SMART SCORECARD
FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

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[Note: CNU is interested to receive your comments and suggestions regarding the criteria and benchmarks. Please email your proposed edits to Sarah Pulleyblank at sarahp@cnu.org Thank you.]

"Growth is inevitable, growth is necessary, but how growth is accommodated can be good or bad. In setting the framework for land development and redevelopment, we must focus on practices that are environmentally sound, economically vital, and that encourage livable communities – in other words, smart growth."

Jim Chaffin, ULI Chairman opening the Smart Growth Conference, Baltimore, 1998

PREMISE

There is a growing call for new planning tools that can help local, regional and state jurisdictions deal with the impacts caused by new development – increased traffic congestion, lack of close-by affordable housing for workers, loss of working agriculture farms, and a reduced sense of community identity. For those communities experiencing significant population and job growth, there is an urgent need to respond to major development proposals that are scheduled for approval in the coming 1-3 years. Most planning regulations such as comprehensive plans and zoning codes are silent about how new projects can be developed in a way that reduces the impacts for neighbors and improves the quality of life for the larger community.

The purpose of a **Smart Project Scorecard (SPS)** is to assist elected local officials, developers, investors, neighborhood groups and designers ***make better project-level decisions that achieve the Smart Growth objectives***. The SPS is a tool that can help evaluate whether a particular project is advancing the long-term viability of a community or creating more impacts with little overall benefit to existing and new citizens. It could also be used to help a developer decide where to best locate particular uses, or to determine what uses are most appropriate over the long term for a particular parcel of land.

As presented here, the primary function is to foster more effective communication about what the community and developer have as common objectives. The key objective is to ***find the intersection that integrates the community's goals, the site's opportunities, and the developer's economic viability.*** *The use of a checklist or point system can provide explicit direction if the comprehensive plan and district plans provide sufficient structure and community consensus. If the backbone planning work has not been completed, then the Scorecard can become the basis of an ongoing conversation leading to a development agreement which includes several benchmarks as common objectives.*

CONTEXT

Over the past 15 years, unwise land use patterns have exponentially expanded virtually every major metropolitan area in the United States. The forces underlying sprawl – market

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demographics; dominance of scattered, low density work places; preponderance of low density, single family homes; and government subsidies for auto travel – have transformed thousands of acres of agriculture and open lands into subdivisions and shopping malls at a proportion that far exceeds the rate of population growth.

Sprawl, as defined by Tony Downs of the Brookings Institution, maintains ten major characteristics:

1. Predominance of low density residential and commercial settlements, especially in new growth areas;
2. Unlimited outward extension of new development;
3. Leapfrog projects jumping beyond established settlements;
4. Single use development that separates shopping, working and residential activities;
5. Low density, single use work places and strip retail development typically located at the periphery of metropolitan areas;
6. Reliance on auto transportation for virtually all trips;
7. Fiscal disparities among localities;
8. Lack of adequate housing choices located close to work opportunities, thus forcing many workers to commute upwards of 45-90 minutes each direction;
9. Reliance mainly on trickle-down to provide housing to low-income households; and
10. Fragmented land use decisions by local governments.

Bruce Katz of Brookings says we have entered a new phase called "Hyper Sprawl". Plans for metropolitan areas would double their land area in the coming 15-20 years. This despite the good news from many cities like Atlanta, Chicago, Denver, and Portland where revitalization of neighborhoods, construction of hundreds of affordable housing units and preservation of historic assets are occurring. The continued volume of single use, low-density growth located outside the periphery of established cities has become the prevalent form of development.

The consequences of this pattern of development are causing major economic, social and environmental disruptions and inequities:

- Lack of new jobs in existing inner cities and first-ring suburbs in areas such as Cleveland, Minneapolis, and Chicago are making it more difficult for residents to earn a sufficient living wage, and in some instances are helping cause the reduction of property values;
- In Colorado, the forces underlying sprawl have caused the loss of 90,000 acres of farmland per year on average since 1978;
- An increase of almost 300% in the congestion of major roadways in Metro Denver since 1990.
- According to an American Farmland Trust study, the costs of providing services to low-density development leads to higher taxes: increased emergency response times for ambulances are as much as 50% longer and for fire as much as 33% longer; and the taxes don't adequately cover the costs of extended sewer and water lines.

SMART GROWTH AGENDA

The term "Smart Growth" was selected by the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to create an umbrella program for several initiatives which have attempted to respond to the increasing degree of sprawl development across the United States.

The objectives of Smart Growth focus on the long-term health of our existing communities --economically, environmentally and socially:

- **To help minimize the impacts of new development** (public infrastructure costs, congestion, air pollution, loss of agriculture land, etc.);
- **To provide greater accessibility and choices in how we move about** from home, work, shopping and leisure activities;
- **To stabilize and improve the long-term financial performance** for commercial and home owners;
- **To maximize the return from public investments** in existing and new roads, schools, utilities, transit systems, bridges, waterways, etc;
- **To protect natural habitat and watersheds** for the future; and
- **To foster a greater sense of connection, responsibility and continuity** for citizens with their communities.

Smart Growth has forged an alliance of diverse interests who can now support a different kind of development: construction that enhances existing communities, is compatible with the natural environment, uses tax dollars efficiently, and is profitable for private investment. "The concept of Smart Growth", according to Michael Pawlukiewicz, ULI's Director of Environmental Land Use Policy, "is considered new and distinctive in that it seeks to identify a common ground where developers, environmentalists, public officials, citizens and financiers all can find ways to accommodate growth that is acceptable to each entity."

What can local communities actually do to achieve the above objectives and to reduce the impacts of new growth? Transportation planners, urban designers, environmentalists, developers and local officials created a list of policy and planning tools referred to as *Smart Growth*:

- Build new neighborhoods in a compact form
- Connect street systems that are designed to balance auto, pedestrian and bicycle movement
- Maintain and enhance existing infrastructure
- Actively pursue redevelopment, including infill residential development
- Encourage mixed-use development, preferably near transit service
- Connect open spaces, parks and trails into a system
- Vigorously protect sensitive habitat and watershed land
- Build mixed-density and mixed-income housing
- Recognize traditional downtowns and urban neighborhoods as being a critical anchor for to the economic and community vitality of a region
- Promote stabile neighborhood schools as a focal point for all adults, children, civic groups and businesses
- Establish predictability in the development process; development projects that enhance the economy, the community and the environment receive expedited approval

ENCOURAGING SMARTER PROJECTS

The major problem with the policy approach to planning occurs on the project level, where specific property owners, elected officials and neighborhood groups often don't follow the spirit or intent of adopted plans. We believe the Smart Growth program must include a project-oriented focus in order to accelerate changes in development practice. Some communities that are experiencing major growth pressure cannot afford to wait 4-7 years before changing the regulations and codes that designate where land uses should be located and how much development should be built.

In the past, communities have used tools such as standard zoning codes, performance codes, indicators and design guidelines are early cousins of the SPS. In a more general way, we have looked at other communities that have used various components included in the SPS. Fort Collins, Colorado has used both a point-system and a smart growth-oriented code as has Boulder, Colorado, in addition to using performance-oriented criteria in implementing its growth management program. There are a handful of communities that are attempting something similar to the SPS and Austin, TX has the most-sophisticated and most-applicable example.

It is important to reiterate how and where the SPS might fit in a typical planning framework. Most zoning dictates exactly what standards need to be met, such as allowed (or dis-allowed) land uses, heights, setbacks, parking requirements and the spacing of tree-plantings in exact measurements. We describe this as the "thou shalt or thou shalt not" approach. Design review was introduced to allow for a more discretionary review. The guidelines that accompany such a program, assuming they are not mandatory, describe what aspects of a proposed development is preferred. Performance standards are more outcome oriented, in that they identify a prescribed standard with regard to level of service road standards, air quality, or natural habitats, etc., but not necessarily how to achieve such a standard. (See Appendix A for more on precedents that use points and checklists).

The Scorecard can be used to translate general community objectives contained in a Comprehensive Plan into project-related criteria. It can augment the objectives identified in a Specific Area Plan or designated growth corridor. The Scorecard can also support generic design criteria (contained in a city's Land Use Code). That is, target a project plan review toward specific performance.

The idea of a Smart Scorecard should be used as a way to complement the primary planning tools at the local level – Comprehensive Plan, Community Vision, and the Land Use map. ***It can also be helpful for those communities that do not have a strong planning infrastructure*** – updated comprehensive plan; specific zoning tools based on district plans; linked capital improvement and transportation plans, etc. It should not be seen as a replacement for zoning or a good Comprehensive Plan. It might be useful in rapidly growing rural areas that have not yet had the time or resources to update a Comprehensive Plan or zoning code to reflect growth-related issues. The Scorecard can act as a measuring device to evaluate the relative impacts, merits and likely performance of a proposed project. If used as a monitoring device, it can assist local jurisdictions over time to achieve many of the objectives of the Smart Growth Agenda (see Appendix B for how to initiate a local Smart Growth Program).

SMART PROJECT SCORECARD

Typically, a community's ability to establish a new vision and direct development occurs through planning and zoning tools. A Comprehensive Plan identifies goals, objectives and criteria for elected officials and staff to use in setting regulations and reviewing project proposals. It usually requires 2-3 years to undertake a major community-wide planning effort, and another 1-2 years to draft accompanying zoning and other code changes, with an additional 1-2 years before projects respond to the new regulations. Plans, policies and codes can have an enormous impact *over time* if the community truly backs up the staff and elected officials when the rubber meets the road – on the project level.

The following checklist can be used by local jurisdictions to evaluate whether proposed development projects are reducing impacts and fulfilling community goals. The topic headings translate the Smart Growth principles into more specific criteria and benchmarks that we believe are the most critical for local planning commissions and city councils to focus their attention. **The Scorecard audience is primarily for City staff, Planning Commissioners, City Councils, neighborhood organizations, and project applicants.**

Caveats:
We have purposefully designed the Scorecard to be flexible so that each community can determine what criteria should receive greater emphasis, and which benchmarks can be "upgraded" or "loosened" in order to better fit near-term goals.

The identified measures require greater scrutiny, especially for projects in rural settings where it is difficult to address most Smart Growth objectives. However, we recognize the great need to upgrade the design of "leapfrog"developments when they are allowed by a community's Land Use Map.

The size of a development parcel will certainly alter how some measures can be achieved. Most criteria assume that larger opportunity sites will receive the bulk of a community's interest. Future drafts should identify when applicable smaller lot measures (i.e. less than 1-2 acres) that are more typical for urban infill sites.

We have combined Urban and Suburban measures as the approach to reducing development impacts are very similar in both situations.

The Scorecard does not identify when a project should not be built -- if one or two Smart Growth criteria are way off the chart but the project is acceptable in most other categories.

Following the checklist, we identify several ways that the Scorecard can be implemented as part of a local Smart Growth program. "City Responsibilities" are identified with each category to encourage public measures that can leverage much greater private-sector response.

We propose that 10 critical components be used to focus where the biggest "Smart-Bang-for-the-Buck" lies: (Please see the accompanying Excel spreadsheet for the actual Scorecard document).

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1. **PROXIMITY TO EXISTING/FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE;**
2. **MIX AND BALANCE OF USES;**
3. **SITE OPTIMIZATION AND COMPACTNESS;**
4. **ACCESSIBILITY AND MOBILITY CHOICES;**
5. **COMMUNITY CONTEXT AND SITE DESIGN;**
6. **FINED-GRAINED BLOCK, PEDESTRIAN AND PARK NETWORK;**
7. **ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY;**
8. **DIVERSITY;**
9. **RE-USE AND REDEVELOPMENT OPTIONS;**
10. **PROCESS COLLABORATION AND PREDICTABILITY OF DECISIONS**

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1. PROXIMITY TO EXISTING/FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Developing new projects near existing neighborhoods can go a long way to achieve many Smart Growth goals. Existing neighborhoods provide some of the critical support for new residential and commercial development -- roads, schools, bus service, water, electrical and sewer capacity may already be available. Projects located away from the urban fabric usually require additional services, new civic amenities, and longer car trips to gain access to these necessities. The ability to add new development adjacent to existing residents and workers

may actually help reduce vehicles miles traveled (VMT) by providing services closer than current destinations.

The key objective is to locate projects as close by as possible without diminishing the essential quality and character of the surrounding area (unless redeveloping the area has become a planning goal, i.e. increasing the mix and activities near a new transit station). In rural settings, new projects are inherently stand alone developments, and greater impacts on existing roads and the landscape are inevitable. Dispersing new housing in rural areas, rather than concentrating new development, can create fewer impacts initially, but set a pattern of development that will the long run create more sprawl. We believe that clustering new rural development, and maintaining larger tracts of open areas, is the better long-term choice.

Critical factors

- Distance to existing roads, water and sewer service
- Project located within a designated development area
- For residential uses: distance to food and convenience stores, schools, daycare, rec centers
- For employment uses: distance to housing (for-sale and rental), restaurants, education, daycare
- Time before additional support services (shopping, schools, transit) will be available
- Distance to bus or transit service

POSSIBLE MEASURES

Distance to roads, water and sewer service	
Adjacent	Excellent
Less than 1/3 mile	Preferred
1/3 -1/2 mile	Acceptable
1/2 mile - 1 mile	Minimal
	Does Not Apply
Walking distance to transit (bus, rail, etc.)	
less than 5 minutes	Excellent
6-10 minutes	Preferred
11-15 minutes	Acceptable
16-20 minutes	Minimal
suggested standard = 234'/minute	Does Not Apply
For residential development, proximity to any one of the following: food/convenience retail/services, schools, daycare, recreation centers	
Adjacent	Excellent
Less than 1/3 mile	Preferred
1/3 - 1/2 mile	Acceptable
more than 1/2 mile to 1 mile	Minimal
	Does Not Apply
For commercial development (employment), proximity to any one of the following: housing, restaurants, entertainment	
Adjacent	Excellent
Less than 1/3 mile	Preferred
1/3 - 1/2 mile	Acceptable
more than 1/2 mile to 1 mile	Minimal
	Does Not Apply

Time before additional support services are available (see 1.4, 1.5 for examples of qualifying support services)	
immediately - before 2 years	Excellent
2-3 years	Preferred
4-5 years	Acceptable
6-8 years	Minimal
	Does Not Apply
Project located within designated development/redevelopment area	Checklist
(Enterprise Zone, prioritized development area)	Does Not Apply

City Responsibilities

- Capital Improvement Program tied to Comprehensive and District Plans
- Transportation and Water Management Master Plans identify future need in community and identify schedule for improvements
- Stated policy not to subsidize infrastructure costs and financing for "leap frog" projects that extend new roads, water treatment and trunk lines outside current service areas
- Designate Village Centers near residential areas that will a provide a mix of uses and civic amenities over time (and near transportation service if possible)

2. MIX AND BALANCE OF USES

Developing more than one use in a project, regardless of the location, can create a synergy between users of that project: The ability to walk to a restaurant at lunchtime rather than driving to the mall; being able to walk to a health club before or after work; taking care of several errands once you've parked your car; and in some instances, living near work and minimizing commuting time and hassles. For the community, mixed- use can help reduce traffic impacts and leverage investments in road and utility infrastructure. For developers, the added construction and marketing costs (and in some places added hassle to obtain financing) need to be offset by the ability to lease the space more quickly. The key is to create a more profitable project because of the higher NOI generated by the mixing of uses to help offset the land cost.

Critical Factors

- Responds to unmet need in nearby neighborhood
- Street level activity generated by particular use
- Includes 2 uses within project
- Includes 3 uses within project
- Includes 2 uses vertically mixed
- Includes 3 uses vertically mixed
- Includes upper level residential with other uses (min 15% of total building area)

POSSIBLE MEASURES

Provides a new type of development to an existing neighborhood (within 1 mile), such as employment, housing, retail, civic, educational, cultural, recreation, neighborhood-serving retail/service	
4 additional uses added to neighborhood	Excellent
3	Preferred

2	Acceptable
1	Minimal
	Does Not Apply
Street-level uses that generate maximum pedestrian activity (# hours open per day)	
more than 18 hours	Excellent
13-18 hours	Preferred
12-17 hours	Acceptable
8-11 hours	Minimal
	Does Not Apply
Street-level uses that generate maximum pedestrian activity (# users per day) - for multiple activities, use the average for all	
>600 users/day	Excellent
400-500 users/day	Preferred
200-300 users/day	Acceptable
less than 100 users/day	Minimal
	Does Not Apply
Project is mixed-use	
Includes 3 uses vertically mixed	Excellent
Includes 3 uses within a project	Preferred
Includes 2 uses vertically mixed	Preferred
Includes 2 uses within a project	Minimal
	Does Not Apply

City Responsibilities

- Mixed-use zoning for "by-right" permitting;
- Shared and/or reduced parking standards for mixed use buildings
- Neighborhood Plan which identifies unmet and future use needs
- Transportation Plan which locates future capacity and transit service
- Lender education about the municipality's plans, investments and other incentives

3. SITE OPTIMIZATION AND COMPACTNESS

Making highest and best use of a site has long been the goal of both the public and private sectors. Cities are rewarded when sites have a thoughtful concentration of building and developers are able to maximize their return on their investment. We have developed some benchmarks that will help direct projects towards contributing to the efficient land-use required by smart growth programs.

The hurdle here is creating a meaningful density, particularly on sites in the central core, without overwhelming facilities. There is a balance that needs to happen in this regard. The Smart Growth Scorecard should provide some guidance in achieving that equilibrium. We need to recognize the benefits of creating density. It increases street-activity, which in turn encourages safety, it also fosters the success of mixed-use areas as well as providing the critical density needed to support current and future transit. We are not suggesting densities that are out of proportion with the existing community. Every community will need to carefully review this section to ensure its appropriateness for them.

For Rural projects, the tendency is to spread new development out into 10, 5 or 1 acre homesites. While this may be initially easier to market and preferred by the community due

to septic requirements, it will establish a pattern that creates the worst conditions for the environment and future traffic patterns. In both the short and longer term for rural projects, it is preferred that projects be clustered, thereby protecting more open land and allowing for a greater variety of housing types and possible future infill development.

Critical Factors

- Take full advantage of allowable DU's per acre and F.A.R.s
- Average number of dwelling units (gross density)
- High percentage of "usable" open space for recreation
- Locate buildings at minimum set-backs or at "build-to" lines when they exist
- Parking spaces under buildings or decked

POSSIBLE MEASURES

Maximize allowable floor-area ratio	
FAR is the maximum allowed by zoning	Excellent
FAR is within 10% of that allowed by zoning	Preferred
FAR is within 20% of that allowed by zoning	Acceptable
FAR is within 30% of that allowed by zoning	Minimal
	Does Not Apply
Average number of dwelling units/acre (gross density including on-site r.o.w. and open space)	
Average density (dua) is: 14 or more	Excellent
10-13	Preferred
7-9	Acceptable
4-6	Minimal
	Does Not Apply
Office project has high floor area ratio (exclude structured parking & r.o.w.)	
>1.0 FAR	Excellent
.76 - 1.0 FAR	Preferred
.51 -.75 FAR	Acceptable
.4 -.5 FAR	Minimal
	Does Not Apply
Shopping center project has high floor area ratio (exclude structured parking & r.o.w.)	
> .75	Excellent
.46 - .74 FAR	Preferred
.36 - .45 FAR	Acceptable
.3-.35 FAR	Minimal
	Does Not Apply
High % of "usable" open space for gathering and recreation as compared to undeveloped open areas such as parking planters and traffic islands	
more than 75%	Excellent
50% - 75%	Preferred
35 - 49%	Acceptable
20% - 34%	Minimal
	Does Not Apply
Place parking in above- or below-grade structures (% of total parking in structure)	
more than 75%	Excellent
50%-75%	Preferred
25%-49%	Acceptable
15-24%	Minimal
	Does Not Apply
Locate buildings at minimum set-backs or at "build-to" lines when they exist	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply

City Responsibilities

- Assist with structured parking
- Designate infill sites where higher densities are encouraged
- Increase minimum densities for sites on transit routes and sites with adequate road capacity
- Minimize front yard and rear yard set backs; establish build-to lines in more urban settings
- Open space requirements should allow trade-off of equivalent "collective community" open areas to meet individual unit standards; reductions allowed when larger regional parks are located close by.

4. ACCESSIBILITY AND MOBILITY CHOICES

One of the most important aspects of any project is access. Access needs to consider all modes of transportation, including the pedestrian. Congestion is one of the most wasteful phenomenon in America. The time and resources that it devours, the pollution it creates and the stressful experience it results in are all detrimental to any community.

Walkability also increases access to the community. Cars also have a tendency to isolate us from people who might otherwise become our neighbors. Besides, a chance encounter is a lot more fun than a fender-bender.

Critical Factors

- Attempt to minimize the increase in VMT generated by a project
- Site is near existing or planned transit service
- Promote pedestrian access by:
  - building sidewalks on both sides of a street
  - providing pedestrian amenities
  - ensure proper maintenance of pedestrian facilities
  - provide direct street connections
  - locating parking facilities behind the building
- Connect pedestrian paths to existing or planned open space near site
- Expand the choices for transportation modes
- Provide convenient Park and Ride lots
- Provide van pool/car pool service

POSSIBLE MEASURES

Attempt to minimize the increase in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) due to project	
Reduce VMT by more than 50%*	Excellent
35% - 50%*	Preferred
20 - 34%*	Acceptable
5 - 19%*	Minimal
*as compared to VMT standards for similar project types and sizes (as defined in ITE)	Does Not Apply
Provide pedestrian amenities for transit	
Transit station	Excellent
structure with seat, roof and schedule information	Preferred
furniture, kiosk	Acceptable
signage	Minimal

	Does Not Apply
Build adequate sidewalks	
Residential sidewalks should be detached	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Commercial sidewalks should be a minimum of 6' in width	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Provide direct street connections	
front doors with well-marked paths, paseos between rear-parking and street	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Locate parking facilities behind the building	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Facilitate connections to existing or planned parks, open space	
paths are clearly-marked and maintained	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Facilitate choices in transportation modes	
provide bike racks, bike lockers, paths to bus stops/bike paths, post bus information/access on-site	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Provide Park-n-Ride lots	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Provide van pool or car pool service	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply

City Responsibilities

- Encourage public investment in pedestrian corridors to encourage future development to respect connections/access
- Provide a transportation study of the area under consideration so that the project-sponsor can make educated decisions about current and future traffic patterns
- Provide a copy of the area's transportation plan to the project-sponsor
- Establish Transportation Improvements capital plan for specific sites/corridors
- Establish Park and Ride Lots at key intersections to encourage commuter transit use
- In urban locations, public art and public plazas help generate increased pedestrian activity

5. COMMUNITY CONTEXT AND SITE DESIGN

Design is a critical component in making all aspects of the Scorecard work together. It also provokes a “gut” reaction from the community and as a result, should be considered very carefully. As many visual preference surveys have demonstrated, a poorly-designed project in both function and aesthetics can forever taint a community's opinion of "smart growth projects". On the other hand, a well-designed project can become a model and convince a community of the positive effects of such projects. Good design can also mitigate against the stereotypical fears that some may have regarding density, multi-family developments, and the proximity of residential units to commercial ones. Density is largely

a *perceptual* issue. If carefully designed, the actual density can be hidden to a point where virtually no neighbor objects to the visual impacts from a project.

The hurdle here is to balance the *local design styles* that may help contribute to a community identity *with creative design solutions* that make all the components of smart growth projects work together. The review here is more discretionary than any other part of the Scorecard, but the criteria are fairly straightforward and should not be labored over excessively. There are numerous examples of well-crafted design guidelines that communities can look to for additional criteria and benchmarks.

Critical Factors

- Preservation of existing structures
- Design reflects regional style, climate, heritage and local materials
- Scale and mass of structure in concert with surroundings
- Fronts of buildings define street
- Continuation of existing street pattern
- Transition buffer zones between areas with different uses and densities
- Inclusion of civic spaces
- Street furniture and lighting enhance pedestrian connections to entrances, parking and natural features

Community Context and Site Design	**Checklist**
Include map of neighborhood and adjacent street connections for planning/building permit approvals	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Preservation and re-use of at least 75% of an existing structure	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Demonstrate use of existing styles, building type in neighborhood	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Building reflects local historic building materials, style and/or design	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Treatment of façade breaks down massing, articulates depth, verticality and street edge	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Scale and mass of buildings relate to neighborhood structures	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Continuation of existing neighborhood street pattern into new project	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply

Include strong connections all adjacent natural features such as river-ways, hiking trails	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Automobile access makes minimum impact on pedestrian experience	
	Checklist
(drive-through access from rear of bldg., signage for ped. activity, special paving for ped. crossings)	Does Not Apply
Create or enhance community spaces such as plazas, squares, parks, etc.	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Landscaping and lighting is focused on the pedestrian experience	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply

City Responsibilities

- Establish Design and Landscaping Guidelines that provide regional precedents of well-designed development and streetscapes that addresses the above issues
- Revise zoning standards every 5-10 years so that by-right buildings reflect community values

6. FINE-GRAINED BLOCK, PEDESTRIAN AND PARK NETWORK

Setting the proper dimensions for streets and blocks become the critical framework to create walkable neighborhoods. For 40-50 years, most cities have emphasized traffic flow and higher speeds in establishing the dimensions of our local streets. There are now many built examples of parkways, collector and local residential streets that balance the needs for the automobile, pedestrians and bicyclists. The size of blocks must also be designed for a walking scale – between 300-600 feet in dimension. Increasing the number of intersections increases pedestrian activity and transit feasibility. Pedestrian paths that connect to parks, retail uses, schools and recreation centers foster more walking and biking.

Critical Factors

- Number of street intersections
- Block lengths
- Variety of street widths
- Connected pedestrian system
- Dispersed variety of park types and sizes

POSSIBLE MEASURES

Street network is based on a grid system.	
100% of street network is a grid	Excellent
75-99% grid	Preferred
50-74% grid	Acceptable
25-49% grid	Minimal
	Does Not Apply

Short block lengths (long-side)	
less than 400'	Excellent
400' - 500	Preferred
501' - 600	Acceptable
greater than 600	Minimal
	Does Not Apply
Distance from major uses to parks within project or adjacent to project	
less than 5 minutes	Excellent
6-10 minutes	Preferred
11-15 minutes	Acceptable
16-20 minutes	Minimal
suggested standard = 234'/minute	Does Not Apply
Pedestrian system that connects to civic, cultural, retail/service destinations and other paths	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Hierarchy of park types and sizes	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply

City Responsibilities

- Adopt a menu of street and pedestrian standards that permit narrower cross-sections where the traffic flow and the intensity of development allows
- Adopt park standards that permit both larger and smaller parks for neighborhood activities in addition to active recreation

7. ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

One of the major costs of unplanned growth is not only the loss of valuable open space which destroys habitats and other environmental treasures, but also the waste produced by rapid construction and the costs of supplying valuable resources to new development that is located on the periphery. With this in mind, the environmental aspect requires action on more than one level. First, the Scorecard's "Proximity to Existing Development" category encourages infill which provides the opportunity to use existing infrastructure, and perhaps reduce the length of car trips, and thus pollution by being near an employment center and other destinations. Here, we emphasize the use of green-building materials and renewable resources as another way of mitigating against the environmental impacts of construction and maintenance. Lastly, there is the preservation of environmental features, both on- and off-site, as applicable. Whether on the periphery or in the center, each project has the opportunity to create open space for recreation and enjoyment. This open space preservation not only reduces the impacts on other natural areas, but if properly done, is an educational experience about the value of the local area's natural resources.

The LEEDS system developed by the U.S. Green Building Council for commercial projects (www.usgbc.org) or the Build Green Program by the Home Builders Association (www.builtgreen.org) provide a larger set of criteria from which a community may choose to include in a Scorecard or building code.

Critical Features

- Maximize energy efficiency of buildings
- Use green building materials
- Use energy/ water conservation systems
- Protect, preserve, and/or restore any on-site natural features i.e. wetlands, riparian corridors, watersheds, steep slopes, significant grasslands, prairies, etc.
- Use local vegetation on site to minimize impact on local habitats & to minimize water consumption
- Establish recycling program with tenants

POSSIBLE MEASURES

Recycle materials that result from demolition of existing structure	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Recycle surplus materials from new construction, fixtures, furniture, etc.	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Maximize energy efficiency of buildings (exceed minimum r-value requirements)	
see Leede's Standards for benchmarks	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Use green building materials	
see National Home Builders Green program for checklist	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Use energy conservation equipment, systems and/or programs	
	Checklist

	Does Not Apply
Use water conservation systems (metered water, graywater, re-use)	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Solar access considered in site design	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Protect, preserve and/or restore any on-site natural features i.e. wetlands, riparian corridors, watersheds, steep slopes, impt. Grasslands, prairies, etc.	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Create and maintain buffers around on/off-site natural areas	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Use local regional vegetation on site	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Xeriscaping, drip water systems versus sprinkling	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Establish recycling program with tenants	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply

City Responsibilities

- Establish standards for use of green building materials (distribute information about green Building at the beginning of the application process)
- Help developers in determining valuable environmental features that are worthy of protection
- Develop solar, wetland, and landscape codes that reduce energy and water consumption
- Maintain public parks and other spaces to meet the needs of nearby residents

8. DIVERSITY

An important component of a healthy community is diversity. Sustainability inherently includes variety in almost every aspect of a project. One way to mitigate against managed-growth communities becoming exclusive is to plan for the housing diversity required for a healthy community. Not only will these criteria foster a community's social well-being, but they can also help create a more viable local economy and range of job opportunities that include teenage and senior members of the community.

When planning for diversity, one must consider all the ways in which people and spaces can differ from one another. Price, access, design, life-styles, etc. are all factors that one should consider when planning and designing for diversity. Good design is the link to creating a diverse environment that is responsive and respectful to a range of users with a range of needs. See Site Design of the Scorecard for details.

Critical Factors

- Variety of building types and styles
- Provide diversity of uses or fulfills an established economic goal of community
- Provide a wide-range in pricing structure of units that will be sold or leased
- Variety of densities in both residential and commercial employment unit
- Vary set-backs and lot-sizes
- Address need for civic needs and amenities, such as daycare, teen/senior center, recreation and cultural facilities, meeting halls, etc

POSSIBLE MEASURES

Variety of building types & styles	
Projects with 20 units+ have more than one building type and/or façade option	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Locally-owned businesses included in a project	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Provide a wide-range in pricing structure of units that will be sold or leased	
at least 20% of units priced for 80%-100% of Average Median Income	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Variety of densities in both residential and commercial employment unit	
densities range from 20-50% of overall median density in project	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Vary set-backs	
See Site Design	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Vary residential lot-sizes	
Include at least 15% of total development for lots under 4500 square feet	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Address need for civic facilities and amenities, such as daycare, teen/senior center, cultural facility, etc	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply

City Responsibilities

- Establish community goals with regard to economic development, on various scales (neighborhood, district, community, city)
- Make economic development goals and funding programs clear to project-sponsor as well as potential community tenants
- Determine a pricing structure for residential and commercial units that would serve users of a wide-range of income levels
- Provide technical assistance for start-up businesses and management training

9. RE-USE AND REDEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

Most projects evolve over time. This is especially true for commercial and employment projects as changes in market demand and tenant formats require physical upgrades every 5-8 years. The ability to adapt a project to accommodate changes in tenant mix, transportation

patterns and user needs allows a project to retain its economic value over the long haul. This in turn allows districts to mature over a 10-20 year period, and to provide stability and a greater sense of community identity. As markets change, buildings that are designed with a more flexible structural system can be renovated for commercial, retail, or housing uses, similar to warehouse buildings found in many historic districts. Parking lots and access roads in office parks and shopping centers can become infill sites once parking decks are added or transit service becomes available.

Critical Factors

- Utility lines located under access roads
- Master plan showing future streets, blocks and development sites
- Building types and structures that are strictly defined in form that can accommodate several different uses
- Location of building entrance toward future street

POSSIBLE MEASURES

Utility lines located along access roads	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Master plan showing future streets, blocks and development sites	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Building types and structures that can adapt to different uses	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Span dimensions that can accommodate residential & office users	
for retail development, a depth of 75' or less	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
If phasing, provide for connections to future street	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply

City Responsibilities

- Utility standards for new subdivisions and commercial projects that require locations under key access roads within the project boundaries
- Building permit requirements that identify possible future building and street expansion locations

10. PROCESS COLLABORATION AND PREDICTABILITY OF DECISIONS

The biggest impediment that limits developing more Smart Growth projects is the interminable delay that usually await demonstration projects. Communities need to commit to working in partnership with developers who are willing to commit to basic Smart Growth criteria. Involving persons who represent the business, preservation, neighborhood, and environmental interests from the outset can often be the key to identifying unmet community needs and opportunities for projects that help fill those needs. Projects that address most of the Smart Scorecard criteria and benchmarks should receive expedited staff reviews, and

certainty that an approval would be forthcoming no later than X days following the submittal of a complete application. In general, earlier conversations with adjoining property owners, neighbors, city staff and other civic groups will result in a more compatible project that retains the support of the larger community. The objective should not be to achieve true consensus, but to have most factions within a community supporting the project.

Critical Factors

i Pre-design meeting with neighbors and/or city staff
i Conceptual design meeting with neighbors and adjoining property owners
i Participation in district/property owner association (parking, maintenance, etc)
i Contact with city staff in all key agencies (parks, transportation, economic development)
i If project conforms with applicable area plans and review deadlines are not met by city, then project approval to the next review point is automatic
i Identify community objectives in adopted plans that are met by proposed project

POSSIBLE MEASURES

Pre-design meeting with neighbors and/or city staff	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Conceptual design meeting with neighbors & adjacent property owners	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Participation in district/property owner association (parking, maintenance, etc)	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Contact with city staff in all key agencies (parks, transportation, economic development)	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Provide computer model of project	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply
Identify community objectives in adopted plans that are met by proposed project	
	Checklist
	Does Not Apply

City Responsibilities

· Review process clearly written out with time lines for both applicants and staff
· Reward Smart Growth projects and collaborative behavior with an accelerated date-certain when the plan/building reviews will go on to the next stage or be completed (e.g. Portland's 120 day cap)
· Identify community benefits regarding infill and Smart Growth
· Designate Smart Growth "Ombudsman" on staff to assist all city staff and commissions involved in development review

(Note: The 1-10 criteria order should be re-evaluated by each local community. The higher the number, the greater *impact reduction* on the physical and human environment, and therefore a higher weighted-value would be awarded to projects that emphasize that benchmark).

APPLICATIONS

- **Checklist**
  The checklist would identify the criteria and encourage staff and the developer to review the list before he or she submits a project for a building or site permit. The checklist might be tied to a Smart Growth booklet describing the objectives of a Smart Project in your community. The checklist approach is primarily to educate both the developer and staff about how to reduce impacts and improve livability over time. It could be used by a Planning Commission or City Council during a discretionary review in order to approve, disapprove or approve-with-conditions an application where the city is being asked to waive or bend a particular code or standard (i.e. parking standard for a mixed-use project).

- **Point/Incentive System**
  The point approach would offer higher points for projects that achieve a higher benchmark, thus creating an incentive to make a project more "Smart". This is the approach that Austin, TX has used in their local Smart Growth Matrix. Those that achieve a higher total would be eligible to receive assistance from the city, such as:

  - ✓ Expedited review time;
  - ✓ Reduced permit fees;
  - ✓ Reduced impact fees for parks, sewer, water, etc.;
  - ✓ Reduced infrastructure costs through city investments;
  - ✓ Tax rebates for creating a reduced-impact project; and/or
  - ✓ Special funding to enhance the design and diversity of the project.

- **Special Review**
  When developers choose to use a planning commission/city council discretionary review process to receive local entitlements, the scorecard can be used as a tool to help them determine whether to approve, disapprove, or approve-with-conditions. PUD's, Site Reviews and Use Reviews typically use general criteria taken from a Comprehensive Plan to help staff evaluate a project's benefits. The scorecard can help refine the evaluation criteria in order to reconfigure the site plan and mix of uses, or to determine that the project needs to be totally reconsidered. These are very difficult decisions for most local board members to undertake, and the scorecard can help translate the community's goals into more specific criteria. This is especially true for communities that have not undertaken neighborhood plans and must rely on very general planning principles and objectives which are difficult to apply on the project level.

- **Development Agreement**
  On significant projects that require public and private sharing of infrastructure investments or use of redevelopment powers, a development agreement is typically signed between parties. These agreements outline specific use mix, access locations, site design parameters, civic amenities, and new infrastructure that will be required to support the project. The scorecard could be used as a tool during the negotiation of the agreement to help quantify the level of public financial participation based on the benefits achieved by the project. For example, if more mixed uses or affordable housing were included, then the city might increase its percentage to offset the cost to build parking decks, road improvements and/or new parks.

APPENDIX

A. SCORECARD PRECEDENTS
B. INCORPORATING A SMART SCORECARD INTO A LOCAL SMART GROWTH PROGRAM

A. SCORECARD PRECEDENTS

The Smart Project Scorecard is a slightly different tool than any of the above. Because it is meant to be incentive-based, and applied as either a point system, checklist or negotiation tool, the SPS encourages better projects by clearly documenting what changes will produce a higher score or a better project. This will eliminate the potential pitfalls of each of the above tools. For example, standard zoning codes preclude creative solutions to project problems and are mandatory. This may create a certain uniformity in design. Additionally, they typically do little to define their purpose, using only a quantitative measure in defining setbacks, road widths etc. Without an explicit purpose, standard zoning does little to satisfy the "why" behind design solutions. Design guidelines were developed to address design aspects that cannot be easily regulated by zoning codes. Guidelines may be either mandatory or discretionary, which determines their potential inadequacies. Mandatory guidelines require specific measurable standards to implement. Discretionary reviews can be very time-consuming, as there is rarely a clear answer to a problem. Additionally, they lack a real incentive. Finally, performance standards, while extremely valuable, address more policy-oriented issues, such as air quality, which a single-project can do little to address.

Austin's "Smart Growth Criteria Matrix" and Incentive Programs

Incentive programs are perhaps the most effective to encourage the kind of development a community would like to see without risking exposure to property rights litigation.

Austan Librach, Director of Austin's Planning, Environmental and Conservation Services Department has developed a Smart Growth Criteria Matrix that is used by city staff to evaluate projects as they come up for review. The Matrix was first conceived in June of 1998 and has already been used for project-level review. It is a point-based system that clearly states community goals, particularly those that relate to smart growth and how to achieve them. Perhaps one of the most compelling aspects of Austin's Matrix is the incentive program tied to point-system thresholds. There are reductions for permits fees and discounts for public infrastructure costs for those who attain certain point ranges. This provides a very real financial incentive for the project-sponsor to consider.

The incentives are so attractive to the development community that they are contacting the City to informally evaluate their projects early in the process to increase their chances of achieving a certain threshold and a fee reduction. When developers have been at the brink of attaining the next threshold, more often than not, they make the changes needed to increase their score.

The intent here is not to create a game of achieving points, but to encourage better projects. However, the Austin example demonstrates the power of incentive programs in achieving community goals.

Another lesson learned by the City of Austin is the importance of community buy-in to a new tool such as the Matrix. Planners must be sure that the community understands the tool and that they

have contributed to the broader goals it supports. Often this requires an education campaign to explain how project evaluations are conducted and the difference between NIMBY-ism and the "common good" that legitimizes planning in the first place. Some neighborhood leaders have become concerned that the Matrix lessens their influence as regards a project's compatibility with local conditions. Public participation is an important part of the Matrix. The points awarded for a developer hosting neighborhood meetings have been increased in Matrix revisions that were instituted in 1999.

Fort Collins

Fort Collins has received a lot of publicity for its planning efforts in the past few decades and with good reason. Fort Collins has had the foresight to try new planning tools and has learned a lot from this experience. Two of their planning systems are described below, as they both are valuable precedents for the SPS.

Land Development Guidance System

Although no longer in use, Fort Collin's LDGS provides some valuable insight into point-based planning systems. The LDGS was in effect from the late 70s through 1997 when Fort Collin's redid its comprehensive plan and its zoning at the same time. There were many benefits to the point system and it was effective for a long time, but according to Greg Byrne, Director of Fort Collins Community Planning Office, "respect for it eroded over time." The land use and zoning had become outmoded and therefore, the point-system that enforced those aspects did as well. In general, Byrne suggests that the LDGS was not adequately specific or comprehensive and therefore suffered. The point-system concept however, was unmarred other than in its relationship with an old plan. In effect, the projects that could be built "by-right" no longer reflected the community's values.

1999 Fort Collins Land Use Code

Fort Collins' new Land Use Code is one of the more progressive ones when it comes to encouraging smart growth development. It was developed in sync with their Comprehensive Plan beginning in 1997. It includes a new mixed-use zoning code as well as other smart growth oriented development, such as facilitation of pedestrian access, direction of development into infill sites, promoting compact development, and consideration of both current and future transit access. The inventory of community goals detailed in the new Land Use Code is very helpful in defining smart growth and smart project requirements. There has been resistance by developers and potential tenants that the requirements are mandatory. There have been requests that the applicant have the option to select either the old or newer standards.

Performance Standards or Benchmarking

While the SPS is not an exact example of performance-based zoning, it does address the issue of benchmarking within a community and similar to performance standards, some of the community goals on the SPS are more open-ended regarding how to achieve them. The other aspect of performance standards that is inherent in the SPS is the inclusion of the purpose and goal in each factor. When it becomes clear that quantitative measurements will not necessarily create an interesting, comfortable neighborhood, it is increasingly important to reiterate why those measurements exist. This type of goal setting is important to communicate to the community as well as the developer. It provides greater support for the planning system when the community goals are directly linked to the criteria.

Other Influential Examples

Below is a table that documents the application of review criteria in several communities. This is helpful in analyzing each community's contribution as a precedent to the research for the Smart Project Scorecard. As mentioned earlier, Austin's Smart Growth Matrix is the most similar tool.

Criteria Relevant to the Smart Project Scorecard

	Growth Focus	Point System	Incentive Program	Bench-marking	Project Level	TND Focus	Notes
Austin, TX	x	x	x	x	x	x	Smart Growth Matrix
Boulder, CO (1997)	x			x	x	x	Revised Growth Management & New Zoning Districts
Chula Vista, CA	x			x			Thresholds
Fort Collins, CO (1977)		x					Land Dev. Guidance System
Fort Collins, CO (1999)	x				x	x	Comp. Land Use Code
Montgomery Cnty, MD	x						Adequate Public Facilities Prog
Westminster, CO	x	x	x		x	x	Growth Management Quality System & Traditional Neighbor Category

While the Smart Project Scorecard has been improved greatly from the lessons and experiences of other communities, aside from Austin's matrix, few tools apply in a comprehensive way. The real lessons learned for the SPS will most likely be learned from its implementation in a variety of communities.

B. INCORPORATING A SMART SCORECARD INTO A LOCAL SMART GROWTH PROGRAM

In order to effectively use a Smart Project Scorecard in your community, there are several companion efforts that will help increase the Scorecard's impact on local residents, property owners and developers:

1. **Smart Scale Assessment** – a collaborative community exercise to determine where the community currently lies on the Smart Growth Scale. For example, are there neighborhood plans in place; a transportation plan in place with funding for backbone service; incentives for mixed-use; design guidelines for infill projects; transit station district plans, housing program to encourage infill development? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the city's policies and its ability to carry them out effectively? Is there a realistic market opportunity to attempt Smart Growth projects? (See attached chart)

2. **Incremental Milestones** – Determine tangible goals along the Smart Scale where the community should be in the coming 3-5 years. Examples: Have 2 mixed-use projects built in the downtown area in the next 5 years; encourage a neo-traditional residential development in the coming year located in a particular part of town.

3. **Prototype Project Benchmarks** – Obtain examples of existing projects from other communities to explain the design, financing and policy tools necessary to implement that development. Also document the reduced impacts from building these projects compared with similar projects located in the periphery of the community.

4. **Smart Scorecard** – Establish a Scorecard tool that works for your Planning Board, Council, staff and neighborhood groups.

5. **Local Demonstration Projects** – Gain support by the Council to move forward on 1-3 demonstration projects that will illustrate how the Scorecard can be used and the positive benefits of new choices to the community. This is especially useful in districts that are not receiving a great deal of development activity.