

SAVING THE SIERRA

Grassroots Solutions for Sustaining Rural Communities
A One-Hour Radio Documentary by jesikah maria ross & Catherine Stifter



SUSTAINING RURAL PLACES TOOL KIT

Brought to you by the Sierra Business Council in partnership with Saving the Sierra

Land Use Planning Tools

More effective land use planning is probably one of the most important things we can do to preserve and protect the character and prosperity of our communities. Land use planning is the practice of developing and implementing public policy in order to regulate the use of land in an efficient, ethical and fair manner.

Much of the United States is growing rapidly, with areas like the Sierra Nevada and much of the intermountain west experiencing double-digit growth rates.

A wide range of organizations are working to reduce sprawling growth and create a more efficient land use development pattern to re-connect communities and create a sense of place. These organizations also work to provide for more efficient use of energy, reduce vehicle miles traveled, improve environmental justice and create healthier, pedestrian friendly, and human scale built environments.

Some of the most important tools to improve our built environment are developing new methods of green building, promoting infill development, incorporating affordable housing into neighborhoods, and designing commercial mixed use developments that put people and jobs closer together. Establishing transit oriented development that places people at transit locations also serves as an improvement to built environment to reduce a communities footprint and dependency on automobiles.

“Smart growth” is defined by our ability to accomplish some basic societal goals, including: improving neighborhood livability, improving access and reducing dependency on automobiles, creating thriving local economies, sharing benefits equitably, reducing costs and taxes, and maintaining access to open spaces and recreation for everyone in the community.

Whether we choose to call this “smart growth,” good growth, or “elegant density,” growth is about promoting efficiency and improving the human experience.

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Sierra Business Council has conducted groundbreaking work on the application of new planning practices in rural areas. To access that work go to:

Planning for Prosperity—Building Successful Communities in the Sierra Nevada

www.sbcouncil.org/Planning-for-Prosperity

Building Vibrant Sierra Communities—A Commercial Mixed-Use Handbook

www.sbcouncil.org/Mixed-Use-Handbook

A number of professional organizations promote smarter growth:

The American Institute of Architects

www.aia.org/

The Congress for the New Urbanism

www.cnu.org/

The American Planning Association

www.planning.org/

Several public and private partnerships and non-profit organizations promote smart growth:

The Smart Growth Network

www.smartgrowth.org

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy

www.lincolnst.edu

Smart Growth America

www.smartgrowthamerica.org/

smartgrowthplanning.org

smartgrowthplanning.org

Several organizations are working on linking growth and energy efficiency:

The United States Green Building Council

www.usgbc.org/

The Renewable Energy Policy Project

www.repp.org/

Pacific Gas and Electric Company

www.pge.com/myhome/saveenergymoney/energysavingprograms/

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Several organizations work on advocating for better policies and decision-making:
The Planning and Conservation League

www.pcl.org

1000 Friends of Oregon

www.friends.org/

The Michigan Land Use Institute

www.mlui.org

Envision Utah

www.envisionutah.org/

These organizations are great models for incorporating affordability and social equity in housing development:

The Non-profit Housing Association of Northern California

www.nonprofnhousing.org/

Bridge Housing

www.bridgehousing.com/

The National Low Income Housing Coalition

www.nlihc.org/

Open Architecture Network

www.openarchitecturenetwork.org/

And some of our friends are just plain cool:

Project for Public Spaces

www.pps.org

Walk Score

www.walkscore.com/

Post Carbon Cities

postcarboncities.net

The Center for Land Use Interpretation

www.clui.org

Planetizen

www.planetizen.com

Visualizing Density

www.lincolninst.edu/subcenters/vd