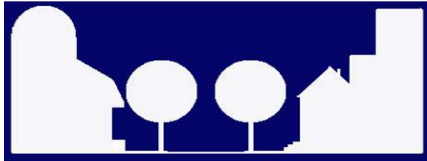


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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **New Group Tackles Ills of Poorly Planned Growth**

#### ***Partnership for Smarter Growth Begins Work in Richmond Region***

“The Richmond Region is at a crossroads,” announced Martha Wingfield, spokeswoman of the newly launched Richmond Partnership for Smart Growth (PSG). “Poorly planned development is consuming our countryside at a rapid pace, increasing traffic and fiscal strains on our counties, even as our City and inner suburbs decline from job losses and lack of investment. We believe our citizens and communities deserve better.”

As research by the Southern Environmental Law Center in its groundbreaking 2003 report – “Where Are We Growing? Land Use and Transportation in the Greater Richmond Region” – indicated, scattered, disconnected development threatens the quality of life in the region. From 1990 to 2000 the Richmond region’s population grew at a faster rate than the state and nation. Yet, the City of Richmond continued to lose population while open land is being developed at nearly twice the rate of population growth. At this rate, approximately 294,000 acres would be developed over the next 20 years, an area over seven times the size of the City of Richmond. More land would be paved over in the next 20 years than in the last 400. “These trends will contribute to more severe traffic congestion, longer commutes, more air and water pollution, less open

space and a lower quality of life,” said Trip Pollard, Land and Community Project leader of the Southern Environmental Law Center.

Galvanized by the SELC report and by what they see around them, citizen activists have formed the Partnership for Smarter Growth. A non-profit organization, PSG is dedicated to working regionally to secure reinvestment in Richmond and the inner suburbs, ensure affordable housing closer to jobs, protect neighborhood open space and rural areas, reduce traffic, create communities more like our historic towns where people can walk, and save tax dollars through more efficient patterns of development.

PSG seeks greater citizen participation in decisions about the future of our communities, better local planning, and increased regional cooperation to protect and enhance the quality of life and long-term desirability and economic competitiveness of the Richmond region. “We want to ensure that our children do not have to go to school in trailers, that jobs are nearby for the residents of our City and older communities, that traffic is reduced through less scattered development, and that our rural landscapes, farms and historic and natural treasures are protected,” said Lisa Guthrie of the Virginia League of Conservation Voters Education Fund.

PSG currently includes citizens from seven participating jurisdictions in the Richmond region including the City of Richmond, Henrico, Chesterfield, New Kent, Hanover, Charles City and Goochland Counties. Partners include citizens, land use planners, environmental organizations, historic preservationists, and academia. The organization is raising money, securing office space and equipment, recruiting volunteers, and hiring a full-time coordinator.

“Smart growth is about growth in the right places, with efficient design, and at fiscally and socially sustainable densities. It is not ‘no growth’. We want to revitalize the city and declining suburbs, make effective use of already paved over land, reduce the growth in traffic through more targeted development, and protect rural land,” said Marleen Durfee of Chesterfield County and director of the Task Force for Responsible Growth. “We do not want the Richmond region, home to a city of great history and beauty, to make the same mistakes of other regions. Smart growth will ensure a good quality of life for current and future generations,” concluded Ray Swanson of Richmond.

To join the Partnership for Smart Growth visit our web site at [www.partnershipforsmartergrowth.org](http://www.partnershipforsmartergrowth.org) or contact Martha Wingfield at 804-537-5217 for information about your local representatives.

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