



SmartGrowthBC

SMART GROWTH MYTHS & FACTS

MYTH #1: “Smart growth is just another expression for no growth.”

FACT: Smart growth is about growing responsibly and using our land and resources more efficiently.

CHALLENGE: Decide how we want to grow, and find creative ways to link economic development with the desire to protect the natural amenities we value.

MYTH #2: “Smart growth is anti-suburb.”

FACT: Smart growth encourages development that meets different objectives in various locations, including suburbs, downtown, and in between.

CHALLENGE: Plan suburban developments that are more compact, promote social cohesion, integrate land uses, reduce car dependency, and protect rural and green spaces.

MYTH #3: “Smart growth slows the approval process, and increases cost.”

FACT: By streamlining their development regulations and permitting procedures, municipalities can reward smart growth developers with speedier approvals and increased predictability.

CHALLENGE: Ensure the success of development that protects the environment, meets community goals, and is fiscally responsible.

MYTH #4: “Smart growth does not satisfy market demand for low density, single family development.”

FACT: Recent demographic and lifestyle shifts mean that two-adult, 2.5-child, middle class families comprise a minority of households. In fact, the emergence of smaller families, empty nesters, childless marriages, singles and aging boomers has created a shortfall in the availability of alternative housing options. Smart growth is about providing a range of housing options that includes apartments, townhouses, multifamily as well as single-detached housing.

CHALLENGE: Amend the current municipal regulatory framework that requires single use zones and limited transportation options, and instead contains inclusionary zoning by-laws for more affordable housing options.

MYTH # 5: “Urban growth boundaries mean higher housing prices.”

FACT: Concentrated growth and more compact communities mean more housing options, a greater supply of dwelling units, and thus lower housing prices. Portland, Oregon has used containment boundaries since 1974 and housing prices still compare favourably with other US cities where the availability of developable land is not regulated.

CHALLENGE: Integrate urban growth boundaries with other smart growth policies that support more affordable housing options.

MYTH #6: “Smart growth is bad for business.”

FACT: Compact communities increase the number of people within walking distance of shopping and transit, and are more cost-efficient. Smart growth policies support local economic development opportunities and creating vibrant downtown centres.

CHALLENGE: Encourage growth in existing areas to support local businesses and to use infrastructure and tax dollars efficiently. The business community in BC must take a leadership position in advancing smart growth policies in order to sustain productivity, competitiveness and quality of place.

MYTH #7: “Dense neighbourhoods are less livable and sustainable.”

FACT: Mixed-use neighbourhoods with a higher density can support transit; enable more sustainable energy delivery such as district heating systems; provide more shops, parks and services within walking distance; and enable protection of green space.

CHALLENGE: Invest in locally-appropriate design and comprehensive public involvement to ensure that new development meets the needs and vision of the community