



City of Auburn, Maine

Office of Economic and Community Development
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www.auburnmaine.gov 207.333.6601

To: Auburn Planning Board

From: Doug Greene, Urban Development Coordinator

Date: February 13, 2018

RE: A Proposal to Make Auburn a “Smart Growth Community”

I’ve been assigned to work on improving walkability (and parking) in Downtown Auburn and the area around the Auburn Public Library. While doing this work, I’ve seen an opportunity to expand this effort into a more comprehensive Smart Growth strategy for all of Auburn. Utilizing the **10 Smart Growth Principles** can provide direction and meaning to our future policy and development decisions and most importantly, **promote Auburn as a desirable place to live, work, play and visit.** These Smart Growth principles are already being used by the City and align well with the City Council’s recent interest in becoming an Age Friendly and Healthy Community.

What is Smart Growth? “Smart growth” covers a range of development and conservation strategies that help protect our health and natural environment and make our communities more attractive, economically stronger, and more socially diverse.

Attached with this memo is an information sheet that answers the questions, “What is Smart Growth?” and “Why Smart Growth?” In reviewing the 10 guiding principles that make for a Smart Community, we find them in Auburn’s planning documents over the last 20 years, and the City has been using and continues to use the majority of these principles. Adopting the 10 Smart Growth Principles will move us forward in a coordinated way and show the City’s commitment to improving Downtown Auburn, New Auburn, its surrounding neighborhoods and the City in general.

Here are some examples of Auburn using the 10 Smart Growth Principles to specific projects:

1. ***Mix of land uses*** (Form Based Code, 62 Spring Street)
2. ***Take advantage of compact building design*** (New Auburn Village Center Plan, future Great Falls development, proposed Troy Street development (48 Hampshire St.)
3. ***Create a range of housing opportunities and choices*** (CBDG programs, 62 Spring Street and Troy Street workforce housing projects)
4. ***Create walkable neighborhoods*** (Downtown Walkability Plan, Update to the Downtown Bike and Pedestrian Plan, Interconnected Trail System)
5. ***Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place*** (Riverwalk Expansion and Revitalization, New Auburn Village Center Plan and the St. Louis Bells)
6. ***Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas*** (Ag Study)
7. ***Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities*** (Ag Study, Downtown Revitalization)
8. ***Provide a variety of transportation choices*** (Complete Street Policy)

9. ***Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective*** (Form Based Code, Plan Review Committee and the Department of Economic and Community Development's mission)
10. ***Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions*** (Ongoing with all city projects)

I look forward to presenting this information to you at your February 13th meeting and listening to your thoughts. My hope is for the Planning Board to approve a motion to have the Chairman send a letter of support from the Planning Board to the City Council and Mayor Jason J. Levesque to adopt a Smart Growth Strategy for Auburn.

Attachments:

1. Information Sheets- "What is Smart Growth?" and "Why Smart Growth?"
2. Draft Resolution

What is Smart Growth?¹



Essentially, smart growth values sustainability by favoring long-range, regional thinking over short-term fixes.

Our definition of smart growth is expanded in our Strategic Plan: “**Smart growth provides choices in how communities respond to growth and change.** We work to revitalize historic neighborhoods and vibrant communities well-suited for residents of all ages, to foster entrepreneurs and creative thinkers, and to provide a safe and inclusive place to raise children. We advocate for a balance of business regulations in tandem with environmental regulations, allowing Maine’s economy to grow and prosper while conserving and enriching our beautiful and productive natural spaces. We support the continuation of traditional livelihoods like fishing, farming and forestry; keeping Maine families working their heritage and making it possible for their children to do the same. We provide leadership by convening a broad range of voices in meaningful conversations on how to arrive at **common sense solutions** as united Mainers. **Our goal is to ensure that future generations can prosper and choose to call Maine home.**”

10 Principles of Smart Growth

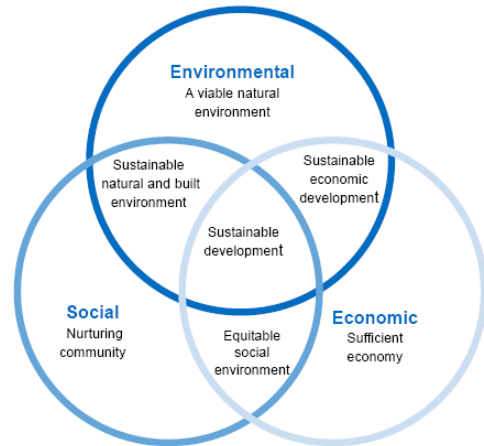
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2. Take advantage of compact building design
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5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
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7. Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
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¹ From GrowSmart Maine Web site, <https://growsmartmaine.org/initiatives/10-principles-of-smart-growth/>

Why Smart Growth?



Smart Growth decisions lead to vibrant downtowns



Smart Growth policies promote balance

Why should Auburn commit to becoming a Smart Growth Community?

“Health, schools, taxes, traffic, the environment, economic growth, fairness, opportunity—many of the things we care about—are all affected by development decisions. From the length of our daily commute to the price of a new home to the safety of our neighborhoods-what, where, and how we build have major impacts on our personal lives, our communities, and our nation.

Growth presents a tremendous opportunity for progress. Communities around the country are looking for ways to get the most out of new development and to maximize their investments. Frustrated by development that requires residents to drive long distances between jobs and homes, many communities are challenging rules that make it impossible to put workplaces, homes, and services closer together. Many communities are questioning the fiscal wisdom of neglecting existing infrastructure while expanding new sewers, roads, and services into the fringe. And in many communities where development has improved daily life, the economy, and the environment, smart growth principles have been keys to that success. Growth is “smart” when it gives us great communities, with more choices and personal freedom, good return on public investment, greater opportunity across the community, a thriving natural environment, and a legacy we can be proud to leave our children and grandchildren.

When communities choose smart growth strategies, they can create new neighborhoods and maintain existing ones that are attractive, convenient, safe, and healthy. They can foster design that encourages social, civic, and physical activity. They can protect the environment while stimulating economic growth. Most of all, we can create more choices for residents, workers, visitors, children, families, single people, and older adults-choices in where to live, how to get around, and how to interact with the people around them. When communities do this kind of planning, they preserve the best of their past while creating a bright future for generations to come.²”

² From Smart Growth On-line, <https://smartgrowth.org/why-smart-growth/>

Holly C. Lasagna, Ward One
Robert P. Hayes, Ward Two
Andrew D. Titus, Ward Three
Alfreda M. Fournier, Ward Four



Leroy G. Walker, Ward Five
Belinda A. Gerry, At Large
David C. Young, At Large

Jason J. Levesque, Mayor

IN CITY COUNCIL

RESOLVE _____

A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY OF AUBURN, MAINE TO ADOPT THE PRINCIPLES OF SMART GROWTH AND IMPLEMENT SMART GROWTH STRATEGIES THAT ENHANCE, STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT THE LONG TERM HEALTH OF THE COMMUNITY.

WHEREAS, the City of Auburn, Maine wishes to create a fiscally healthy and sustainable community through the evaluation and implementation of Smart Growth principles; and

WHEREAS, the term “Smart Growth” will promote planning and transportation decisions that concentrates growth to avoid urban sprawl and advocates compact, transit-oriented, walkable, bicycle-friendly land use, including neighborhood schools, mixed-use development with a range of housing choices appropriate for the context of the City; and

WHEREAS, the City of Auburn, Maine has already shown commitment to these principles by way of its planning history, decision making and projects by using Smart Growth principles that strive to strengthen and improve the health of its citizenry and community;

WHEREAS, the City of Auburn, Maine wishes to incorporate and promote smart growth principles and continue its commitment to Smart Growth into the future;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF AUBURN, MAINE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1: The City Council will strive to continue the effort to adopt, enforce, and educate property owners about land-use policies that reduce sprawl, preserve open space and create compact, walkable communities while promoting transportation options such as complete streets, bicycle trails, opportunities for car pooling and public transit.

Section 2: The City Council, in their roles as local government leaders, consider the relationship between decisions made today and their long-term impacts, and recognize that our success as community leaders is dependent on an open decision-making process that takes into account the long-term economic, environmental, health and social well-being of our communities well into the next century.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Auburn City Council on this ___day of _____ 2018.