SMART GROWTH IS ONE WAY TO HELP PRESERVE THE HURON RIVER!

WHAT IS SMART GROWTH?

Smart Growth is a set of principles that guide intelligent and sustainable land use policies. In Michigan we are just beginning to realize the crucial connections between vibrant cities and healthy open spaces. We need a set of statewide land use goals that will assure the beautiful Michigan we grew up with will still be here 100 years from now.

The following principles **(The Ahwahnee Principles, 1991)** can serve as a basic guideline for smart growth:

Housing accomodates a wide range of residents of varying economic levels and age groups. More compact groupings are preferable to widely dispersed settlements.
Businesses are varied in nature, offering a broad spectrum of employment opportunities. Commercial centers take advantage of pre-existing infrastructure, and when possible utilize natural landscaping, benefiting employees as well as the community.
Schools ensure adequate classroom capacity for the projected number of students, and ideally are situated in an environment which lends itself to education (e.g., near an adjacent wetland or wildlife area).
Open spaces in the form of parks, squares, and wildlife areas greatly enhance both the value and the character of the community, while surrounding agricultural lands and/or wildlife corridors contribute a well-defined edge.
The community center or "downtown" is the focal area encompassing commercial, civic, cultural, and recreational activities. Sidewalks and large trees, as well as reducing the width of streets and providing convenient parking, help make streetscapes attractive and safe and promote shopping areas as hubs for social activity.
Biodiversity, inherent in natural areas, fragile ecosystems, and farmlands, is preserved as much as possible through the protection of large tracts of land. Landscaping is environmentally friendly, utilizing native plants and natural habitats, and employing landscape materials that will minimize long-term requirements for maintenance, irrigation, pesticides, and herbicides.
Transportation includes pedestrian routes and bicycling paths which are convenient and safe, with walkways providing wheelchair access. Conveniently placed transit stops provide easy access to mass transit systems. The maintenance and improvement of existing roads is preferred to the construction of new roads. Thoroughfares are able to handle the traffic without undue congestion or safety problems, and high speed traffic is discouraged.
Conservation of natural resources is promoted through the application of sustainable construction principles: situating buildings according to energy-enhancing light exposures and ventilation; making use of climate-compatible materials as well as wall and roof surfaces that reflect or absorb the sun's heat as needed; practicing environmentally friendly landscaping by utilizing windbreaks and natural water drainage; and using energy-efficient outdoor lighting and renewable energy systems wherever possible.
Water quality is vigilantly protected. Stormwater management measures are assessed, and efforts made to reduce the amount of closed drainage and to use open drainage where appropriate, e.g., using grass swales in residential areas instead of an enclosed storm sewer. Well water or public water is sufficiently available to accomodate any new project.
Redevelopment areas, i.e., development on vacant or otherwise reusable sites in already developed areas, is encouraged over sprawling development outside the community boundaries. General plans designate where new growth, infill, or redevelopment will be allowed to occur.
On-site recycling centers are available and actively promoted, as well as plans for pollution prevention. Purchasing practices and policy decisions are based on sustainable, earth-friendly principles.