



Promoting Public Health Through Smart Growth



Ione Smith, Smart Growth BC
Healthy Community Planning Seminar
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Outline



- Smart Growth BC
- Principles of smart growth
- Health impacts of current planning system
- Summary of research findings
- Local government role
- Policies to advance healthy communities



Who is Smart Growth BC?



- Province wide, non-profit, non-governmental organization
- Founded in 1999
- 5 staff; board of 10-12
- Funded by foundations, grants, programs/fees and donations
- Work with community groups, local government, businesses to increase livability

What is smart growth



- Smart Growth is a collection of development strategies that
 - ✓ enhance our quality of life,
 - ✓ protect our environment, and
 - ✓ use tax revenues wisely
- Managing growth
- Providing choice

Smart Growth Principles



1. *Mix land uses.*
2. *Build compact neighbourhoods.*
3. *Provide a variety of transportation choices.*
4. *Create diverse housing opportunities.*
5. *Encourage growth in existing communities.*
6. *Preserve open spaces, natural beauty, and environmentally sensitive areas.*
7. *Maintain agricultural lands.*
8. *Utilize smarter, and cheaper infrastructure and buildings.*
9. *Foster a unique neighbourhood identity.*
10. *Nurture engaged citizens.*

What's Wrong with the Current System?



Environmental Impacts



- Air pollution
- Excess pavement and habitat loss
- Disposal of used cars/parts



Financial Impacts



- Costs to individuals to buy, insure, maintain, and gas up:
 - CAA estimates about \$8,000/year
- Costs to taxpayers of building and repairing roads, bridges, parking lots, stormwater systems...
 - \$70 billion in GTA over next 25 years

Social Impacts



- Lack of housing and transportation choices



Social Impacts



- Health
 - Air pollution
 - Traffic accidents
 - Lack of access to services and amenities
 - Physical activity, obesity



Street connectivity



2 km

0.8 km

Research findings



- Significant research has been done in the area of urban form and health:
- American Journal of Health Promotion
 - American Journal of Preventative Medicine
 - Canadian Institute for Health Promotion
 - Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
 - Smart Growth America
 - Canadian Heart and Stroke Foundation
 - Ontario College of Family Physicians
 - Centers for Disease Control

Heart and Stroke Foundation 2005 Report Card



- Almost 50% of Canadian adults and 37% of Canadian children are now either overweight or obese.
- Canadians are more likely to meet 30 min daily activity level in moderate-to-high density neighbourhoods with community and commercial services in walking distance.



Ontario College of Family Physicians



Report on Public Health and Urban Sprawl in Ontario

- Sprawl = more driving = more air pollution
- Sprawl = less walking = more obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, cardio-vascular and other diseases
- Sprawl = more traffic = more accidents and fatalities and mental health impacts (stress, road rage and anxiety).

Health Outcomes Through Land Use



Role of local governments



- Policies, by-laws, zoning codes
- Regional growth strategies
- Education on benefits of smart growth

Policies for local government



Land use

- Increase density
- Zone for mixed-use neighbourhoods
- Protect and integrate greenspace
- Plan for town centres
- Develop in existing urbanized areas (infill)



Policies for local government



Design

- Create wide sidewalks, street lighting, awnings, storefronts facing the street, street trees, to increase walkability
- Increase connectivity of streets



Policies for local government



Transportation

- Provide efficient public transit
- Implement parking management strategies (pricing, supply, etc)
- Provide infrastructure and facilities for walkways, bikeways, bikes on buses, bike racks



Infill Development



www.urban-advantage.com

Upcoming Events...



- "Promoting Public Health Through Smart Growth" – SGBC report by Larry Frank and Todd Litman to be publicly released March 29th at breakfast networking session in Vancouver
- 2006 Conference May 5th at Westin Bayshore Inn, Vancouver "Innovations in Smart Growth Housing" – keynote speaker from BedZed, topics to include NIMBYism, affordability, densification, green buildings
- 1st Annual Smart Growth BC Awards – nominations due March 24th, to be awarded at the Conference on May 5th

For more information



www.smartgrowth.bc.ca

Thank you!