

1000 FRIENDS of Connecticut

SMART GROWTH DEVELOPMENT SCORECARD BETA VERSION

Introduction

Among developers, political, civic and business leaders it is becoming increasingly clear that building what and where it is smart, sustainable and responsible, Connecticut's towns and cities can enjoy the fruits of growth without bearing the costs of poorly planned development.

Smart growth strategies help communities generate more jobs, provide more choices in the location and cost of housing, and build a healthy economy. At the same time smart growth allows us to reduce our environmental impact, secure greater energy independence, reduce redundant public expenditures, and create safe and healthy neighborhoods for our kids, our seniors, and our families. Smart growth also improves our global competitiveness for new talent and new investment.

Smart growth is a win and with the prospect of ever-lengthening commutes, the desire to reduce carbon emissions to meet Connecticut's new greenhouse gas emission reduction targets, and rising gas prices, now is the time to grow Connecticut smart!

More and more people are seeking homes and business locations where they are not completely automobile-dependent. Gen X-ers and empty-nesters are expressing a preference for neighborhoods where they can walk or bike to the grocery store and take public transit to work and entertainment. More and more people want to live where they can still be active citizens as they age, and where their children and grandchildren can enjoy healthy physical activity everyday.

Vociferously, Connecticut's residents are expressing frustration with the way shortsighted planning sacrifices the long-term fiscal health of our communities -- starving our established downtown businesses, under-utilizing the assets of our older communities, eating up our farms and open spaces and ravaging our air and water.

Still, look closely and we can envision an alternative future. Citizen activists are working to rebuild existing communities and design new ones to better respond to the needs of this and future generations, and to the evolving preferences of the market. 1000 FRIENDS of Connecticut aims to advance that vision. Together we must act quickly and decisively. We are living in times of extreme uncertainty. Can we come together to mitigate the impacts of global climate change? Will the tightening credit market and growing economic segregation mean still fewer housing choices for low- and middle-income residents in Connecticut? How will we weather ever-escalating gasoline prices? Can we slow the rate of asthma in school kids in our cities? White Plains and Yonkers are speedily developing transit accessible, waterfront neighborhoods. Stamford, Norwalk and Bridgeport are hoping attract development to maintain their competitiveness. Will this lead to increased prosperity in Hartford, New Haven, Waterbury, Windham, New London and Norwich? Or, will investment lag as people

choose to live and locate their businesses in smart, transit oriented locations further south and west – places like Maryland, New Jersey and Westchester County? Can the region’s remaining farmers fight off the pressure of rising land and energy costs successfully and take advantage of the growing locavore movement in Manhattan and its suburbs?

Fairfield County is the tenth most sprawling area of the country. Much of the state’s infrastructure is inadequate and/or in decay. Shoreline traffic congestion is legendary. Housing affordability is a challenge and, because subsidies are scant and land costs high, most new housing is high-end.

Still, Connecticut is home to projects like Harbor Point in Stamford, the Pratt and Whitney redevelopment in North Haven, Storrs Center, the transit hub in Meriden, and plans for the West River neighborhood in New Haven. If smartly implemented, these will not only improve our quality of life, but will also be shining examples of smarter, more sustainable, more responsible growth for the rest of the state. Those projects, and plans and initiatives like them, won’t happen without supporting policies and investments at the state and local levels. Smart growth developments require a significant shift in the current development scheme. Many existing zoning practices, parking requirements, road design speeds, and the form and content of our communities must evolve.

GETTING TO SMART FROM HERE WILL REQUIRE STATE AND COMMUNITY LEADERS TO OVERHAUL OUTDATED PLANS. WE’LL NEED TO GRANT VARIANCES TO, OR REWRITE LAWS AND REGULATIONS TO MEET MODERN STANDARDS. IT WON’T BE EASY. 1000 FRIENDS of Connecticut drafted the *Smart Growth Development Scorecard Beta Version* to:

- help developers, citizens groups, municipal and state decision makers develop a clearer understanding of what smart growth is,
- support to regulations and investments that advance smart growth, and
- remove regulations and investment criteria that impede smart, sustainable and responsible development.

1000 FRIENDS modeled its scorecard on the work of The Smart Growth Leadership Institute, the TND Design Rating Standards, and the New Jersey Future Project Scorecard. The beta version was developed by the following committee members: Dara Kovel, Jonathan Rose Companies; John Guskowski, CME Associates; Robert Santy, CERC, Inc.; Toni Gold, Consultant Project for Public Spaces; Robert Orr, Robert Orr Associates; Susan Bryson, Wiggin and Dana; Scotia Ryer, Wiggin and Dana; Dr. Robert Painter; and Heidi Green, 1000 FRIENDS of Connecticut.

Developments will be reviewed by a committee of experts including: architects, engineers, land use attorneys, developers, and community activists.

The Smart Code Development Scorecard Beta Version -- Organization

The *Smart Growth Development Scorecard* is organized in the following categories:

- Maximizes Existing Infrastructure,
- Mix of uses,
- Housing options,
- Accessibility, mobility, & connectivity,
- Compactness/Land Use Efficiency,
- Environmental protection,
- Pedestrian safety, streetscapes & parking

Categories are weighted on a scale of 100. Points are allocated for each question within a category. The questions were designed to gauge a developments' correlation to the smart growth principles below.

Ten Principles of Smart Growth

1. Provide a variety of transportation choices.
2. Mix Land uses.
3. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
4. Create walkable neighborhoods.
5. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration.
6. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
7. Make development decisions that are predictable, fair and cost effective.
8. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas.
9. Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities.
10. Take advantage of compact building design and efficient infrastructure design.

THE SMART GROWTH DEVELOPMENT SCORECARD—THE QUESTIONS

Greenfield

Connecticut is a small state with centuries of human habitation. Until the 20th century, development in Connecticut was concentrated in compact centers surrounded by large tracts of field and woodlot. In recent years, however, we've moved away from those centers, we've spread across farmland and green spaces. Until the mid-20th Century, our development catered to the pedestrian, but recently we've pivoted to make the car our locus of development. We've paved the land for car storage. We've built ribbons of road to make it speedier and easier for cars. But, for future generations, our development pattern needs to provide alternatives to the single-person automobile. It must accommodate the needs of pedestrians, and conserve our remaining farmland and open spaces. 1000 FRIENDS of Connecticut is opposed to the wasteful consumption of land in low-density, poorly-planned development, new development must be redirected back in to urbanized areas.

Development on greenfields, i.e.: forests & grassland, land that may have been previously used as cropland, pasture land, wood lots, quarries, etc., but was *not* previously developed AND Development on land that is *not* served by existing sewer and water infrastructure at the time a development is planned is NOT smart growth development.

Maximizes Existing Infrastructure

1. Site Type 8 Points

Smart Growth redirects new development to existing communities. Within those communities, smart growth directs development to places already served by water, sewer, and transit infrastructure. Smart growth seeks to maximize the resources of established neighborhoods while conserving open space, farmland and irreplaceable natural resources. A project surrounded on all sides by existing development is the most efficient site placement. Therefore, 1000 FRIENDS of Connecticut awards points in this question for tight infill, and for projects that tap into existing infrastructure. Infill development that cleans up and reuses environmentally contaminated land receives additional points.

Projects more than a short walking distance from existing development, or development where sewer, water, or transit infrastructure is not available, will be awarded no points in this section. (This question pertains to all development.)

2. Brownfield 8 Points

Clearly, cleaning up environmentally contaminated properties (or properties that are perceived to be contaminated) to the highest standard of remediation carries the greatest potential cost to the developer. The highest standard of remediation also allows the greatest flexibility for reuse. In this section, 1000 FRIENDS award points based on the options for reuse provided by the remediation. (This question only pertains to sites requiring remediation.)

3. New Roads 10 Points

Connecticut's current road standards are engineered to accommodate the highest number of cars travelling at the fastest possible speeds. This compromises the character of streets, contributes to poor air quality, high rates of greenhouse gas emissions, and higher mortality rates. In this question, we award points to projects that humanize the road infrastructure, slow speeds, disperse traffic into a wider grid, and make streets friendlier for walkers and bikers. (This question pertains only to projects that require roadway modifications.)

Compactness and Land Use Efficiency

4. Densities 3.3 Points

Before the automobile dominated our planning, cities and villages were more densely concentrated, lots were smaller, buildings taller and open spaces wider. People lived within walking distance of work, school, cultural and social activities. Compact development equates to lower energy and natural resource consumption. It correlates to better health outcomes, and it tightens social networks. Therefore, 1000 FRIENDS awards points in this section to development at historical densities. Development that further distances us from one another receives no points. (This question pertains to all projects.)

5. Area of parking 3.3 Points

Standard parking requirements drive up the cost of development forcing developers to dedicate valuable space to the car, they also contribute to the dysfunctional spread of impervious surfaces, and contribute to pedestrian-hostile environments. Smart growth provides residents and workers alternatives to the single passenger automobile, preserves natural resources, and orients to the pedestrian. This section awards points to development geared to pedestrians and transit users. It awards the highest score to developments that make no provisions for parking and awards no points for those that require high minimum parking allowances. (This question pertains to all projects.)

6. Parking alternatives 3.3 Points

Currently and into the near future, parking will continue to be a necessary evil. This question awards points to developments that creatively accommodate the car within the uses of the development. Plans that meter parking and allow for shared parking spaces score highly. Projects that do not provide street parking or make no attempts to reduce parking receive no points. (This question pertains to all projects.)

Mix of Uses

7. Mix of land uses 5 Points

A healthy mix of uses is critical to community vitality. Without variety (single family detached housing, small lot single family detached housing, single family row houses, condominiums, rental units, grocery/convenience shopping, offices, libraries, restaurants/entertainment), communities aren't appealing to discriminating employers and residents. Without variety, economies fail to be robust. 1000 FRIENDS awards points (based on a development's size) for (1) the variety of the mix, and (2) the proximity of uses within the mix. (This question pertains to all projects.)

8. Mix of neighborhood uses 5 Points

Smart development augments and strengthens established communities. This question awards points to development that overcomes single-use zoning, and livens

the mix of uses within a walkable distance of the development. (This question pertains to all projects.)

9. Jobs/housing balance 5 Points

Smart growth places housing and employment within a walkable distance of one-another. This question awards points based on the likelihood that the residents of units created will be able to walk to their jobs, and the workers in work sites created are able to walk home. Projects in which a majority of workers and/or residents must commute 30 minutes or more receive 0 points. (This question pertains to all projects.)

Housing Options

10. Dwelling unit types 3.25 Points

A wider variety of residential building types provides texture to communities and helps insure a mix of house prices and family-sizes are available even in projects without designated affordability provisions. This question awards points for diversity of dwelling types within a neighborhood. (This question pertains to all projects with a residential component.)

11. Neighborhood income diversity 3.25 Points

There may be times when by adding income diversity to a development, the diversity of an entire neighborhood is increased. This question awards points to developments that catalyze greater income diversity for the surrounding areas. Because growth isn't smart if incomes are segregated, this question awards greater points for wider variance in affordability standards. (This question pertains to all development with a residential component.)

12. Affordability protection 3.25 Points

Residential units in smart growth locations increase value faster and hold their value longer than traditional residential units. Therefore, a mix of affordability can't always be assured based on housing type design alone. This question awards points to developments that guarantee affordability. Points are awarded based on depth of income targeting, diversity of affordable units, and the length of time affordability is protected. (This question pertains to all development with a residential component.)

11. Municipal income diversity 3.25 Points

Smart growth discourages segregation of communities. Smart developments not only build diversity into their projects, they can also catalyze diversity in the municipality. This question awards points for projects that break down municipal segregation by income or deconcentrate poverty. (This question pertains to all development with a residential component.)

Accessibility, Mobility and Connectivity

12. Frequently visited uses within ¼ mile 3 Points

For residents and workers to leave their cars behind and conveniently opt to travel by foot or bike, there must be a healthy mix of housing, shopping, restaurants, work places, schools and institutions within a relatively compact area. This question awards points based on the mix of uses within a given proximity. High scoring projects will have many uses within compact distances. (This question pertains to all development.)

13. Transit accessibility 6 Points

Transit access is a critical to reducing our reliance on the automobile. This question awards points based on proximity to high quality transit service (this refers to permanent transit – commuter rail and bus rapid transit.) Top scoring projects will include a transit station within a transit oriented development. Projects built with the expectation that previously approved but as-yet-unbuilt transit service will receive the minimum points. Auto-dependent development scores zero points in this section. (This question pertains to all development.)

14. Street network connectivity 3 Points

Creating street networks that are tightly interwoven disperses traffic congestion. Interconnectivity, coupled with slower design speeds makes a development more convenient for pedestrian and bikes as well. This question gauges the interconnectivity of streets created within a development, the connection between the development, and the existing street grid, and design speeds of new streets. (This question pertains to developments that include new streets.)

Pedestrian Safety, Streetscapes, Parking

15. Access to parks .9 Points

Biophilic research has documented what we all know intuitively. Humans need nature. This question looks at proximity of the development to parks and public spaces. High scorers will be within a short walking distance of a park. Or, the development's design will increase the general public's pedestrian access to a park or public green space. (This question pertains to all developments.)

16. Traffic calming .9 Points

Smart growth means creating environments that are safe and inviting to pedestrians. Pedestrian mortality is nearly assured in car/pedestrian collisions at 30 MPH. Reducing street widths and the space allocated to parking lanes slows traffic and makes streets safer for pedestrians and bicyclists. Yield streets, where the width accommodates only one car with occasional turnouts, are an ideal design for

residential neighborhoods. This question awards points to streets that are designed to slow traffic and ease pedestrian use. (This question pertains only to developments that impact street design.)

17. Safety of walkers and bikers .9 Points

This question awards points for having sidewalks, the width of sidewalks, street speeds, bike lanes and crosswalks. (This question pertains only to developments that impact street design.)

18. Street trees .9 Points

Street trees provide shade. An uninterrupted canopy adds elegance to a street. Leaves remove significant quantities of particulate pollution, and sequester carbon. High-scoring developments will provide street trees and will ensure that the trees are planted so as to guard the trees from infestation, dehydration and undue stress. (This question pertains only to development that impacts the street.)

19. Building orientation .9 Points

People prefer walking on streets faced with buildings that are scaled to humans and engage people on the street. This question awards points to developments with buildings that hug the street and welcome pedestrians, while hiding vehicle entrances and loading docks in the rear. (This question pertains to all developments.)

20. Historic preservation .9 Points

Historic structures add to the flavor, character and uniqueness of a place. This question awards points to developments that reuse all historic buildings, preserve them with accuracy, and design newer components to meld with the historic features of existing buildings. (This question pertains to all developments with identified historic structures and to development with structures that contain potentially-historic, but not-yet identified features.)

21. Accessibility to differing abilities .9 Points

Connecticut's population is rapidly aging and the need for development that accommodates people whose abilities are compromised is becoming increasingly salient. This question scores development based on its level of accommodation for the differently-abled. (This question pertains to all developments.)

22. Appealing frontage .9 Points

This question regards penetrability, massing of buildings, and design of pedestrian entrances within the development. Closely related to question 21, this question highlights the pedestrian experience entering and exiting buildings while the

earlier question rewards developments that reduce the impact of vehicle egress on the experience of the development. (This question pertains to all development.)

23. Tradition and architecture .9 Points

This question is the third in the series of questions concerned with the experience of the development. It rewards developments that integrate stylistically with and enhance their surroundings. (This question pertains to all developments.)

24. On-street parking design .9 Points

On-street parking provides a valuable buffer between pedestrians and traffic. On-street parking also calms traffic and reduced traffic incidents. On-street parking provides greater efficiency in land use, and reduces the need for new impervious surfaces. This question rewards projects that liberally employ on-street parking and design it for safety. (This question pertains to all development that makes provisions for parking.)

25. Off-street parking .9 Points

The aim here is to improve the experience of the development by reorienting places to people instead of cars. High points are awarded to developments that make parking invisible by utilizing back alleys, parking in the rear of buildings and reducing the prominence of garages. (This question pertains to all development with a residential component.)

Greenness

26. Highlight natural features. 1.6 Points

This question awards points based the extent to which natural features are preserved, protected and made available to the public. (This question pertains to development in which natural topographic features are present.)

27. Reuse of existing buildings 1.6 Points

When gauging the lifecycle environmental costs, the greenest building is a building that is already here. Reuse of buildings is less-resource intensive than destroying existing buildings to raise new ones. This question rewards developments for the extent to which they adaptively reuse existing buildings. (This question pertains to developments on sites with existing buildings.)

28. Green buildings 1.6 Points

This question seeks to reduce the environmental impacts of development through the use of green building techniques. (This question pertains to all development.)

29. Alternative energies 1.6 Points

The goal is to encourage the use of and stimulate demand for non-carbon generating energy systems and alternative technologies to reduce the carbon footprint of proposed projects. (This question pertains to all development.)

30. Wetlands, streams, shorelines, etc. 1.6 Points

This question seeks to protect existing wetlands. High scoring projects will not only avoid disturbing wetlands, but will also make efforts to improve local water quality. (This question pertains to all development.)

31. Slopes, floodplains, habitat, etc. 1.6 Points

The goal is to protect natural and cultural assets within the development and to increase the public's access to these assets. High scorers will exceed regulatory requirements and open access to key features. (This project pertains to development in which cultural or natural assets are present.)