



**Smart Growth America**  
Making Neighborhoods Great Together



## Communities Across America Know: Smart Growth Strategies Save Money

From New Jersey to New Mexico, rural, suburban and urban communities are interested in making smarter investments for economic growth. Regions across the country have unequivocally shown that smart practices in housing, infrastructure and transportation will save local, state and federal government budgets significant sums. Businesses benefit from strategic development too, because smarter short-term decisions mean a stronger local economy for the future.

### Federal Programs That Stretch Taxpayer Dollars

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Transportation and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have partnered to create the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, an effective program that gets more out of each taxpayer dollar. When rural regions, cities, suburbs and towns make strategic decisions about their future transportation, housing, water infrastructure and public service needs, they save money - and so does the federal government. The Partnership for Sustainable Communities programs take proven cost-saving successes from communities across the country and give more places the chance to create their own locally-driven models of economic growth and fiscal health.

### Proven Success Across the Country

#### Utah

Local business leaders and citizens came together in 1997 to develop a strategy for the economic future of the Salt Lake City region. This effort, called Envision Utah, received \$1 million of its \$8 million budget from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Federal Highway Administration as part of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities. Once implemented, the plans developed by Envision Utah will save the state and the Salt Lake City region \$4.5 billion in infrastructure costs, much of which is usually paid for by the federal government.

## **New Mexico**

The City of Albuquerque studied infrastructure and real estate demand and determined that targeted investments would save the city hundreds of millions of dollars. Non-strategic development for roads and sewer systems could cost the city more than \$2 billion, but a more strategic plan could save Albuquerque more than \$355 million. That kind of efficient local government investment will positively impact the entire region's budget.

## **New Jersey**

A study in New Jersey found the state could save billions of dollars in infrastructure costs over the course of two decades by using smarter local strategies for economic development. If growth were to go unchecked during that time, the state would have to invest substantially in construction and maintenance of new roads and sewers. New Jersey's study found that strategic decisions to focus economic development around existing communities could reduce land consumed by 34 to 60 percent and save the state \$1.5–2.3 billion. These dramatic savings could substantially bolster the regional economy and the state's budget.

## **Florida**

The city of West Palm Beach showed that decisions to include new real estate development within existing communities – as opposed to far from existing infrastructure and services – would result in substantial savings for taxpayers. Local leaders found that businesses flourish in areas close to major intersections and thoroughfares where people already live, work and shop and it makes sense to leverage that private investment for future economic health. West Palm Beach estimated savings of approximately \$100 million if development was focused in an area of a few square miles instead of spread over a larger area.

## **Iowa**

The Main Street Iowa Program, a public-private partnership with a 25-year history of restoring the economic competitiveness of historic downtowns, has helped revitalize 47 communities across Iowa. Small towns like Oskaloosa (pop. 11,000) credit the program for creating more than 150 small businesses that support over 350 jobs in downtown Oskaloosa. That translates to \$15 million in private investment in Oskaloosa and nearly \$1 billion in private investment statewide. Main Street Iowa has a proven track record of leveraging modest state and federal resources to encourage significant private investment, and has been instrumental in turning around dozens of small towns in Iowa that were suffering from population loss and lack of economic opportunities.

## **About Smart Growth America**

Smart Growth America is the only national organization dedicated to researching, advocating for and leading coalitions to bring smart growth practices to more communities nationwide. From providing more sidewalks so people can walk to their town center to ensuring that more homes are built near public transportation or productive farms remain a part of our communities, smart growth strategies help make sure people across the nation can live in great neighborhoods.

For more information visit [SmartGrowthAmerica.org](http://SmartGrowthAmerica.org) or contact Jessica Holmberg at [jholmberg@smartgrowthamerica.org](mailto:jholmberg@smartgrowthamerica.org).