Next Steps for Smart Growth (April 2007)

A timely opportunity exists to make significant progress in smart growth implementation by focusing the numerous and diffuse smart growth constituents on a small number of high impact changes—a smart growth action agenda. The diversity and number of our partners and issues in smart growth is both a strength and a weakness. It's a strength because of the uncommon partnerships it can create and the comprehensive solutions that are possible. It is a weakness because the partners are focused on every possible solution that can be imagined: public charrettes, health impact statements, transportation reform, zoning changes, schools as centers of community, transit funding formulas, etc. The diffusion and dispersed nature of our efforts reduces the power and effectiveness of the efforts. This issue is particularly salient now—when big, discreet changes are possible if, and only if, our efforts can be focused. As a result, the Agenda will not be comprehensive. It will be limited to a small number of high impact actions supported by a range of organizations. This strategy to change development patterns is about capitalizing on and focusing the work of constituencies that have supported smart growth concepts. Several macro trends favor smart growth and illustrate which issues should be addressed in creating and implementing the Action Agenda.

The 6th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth Conference in Los Angeles was the initial venue for developing the Action Agenda. At the end of each breakout session the audience and speakers were asked to identify key issues and related actions that could serve as the core of the Agenda. From over 80 breakout sessions, more than 500 ideas were shared (not all sessions undertook this exercise). These suggestions represented the "raw data" of what participants thought smart growth advocates should be addressing. This information was organized and sorted by topic and its viability as an effective action. There was much duplication in ideas and suggestions – a testament to the consensus and understanding of the issues. The following is a preliminary list of general topic headings and related actions. Once again, this list is not intended to be either comprehensive or exhaustive. The ideas represent feedback from participants based on subjects discussed in the sessions, rather than a comprehensive list of all topics and actions related to smart growth. For example, while climate change related to several breakout sessions, there were no compelling ideas or actions offered specifically on climate change. However, many of the individual transportation, land use, or green building actions can be viewed together as a climate change strategy. It is not useful, nor efficient for the Action Agenda to try to include any and all possible ideas. It should focus on specific high impact actions that will be more powerful if implemented and proven effective by a range of groups across the country.

At this time, the condensed list of topics/actions is being shared with conference attendees and the general public to get your reaction and feedback. We are asking you to review the list and provide suggestions to enhance or add to the information provided. Specifically we are seeking additional details and recommendations to clarify and direct the actions provided. New topics or actions should only be offered if they are complete thoughts including a description of the action, identification of the responsible party for implementing the action, a timeframe for action and any other supporting details. Comments must be emailed to Michele Kelso Warren at mkwarren@lgc.org by May 21.

This feedback element is a critical piece in developing the Smart Growth Action Agenda. A workgroup that involves conference organizer the Local Government Commission and a few other national partners has been identifying relevant constituents to work with them to further develop the agenda into more detailed strategies, based on your feedback and other expertise. The third step will be to develop a workplan for each strategy within the Smart Growth Action

Agenda. This work will continue through 2007. Our goal is to release results and findings of this undertaking prior to the 7th Annual New Partners for Smart Growth Conference, February 7-9 2008 in Washington, DC. Plenary and breakout sessions will be developed according to the ideas in the Smart Growth Action Agenda. If you have questions about this process or the Smart Growth Action Agenda, please contact Michele Warren at 916-448-1198 x 308 or Kevin Nelson at 202-566-2835.

Draft Smart Growth or "Green" Action Agenda (April 2007)

Demonstrate the Principles
- Initiate 1,500 potential LEED-ND projects
- Create an awards program for types of projects/issues you want to promote in your community/state/region

Facilitate the Projects
- Create partnerships that provide a voice for nonprofit developers, housing authorities and neighbor to provide the vision for the potential of developing underutilized parcels
- Support technical assistance programs that assist communities with smart growth implementation
- Tie visioning and scenario development exercises directly to implementation

Finance Change
- Link land use planning to bond financing
- Require 30% of all real estate financing to fund Smart Growth
- Shift the financing instruments used to generate transportation funding to be more in line with SG principles (e.g. property and real estate taxes, developer impact fees, HOT lanes, VMT tax).
- Change criteria for tax credits and programs (Low Income Housing Tax Credits, Historic Preservation Tax Credits, Tax Increment Financing) to favor smart growth projects/redevelopment
- Establish better financing models for mixed-use projects by working with banks and other financial institutions and financiers to quantify the benefits of smart growth development

Change the Codes & Standards
- Let your code revision guide the comprehensive plan update
- Streamline the permit review process by having all relevant departments weigh-in on a project during the pre-application phase
- Educate communities about Form Based Codes through trainings, workshops and best practices; this tool is not appropriate everywhere and should be understood before used
- Enlist AASHTO, AMPO and transportation leadership in acceptance & marketing of new multimodal roadway standards
  - Have FHWA and state DOT's adopt new ITE thoroughfares manual

Educate & empower public, decision-makers, and designers
- Educate Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Departments to Support Smart Growth

- Require of public health officials to have planning education and vice versa
- Allow required public hearings to follow charrette-style workshop process
- Increase outreach/education on roadway re-engineering to transportation engineers, planners, emergency response, business community, elected officials, and school boards.
- Expand the smart growth message to diverse communities (Spanish, Environmental Justice, etc. when and where appropriate)
- Encourage health impact assessment as part of the development approval process; planners and health practitioners need to learn from one another

Think big; think green
- **Accelerate Green Building with public investments**
  - Change state housing finance agency tax credit point system to require green building
  - Require all Federal, state, county, city, and school buildings to follow LEED guidelines
- **Encourage green infrastructure at local, regional & national scale**
  - Training for engineers and landscape architects in how to use natural systems/soils for stormwater management, simple tool to quantify costs/benefits of GI systems
  - Get information on performance, cost effectiveness & maintenance to water utilities
  - Remove obstacles to GI in city street and drainage codes
  - Identify funding and responsibilities for maintenance of GI systems
  - Encourage municipalities to accept landscape architects certifications on stormwater
  - Incentivize use of low water using landscapes and water efficient practices; cut landscape water consumption by 50%

Transform Transportation Policy
- **Implement a Multimodal Corridor Investment Strategy in State DOT's and MPO's**
  - Supported by FHWA, FTA EPA, HUD and other non-transportation agencies
  - Focus on city-to-suburb corridors that are ripe for reinvestment and re-engineering
  - Cross-agency, cross-program, multi-jurisdiction planning that includes businesses, developers, environmentalists and other stakeholders up-front
  - Incorporate multimodal solutions, boulevard and network approach, TOD and Transit Ready, grayfield & brownfield redevelopment, green infrastructure
  - Use process as target for other public & private investments – workforce housing, public facilities, senior & special needs housing
- Spend a majority of non-maintenance state transportation funds on transit, walk, bike, TDM, and maximizing efficiency of existing road network ('connect-the-dots ' of existing roads, re-engineer the corridors)
- Shift transportation financing instruments to be more in line with SG principles (e.g. property and real estate taxes, developer impact fees, HOT lanes, VMT tax).
- Ensure that when new transit projects are put forward (with local option transportation funds) that adequate funding is included for operations and maintenance.
- Include innovative incentives as part of these collaborative transportation land use initiatives (location efficient mortgages & rent subsidies)

Make Streets that work for everyone
- **Roadway re-engineering/Road Diets:**
  - Conduct statewide review/survey of 4 & 5 lane roads as candidates for Road Diets
  - Review all planned projects for potential lane reductions and right-sizing
  - Create a repository of models/policy language for roadway re-engineering
- **Emergency response:**
  - Frame regional network connectivity as a public safety issue (emergency response time) as well as convenience and transportation choice
  - Enlist fire and emergency staff as allies/spokespeople on overall life safety; document best practices and code changes that illustrate where this works
  - Guidelines/handbooks: on design for fire officials, city transportation and public works; for planners on how to apply Green Streets principles for stormwater into re-engineering; for purchasing agents on equipment flexibility; incorporate into General Plan.
  - Link research on street width & reduced accidents to emergency response call load.

Make Transit Work
- Triple transit funding – for both capital and operations
- Change the federal funding formula for FTA projects
- Plan for Transit Ready Development along city-to-suburban corridors and greenfield development; work with localities, transit agencies, MPO's and developers.
- Sell the benefits of TOD through model parking ratios, walking/biking access, induced investment around transit stations

Get the Parking Right
- Incorporate right-sized parking approach (Shoup, Littman et.al.) into the 4th edition of ITE's *Parking Generation*
- Eliminate minimum parking requirements and expand the use of maximum parking limits
- Eliminate off street parking requirements – leave it to the market
- Expand the use of Parking Cash Out
- Policy and technology that rewards good behavior (e.g. smart cards used to pay for parking in an employee lot or can accumulate credits when you carpool, walk or bike to work)

Market the Action Agenda
- Work with planners and other partners to convince owners/financers/developers that smart growth makes money and protects property rights
- Target messages to specific audiences – find the messaging that works for public officials, general public, landowners, coastal/waterfront areas, farmers, health professionals, etc.

Build Housing Choice
- Approve housing permits concurrent with school construction budgets
- Support a national housing trust
- Ensure additional levels of affordable housing by adopting inclusionary zoning requirements of at 15% of given development over 50 units to be affordable; do not allow buy-out option

- Establish goals for localities to provide workforce housing: this can be accomplished through tying state development funds or housing assistance funds to local planning housing element

Transforming the Design of Institutional Development (Schools, Government Facilities, Hospitals, Military Bases, etc)
- School districts plan with communities
- Eliminate school siting standards; build schools in the center of communities
- Bring together all relevant partners in development decisions; school districts and local jurisdictions working together
- Provide technical assistance to colleges and universities to implement smart growth
- Make the smart growth case to university presidents, sustainability coordinators and facility managers

The New Regionalism
- Develop partnerships with the insurance industry to change the economics of land use decisions (reduce cross-subsidies (good development subsidizing the insurance costs of bad development)
- Reward through state funding and bonds that address the housing/job balance
- Establish quantified measuring tools per region to evaluate smart growth per region to inform investment decisions
- Convince localities that "chasing rooftops" is not an answer to increasing tax base, a better solution is holistic plan that accommodates a variety of land uses and inputs