areas. To meet this goal, we must gain additional experience in achieving better infiltration or reuse of stormwater. 'Zero-discharge development' is relatively easy for residential land use with appropriate soils. For the more prevalent areas with soil limitations, however, additional experience is needed to ensure success.

For watersheds entirely within urban areas, watershed management goals must be established by the community through a watershed planning process that supports the presence of a healthy, living, natural system, even if salmon use is limited. Urban streams do have tremendous value: They may support rich aquatic biological communities, including benthic invertebrates and fish. They provide open space, aesthetic and educational benefits, and an enhanced sense of local community. In already-urbanized areas, accomplishing this alternative set of goals requires an effective management program that addresses the hydrological impacts of development and protects riparian corridors.

Stewardship Tools

Adapted from *Community Stewardship: A Guide to Establishing your own Group*

“Stewardship is the act of taking responsibility for the well-being of the environment and doing something to restore or protect that well being”, including voluntary community action at the local level.

Environmental stewardship involves applying technical guidelines, standards, and designs to the assessment, protection, rehabilitation, or enhancement of local ecosystems, while maintaining opportunities for development to take place, where appropriate. Stewardship activities make specific use of information obtained from mapping and inventory tools discussed earlier.

The Stewardship Series

Funded by both the federal and provincial governments, in partnership with various non-governmental organizations, the STEWARDSHIP SERIES is a group of publications that describe various stewardship activities. They cover the following issues:

- Official Community Plans
- Creating Greenways
- Protecting Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Protecting Watercourses
- Protecting Groundwater
- Protecting Trees
- Soil Removal & Deposition
- Landscaping Guidelines
- Federal / Provincial Habitat Protection Guidelines
- Riparian Zone Setbacks / Buffers
- Zoning Bylaws
- Development Permits
- Development Variance Permits
- Subdivision Bylaws
- Referrals

How Smart Growth Supporters Can Use Stewardship Tools

Smart growth supporters can use these stewardship guides (downloaded free from the internet at www.stewardshipcentre.org) to participate more effectively in the creation of local or regional stewardship programs. Those with a knowledge of environmental stewardship activities can work with local government staff to develop and monitor stewardship bylaws based on the other tools discussed earlier. For learning more about the bylaw development process see: *Stewardship Bylaws A Guide for Local Governments (revised June 1999)*. Planning to create such programs and bylaws requires a high level of awareness and direct involvement by local groups. Start by identifying what actions to take, and what Best Management Practices are needed. In some cases, some technical training may be required.

Community Based Stewardship Activities

Many types of stewardship activities can be undertaken by smart growth advocates at the local level, ranging in scope from one-day clean-ups to ongoing projects aimed at the management of entire watershed. Other activities include:

Watershed Planning and Management

- Develop a community vision for the watershed
- Conduct multi-stakeholder planning for land and water uses
- Link with community and regional, planning activities (*RGS & OCP*)

Incorporate stewardship policies in *OCP*. For example:

- Require developers to conduct ecological site planning & design
- Avoid Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- Retain natural vegetation
- Limit the amount of impervious surfaces
- Create vegetation buffers between built areas and water ways
- Use detention ponds to control storm water
- Separate storm water from sewage systems
- Create bike & pedestrian trails along water courses (at a safe distance)

Create or update land-use regulations to implement stewardship policies:

- Zoning bylaws
- Impervious surfaces bylaw
- Use setbacks
- Tree cutting bylaws
- Erosion control bylaw

- Watercourse bylaw
- Stormwater runoff control and management (limit impervious surfaces)

Education & Awareness Raising

- Distribute information on various personal practices
- Label drains that lead to salmon producing streams
- Establish a nature centre and interpretive trails
- Make school presentations

Research & Assessment

- Invite Community Mapping Workshops specialists
- Carry out bio-physical inventories

Monitoring Environmental Conditions

- Count bird, fish, and wildlife numbers
- Monitor air / water quality
- Monitor vegetation

Surveillance / Watchdog Work

- Conduct stream watch programs
- Surveillance of activities in environmentally sensitive areas
- Surveillance of polluting activities
- Surveillance of development projects
- Review local government or resource management agencies

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Restoration or Enhancement

- Clean up projects
- Build and maintain nesting boxes
- Plant trees
- Reconstruct shorelines
- Re-stock fish streams

Preservation of Valued Places

- Designate parks
- Plan Greenways
- Education & lobby land owners
- Manage protected areas under other jurisdictions

Additional Stewardship References

Healing the Land... Healing Ourselves: A guide to ecological restoration resources for British Columbia, by BC Environmental Network Educational Foundation, 2001.

Conservation Covenants

This article adapted from *Greening Your Title: A Guide to Best Practices for Conservation Covenants, 2000* by Ann Hillyer, Judy Atkins, West Coast Environmental Law Association

A conservation covenant is a long-term commitment by the landowner and the conservation organization or government agency to the stewardship of the land. Some privately owned land may have significant ecological, cultural, heritage, aesthetic and recreational value to the surrounding community. Conservation covenants offer a way in which to protect these values for the enjoyment of future generations. Conservation covenants can be used to:

- Protect ecologically valuable features of land
- Secure appropriate management of various types of ecosystems and critical habitat
- Provide buffer zones next to parks, wetlands, other environmentally sensitive areas
- Protect sensitive areas in newly subdivided developments
- Limit forestry activity on private land to ecologically sustainable forestry
- Create trail systems and greenways through a number of parcels of adjoining land
- Protect riparian habitat from logging, clearing or other development
- Protect important heritage and cultural sites
- Ensure proper and permanent stewardship of ecologically sensitive land.

The landowner and the covenant holder(s) (conservation organizations, land trusts or government agencies) are the key players involved in creating conservation covenants.

Key Principles For Success

Professional Advice

Conservation covenants may have serious legal and financial consequences for the various parties involved. Both landowners and covenant holders should seek professional legal, financial, and surveying advice as early as possible in the process, before entering into a covenant to protect land.

Management Plans and Agreements

It is essential that the landowner and the conservation organization assess the management needs of the property and, if necessary, agree on a management

plan for the land, including who will undertake the management activities and secure the resources for carrying out long-term land management.

Collecting Baseline Information

Baseline information describes the existing state of the land (flora, fauna, natural and cultural features) at the time the conservation covenant is placed. Depending on the particular circumstances, it is generally prepared in the form of a detailed written report accompanied by a combination of surveys, photos, videotapes and maps. It is sometimes referred to as a baseline inventory or baseline documentation report. Baseline information also helps the parties identify conservation objectives and draft the covenant itself. It provides the benchmark against which to measure changes in the land and its features. Baseline information is essential to the monitoring process as it makes it easier for both present and future landowners to comply with the terms of the covenant.

Important aspects to consider about baseline information:

- when to collect it
- what types of information to collect
- where to find the information
- who should compile it
- agreeing on content and format
- where to keep it

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Monitoring and Landowner Contact

Monitoring is essential to ensure that the objectives of a conservation covenant are met. It also provides information to assist with the management of the land. Monitoring is carried out to measure and record change on the land, determine the effectiveness of the covenant to protect the land and ensure compliance with the terms of the covenant. It provides information that may be used as evidence if enforcement of the covenant is necessary. How much monitoring is necessary will vary from covenant to covenant.

Things to consider about monitoring and landowner contact:

- role of monitors
- relations between landowners and covenant holders
- selecting and training monitors
- determining what, how and how often to monitor
- types of documentation
- creating records that meet evidentiary standards

Change in Ownership

Conservation covenants are intended to protect land indefinitely. Covenant holders must therefore be prepared to deal with change of ownership to ensure that the covenant requirements are met and the land continues to be adequately protected after the change of ownership.

Other Things to Consider with Respect to Conservation Covenants:

- Land within an Agricultural Land Reserve
- Access to the Land

Challenges

Dispute Resolution

Even with careful drafting of covenant documents, occasional disputes related to conservation covenants may arise between landowners and covenant holders. A dispute might occur if there were:

- A difference in interpretation of a specific provision in a conservation covenant,
- An honest mistake on the part of a landowner about what types of activities were permitted on the land or where certain activities should take place, or
- A deliberate violation of a provision in a conservation covenant, particularly if repeated.

To address these possibilities, it is useful for landowners and conservation organizations to consider what type of dispute resolution mechanism to include in the covenant document. A range of dispute resolution mechanisms are available, including negotiation, mediation and arbitration. There are costs associated with resolving disputes and the covenant should set out how these costs will be allocated among the parties. Generally, parties will share the cost of dispute resolution.

Protection Against Liability

Both landowner and covenant holder are potentially liable to third parties. Liability could arise in relation to individuals who enter on the land subject to the covenant. There is also potential liability in nuisance to neighboring landowners.

Citizen Involvement in Conservation Covenants

- Educate land owners regarding the value of conserving land for future generations
- Monitor covenants that have existed for many years
- Form a local land trust (non-profit) if one does not exist

Additional Conservation Covenants References

West Coast Environmental Law Association	www.wcel.org
Surveyor General	www.elp.gov.bc.ca/clrs
The Land Centre	www.landcentre.ca/index.cfm
The Stewardship Centre for BC	www.stewardshipcentre.org
The Land Conservancy of British Columbia	www.conservancy.bc.ca
Land Use Coordination Office	www.luco.gov.bc.ca

Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)

Protecting scarce agricultural land from urban sprawl is a key smart growth strategy.

First, a healthy agricultural sector helps diversify the provincial economy, supporting the livelihood of over two hundred thousand British Columbians. Second, agricultural products increase our food security and reduce our dependence on imported foods. Third, diverse farmlands create a variety of wildlife habitats and support bio-diversity. Fourth, open, green spaces near urban areas are a valuable resource, providing scenic landscapes, recreation opportunities, and contribute to our enjoyment of BC's expansive outdoors.

As discussed throughout the TOOL KIT, urban sprawl consumes vast quantities of land. In some cases, this land is removed from the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), a regulatory system that was established by legislation in 1973 to preserve agricultural land in BC, while encouraging agricultural uses within the reserve. The ALR has been extremely successful at preserving farmland in BC since its creation. However, without monitoring, this reserve may be threatened.

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Smart growth supporters are interested in ensuring the ALR maintains its integrity and continues to protect farmland while limiting the encroachment of urban sprawl. They are also active in promoting responsible planning in areas on or bordering agricultural lands. Since many urban and rural communities are partly or completely surrounded by ALR, these lands comprise a de facto urban growth boundary and green belt. Smart growth supporters want this ALR/UGB line maintained.

How it Works

Land-use planning related to agricultural land involves a number of regulatory statutes, including: the *Land Reserve Commission Act* (formerly the Land Commission Act), the *Local Government Act*, and the *Farm Practices Protection Act*. The recently re-named Land Reserve Commission (LRC), rules on applications to remove land from the ALR, include land into the ALR, and for permission to subdivide ALR land or use it for non-farm uses. For more information on how these statutes work, refer to pages 103-115 of the *Smart Growth Guide to Local Government Law and Advocacy*.

How the ALR Affects Land Use Planning

Smart growth supporters should be familiar with ALR procedures and their land-use planning implications. Important things to know are that local government:

- Is responsible, along with the LRC, for land use planning in the ALR. For example, they have the authority to pass (with approval from provincial Minister of Agriculture) 'farm by-laws' affecting agricultural land, such as promoting environmentally sound farming practices.
- Must authorize an application to the Agricultural Land Commission to exclude land from the ALR. Otherwise, lack of authorization effectively disallows the application.
- May not allow non-farm uses (or other land-use restrictions listed in the Act) to take place in the ALR.

In addition:

- An approving officer may not approve subdivision of ALR land.
- A variance permit may not be issued, except for farm uses in the ALR.
- Development Permit Areas may be used to protect agricultural lands (buffer zones, setbacks, screening, landscaping, fencing, and siting of buildings).
- Any land-use bylaws within a municipality or regional district must be consistent with the LRC Act.
- An OCP that applies to any land located in the ALR must be referred to the LRC for comment after first reading and prior to adoption.

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Supporting A Stronger Agricultural Land Reserve

Opportunities for citizen involvement in the protection of agricultural land are the same as for other land-use planning and decision-making processes, namely:

- Lobbying regional districts to develop *Regional Growth Strategies* that clearly establish growth management policies that protect the ALR
- Developing an *Official Community Plan* that addresses growth management and ALR protection
- Creating land-use bylaws
- Creating and monitoring Agricultural Advisory Committees
- Lobbying local government not to authorize private applications to exclude land from the ALR
- Attending and commenting at public hearings where required

Additional Agricultural References

British Columbia Agriculture Council: www.bcac.bc.ca/

British Columbia Agriculture Awareness:www.agaware.bc.ca/

Agricultural Work force Policy Board (AWPB) 2795 Grafton Avenue, Qualicum Beach, BC, V9K 1W8, Phone: (250) 752-1564, Fax: (250) 752-5403, e-mail: awpb@island.net

Farm Folk/City Folk, 131 Water St., Vancouver, BC, V6B 4M3, Phone: (604) 730-0450, Fax: (604) 730-0451, www.ffcf.bc.ca, e-mail: sustain@ffcf.bc.ca

Canadian Organic Growers, P.O. Box 6408, Station J, Ottawa, Ontario, K2A 3Y6, Phone: (613) 291-9047, e-mail: info@cog.ca www.cog.ca