

A Smart Growth



Check Up



Are Smart Growth concepts having an effect on planning and development in America? Is low-density sprawl continuing unabated, or has a new approach taken hold? In this issue of *On Common Ground*, we give you a progress report on Smart Growth.

As Jason Miller reports on page 50, America's growth occurs primarily in the suburbs and exurbs, in a low-density form that requires a vehicle to get anywhere—but a shift is occurring. This shift is being noticed by major homebuilders and real estate companies, who have recognized that a market for walkable communities has arisen. This market is being met not only in central cities, but in new suburban developments that use many Smart Growth concepts of higher density, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods. Consumers are starting to make the connection between the form of development and everyday issues, such as how much exercise they get, as reported by Heidi Johnson-Wright on page 32. Environmentalists are integrating Smart Growth concepts into green building practices, as reported by John Van Gieson on page 38.

These Smart Growth approaches are becoming evident in public policy as well as the marketplace. In the November 2006 elections, as David Goldberg tells us on page 6, voters were clear in their support for community planning. Open space conservation and funding of transportation alternatives were also popular with voters, as reported by Christine Sexton (p. 14) and Steve Wright (p. 20), respectively. State governments are adopting new transportation policies that recognize the needs of pedestrians and transit users, according to Barbara McCann on page 26. And, as Brad Broberg reports in his article on form-based codes on page 44, local communities are adopting new planning and regulatory techniques that will make it easier to achieve Smart Growth.

These market trends and public policy directions suggest that Smart Growth is alive and well.



For more information on NAR and Smart Growth, go to www.realtor.org/smartgrowth.

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