

PARTNERSHIP FOR SMART GROWTH

Smart Growth Principles

PSG supports and endorses the principles of smart growth to guide future development in the region. Smart growth is well-planned development that protects open space and farmland, revitalizes communities, keeps housing affordable, and provides more transportation choices. Smart Growth focuses development in town centers where people take shorter car trips, and also walk, bike, or take transit. Developers are able to minimize per unit infrastructure costs and create a market for retail shops. Local governments save money by preserving fiscally beneficial open space, reusing and maximizing the use of existing infrastructure and services. Economic value is created for homeowners and the community.

10 broad principles of smart growth agreed to by diverse groups including the national homebuilders are to:

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

Richmond Spreading Out – Facts and Figures

- From the year 1990 to the year 2000 population in the region grew by 15.1% outpacing the state at 14.4% and the nation at 13.2%. The region added 131,000 people during that time. Population projections for the future estimate the region's population to grow by another 124,588 people by the year 2010 bringing the region's population to over 1.21 million people.
- Even as population continues to grow at a steady clip, the rate of land consumption is increasing much faster than population. Between 1992 and 1997 land development increased more than twice as rapidly as population. During those five years more land was developed than in the previous ten years. An average of 32 acres per day or 1.3 acres per hour was developed during this time. If land development continues to grow at this rate, approximately 294,000 acres will be developed over the next 20 years, an area over seven times the size of the City of Richmond. This would mean that the area would develop more land in the next 20 years than it had in the last 400.
- During the period from 1982 to 2000 road construction in the region increased more rapidly than population, yet traffic congestion still increased. From 1982 to 2000 population has increased by approximately 42.85% and total road miles has increased by over 90%. Freeway miles have increased by over 123%.

(Endnote: Data derived from *“Where Are We Growing? Land Use and Transportation in the Greater Richmond Region ; 2003; by Trip Pollard, Southern Environmental Law Center)*