

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



• What is smart growth?

Smart growth is a collection of land use and development principles that aim to enhance our quality of life, preserve the natural environment, and save money over time. Smart growth policies improve and complete our regions by placing priority on infill, redevelopment, and green space protection. Communities that embrace the 10 principles of smart growth are vibrant, mixed-use and compact places; offer alternatives to driving; and provide excellent access to green space and farmland. Through smart growth, neighbourhoods develop the qualities that make them the best place for the people who call them home.

• What are the smart growth principles?

Mix land uses. Each neighbourhood has a mixture of homes, retail, business, and recreational facilities.

Build well-designed compact neighbourhoods. Residents can choose to live, work, shop and play in close proximity.

Provide a variety of transportation choices. Neighbourhoods have safe and efficient infrastructure for transportation options including walking, cycling and transit.

Create diverse housing opportunities. People in different family types, life stages and income levels can afford a home in the neighbourhood of their choice.

Encourage growth in existing communities. Investments in infrastructure, such as roads and schools, are used efficiently, and developments do not take up new land.

Preserve open spaces, natural beauty, and environmentally sensitive areas. Development respects natural landscape features and holds higher aesthetic, environmental, and financial value.

Protect and enhance agricultural lands. A secure and productive land base provides food security, employment, and habitat, and is maintained as an urban containment boundary.

Utilize smarter, and cheaper infrastructure and green buildings. Green buildings and other systems can save both money and the environment in the long run.

Foster a unique neighbourhood identity. Each community is unique, vibrant, diverse, and inclusive.

Nurture engaged citizens. Places belong to those who live, work, and play there. Engaged citizens participate in community life and decision-making.

• What is SmartGrowthBC?

Founded in 1999, Smart Growth British Columbia is a province-wide non-profit organization dedicated to **creating more livable communities**. Working with community groups, municipalities, businesses and professional associations, we are Canada's most effective and innovative non-governmental organization promoting environmentally, socially and fiscally sound land use and development.

• How does Smart Growth BC work?

Smart Growth BC creates more livable communities through a holistic combination of:

Education & Outreach

- ❖ Our **Community Assistance Program** helps community organizations engage more effectively in land use planning and development issues.
- ❖ Our **Annual Conference** offers professional development on smart growth best practices to planners, policy-makers, developers, and community leaders.
- ❖ Our **Voter Education Campaign** raises awareness of land use and smart growth responsibilities of local government for voters and candidates.
- ❖ Our wide assortment of **Guides and Toolkits** provide specific 'how-to' guidance for both citizens and governments on applying smart growth principles to their communities.

Research

We conduct and disseminate strategic research to support the integration of smart growth principles into practice. Recent publications include:

- ❖ *A Review of Best Practices in **Affordable Housing***
- ❖ *Innovative **Infrastructure Financing Mechanisms** for Smart Growth*
- ❖ *Promoting **Public Health** through Smart Growth*

Implementation

- ❖ **Smart Growth on the Ground** helps citizens and their elected leaders design and build smarter, more sustainable neighbourhoods.
- ❖ **The Sea-to-Sky Greenbelt Initiative** works with communities from Lions Bay to Pemberton to direct development towards compact town centres surrounded by rich wildlife habitat, working lands, and a wealth of recreation opportunities.
- ❖ **Smart Growth Advisory Services** assists local and regional governments on a fee-for-service basis with smart growth planning, policy development, and public engagement.

Policy & Advocacy

Our public policy work focuses on the connections between land use and pressing issues such as, **climate change, affordable housing, transportation alternatives, preservation of farmland, regional growth management, public health and planning**, and more!