

# MASSACHUSETTS SMART GROWTH ALLIANCE

## Who We Are

### What is Smart Growth?

### Why and Why Now

### Our Smart Growth Principles

- ◆ Protect and preserve environmental resources, open space, working landscapes and unique natural environments, and reduce air and water pollution.
- ◆ Promote diverse housing types in all communities to enable households from a wide range of economic levels, cultures and age groups to live and work within their boundaries.
- ◆ Foster economic and social equity and provide choice and opportunity for all Massachusetts residents.
- ◆ Reinforce our tradition of compact, walkable cities, towns and villages by encouraging lively, stand-alone development near existing infrastructure and providing efficient land use the minimum spread.
- ◆ Invest in transportation choices, including high quality public transit services, which provide alternatives to automobile use.
- ◆ Encourage fiscal policies that allow all communities within a region to share in the benefits and responsibilities of growth.
- ◆ Promote local, regional and state planning and investment to promote smart growth.
- ◆ Promote sustainable, shared prosperity through economic investment and development policies that provide jobs and opportunity, strengthen communities, and streamline development processes that avoid sprawl.
- ◆ Encourage development that conserves resources, minimizes waste, utilizes good design, promotes health and enhances the community in which it is located.

### The Alliance Program

The Alliance recently received a significant foundation grant to begin its work on an ambitious shared agenda!

- ◆ **Policy and advocacy efforts** for administrative and legislative reforms and capital investment decisions that will achieve Smart Growth outcomes.
- ◆ **Education, outreach and organizing** for a diverse, broad-based constituency for Smart Growth throughout the Commonwealth.
- ◆ **Research and analysis** for the tools and information needed to build the case for Smart Growth reforms, policies, and investments.
- ◆ **Targeted engagement in place-based projects** and campaigns that provide on-the-ground demonstrations of Smart Growth in action.

### Contacts

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## SIX GROUPS JOIN FORCES FOR A WAR ON SPRAWL: ALLIANCE VOWS TO PRESS ROMNEY TO GUIDE GROWTH

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**Author:** By Anthony Flint, GLOBE STAFF **Date:** 06/11/2003 **Page:** B1 **Section:** Metro/Region

Housing advocates and environmentalists have banded together to form a sweeping new political alliance to pressure the Romney administration to do something about sprawl in Massachusetts, promising to hold the governor's "feet to the fire" on his campaign promises to change the rules on development.

The **Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance** is made up of six separate advocacy groups that have agreed to work together on the sprawl issue. Similar alliances have organized in states that have overhauled development rules, including Oregon, Maryland, and New Jersey.

The "smart growth" movement has gathered momentum around the country over the past 10 years, promoting the redevelopment of existing urban areas and transit-oriented planning to avoid the urban sprawl that comes from building on undeveloped land in suburban and rural areas accessible only by car.

Governor Mitt Romney made sprawl a campaign issue and put Douglas Foy, former president of the Conservation Law Foundation, in charge of the new Office of Commonwealth Development, which oversees housing, the environment, transportation, and energy. The Legislature has not approved that restructuring, but the office is working on an anti sprawl agenda, and has circulated a set of draft principles that would guide development in the future.

Marc Draisen, executive director of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, one of the six organizations in the new alliance, said one task will be to "hold the governor's feet to the fire" and speak out on specific projects. "If they are inconsistent with smart growth, we're going to have to say they should not be built," he said.

"I think it's great," said Foy, referring to the alliance. "We need a lot of voices to push this agenda along.

Members of the new group, which also includes the Citizens Housing and Planning Association, the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston, the Boston Society of Architects, the Environmental League of Massachusetts, and the Conservation Law Foundation, say the alliance will support policies to create more affordable housing while working within the state's tradition of home rule, under which cities and towns control development within their borders.

Most cities and towns in Massachusetts are struggling to cope with parts of the current development framework, such as zoning rules that favor spread-out subdivisions and a tax system that leads to extensive commercial development to bolster a tax base that can pay for services, said Larissa V. Brown, program director for the Boston Society of Architects' Civic Initiative, a two-year-old anti sprawl campaign.

"The state needs to have a position here - to say that it's not OK to drain water supplies, gobble up open space, or shut out people of modest means," said James R. Gomes, president of the Environmental League of Massachusetts.

The group's first initiatives will be to create a "white paper" to present to the Romney administration, suggesting steps such as those recently adopted in Pennsylvania, which push cities and towns to plan together and share tax revenue across municipal borders. The alliance also wants affordable housing projects to be compact and near transit, and will press the Romney administration to overhaul Chapter 40A, the statewide zoning law.

The group also seeks to build a constituency for smart growth by sponsoring educational events, to get citizens to think beyond the local level, said David Harris, executive director of the Fair Housing Center.

In addition, another new group, which includes many members in the Smart Growth Alliance, has formed separately to focus on how new development policies will affect low-income families. The Greater Boston Action Committee will promote affordable housing and greater access to transit for low- and moderate-income workers, said Anthony Davis, a spokesman for PolicyLink, the national group that helped the committee form.

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