



SMART GROWTH COMMUNITY PLANNING PROGRAM

Program Overview

The NYS Department of State (DOS) Smart Growth Community Planning Program is administered by the Office of Planning, Development & Community Infrastructure (OPDCI). The program awards funding to eligible communities for the development or update of local and countywide comprehensive plans, area plans or zoning codes that emphasize and integrate Smart Growth principles.

What is Smart Growth?

Smart Growth is a forward-thinking approach to planning and development that supports and integrates four key themes: Equity, Economy, Environment and Energy/Climate.

- **Equity**—Smart Growth champions inclusivity, equity and diversity by encouraging a variety of housing types and employment opportunities for people of all incomes, backgrounds, ages and abilities.
- **Economy**—Smart Growth enhances community quality of life, creates livable, sustainable communities and revitalizes downtowns, which is proven to help attract and retain businesses and workers.
- **Environment**—Environmental stewardship is woven into the fabric of Smart Growth, with green spaces and parks seamlessly integrated into community design.
- **Energy/Climate**—Smart Growth promotes walkable, bikeable, transit-accessible neighborhoods with a compact mix of land uses, which minimizes reliance on cars and thus reduces energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. Smart Growth also encourages clean energy and climate resiliency.

These themes form the foundation for all OPDCI programs and policies.

Smart Growth Principles



Develop plans and land use regulations that allow for and encourage mixed-use neighborhoods.



Enable a diverse mix of housing types that provide for opportunity and choice for all.



Prioritize infill and redevelopment of existing buildings to revitalize neighborhoods and downtowns, including areas around public transit.



Provide well-planned, equitable, and accessible public spaces.



Encourage compact neighborhood design and concentrated development around existing infrastructure.



Preserve open space, agricultural resources, and natural resources.



Prioritize transportation options such as walking, cycling, and public transportation.



Promote climate resiliency and adaptation, preferably through nature-based solutions, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



Build on unique traits to create an attractive and welcoming community with a strong sense of place.



Engage in an inclusive, collaborative public planning process that considers the needs and character of the community.



A recipient of the Smart Growth Community Planning program, Jamestown, NY has made a more welcoming downtown with improvements to lighting, landscaping, and widening the sidewalk to create a public space that encourages vibrancy within the city's core.

What is a comprehensive plan?

A comprehensive plan (or “comp plan”) is a local government’s blueprint for future growth and development. The comp plan outlines the community’s vision, sets goals to achieve the vision and provides policies to guide local land use and development decisions. It also ensures coordinated and well-planned development and invites ample public participation in the community planning process.

What is an area plan?

An area plan is similar to a comprehensive plan but for a specific area, such as a downtown, hamlet or Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). It focuses on the unique needs, circumstances and opportunities of that area.

What is zoning?

A zoning code is an enforcement tool that translates a comprehensive or area plan into land use regulations, specifying what kind of development is allowed in different areas. The zoning code, and future development decisions, must be consistent with the comprehensive or area plan, thus ensuring that development aligns with the community’s long-term vision and goals.

Grant Opportunity

The Smart Growth Community Planning program supports a range of activities, including:

- Preparation or update of a local or county-wide comprehensive plan.
- Preparation of an area plan.
- Development or amendment of a zoning code.

Eligible applicants include:

- New York State towns, counties, villages, and cities.
- Counties and regional planning boards on behalf of a town, village, or city.
- Eligible not-for-profit organizations on behalf of a county, town, village, or city.

Smart Growth works in tandem with programs administered by the DOS Office of Planning, Development & Community Infrastructure, such as the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program, Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, Downtown Revitalization Initiative and NY Forward.



Public engagement is an essential component of the Smart Growth Community Planning program.



A recipient of the Smart Growth Community Planning program, Peekskill, NY has improved Pugsley Park (above) and has added public art to their downtown to help create well-planned, inviting public spaces that contribute to a strong sense of place.

Additional Information

For more information see our website:

dos.ny.gov/nys-smart-growth-program