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Pima County to examine environmental, economic benefits of sustainable land use audit with aid from Smart Growth America’s technical assistance

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Pima County, Ariz., will host Smart Growth America representatives Wednesday, April 11, as part of a free, grant-funded technical assistance program aimed at developing a sustainable zoning code and assessing the community’s goals for land-use regulation. County staff will discuss an intended audit of Pima’s zoning code as well as green business practices, in a broader context of issues like renewable energy, economic development, community health, water conservation and quality and housing diversity.

“Pima County has been afforded a unique opportunity by Smart Growth America to help us begin to identify how we might modify our zoning code and perhaps related regulations and policies to eliminate barriers to smart growth and create new opportunities for it,” Pima County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry said. “This event will be a great opportunity for County residents to learn more and, most importantly, help us explore those possibilities.”

In September 2011, Pima County was one of 15 communities nationwide selected from a pool of 90 applications by Smart Growth America to participate in the technical assistance program. Stretching from Maine to Washington State, these 15 communities represent major cities, suburban centers, and rural towns alike.

“Smart Growth America is committed to providing the tools and training to help community leaders keep their cities and towns livable, sustainable and vital places,” said Roger Millar, Director of Smart Growth America’s Leadership Institute. "Our audit of Pima County’s code is an initial step in a local process that can lead to compact mixing of uses, including housing types and costs, oriented to transit. This will allow low income, minority, and elderly residents greater access to community services and resources, which has positive implications for health and nutrition, education, employment and upward mobility, family unity, and safety."

The program, made possible through a five-year Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Sustainable Communities, seeks to develop local planning solutions that help communities grow in ways that benefit families and businesses, while protecting the environment and preserving a sense of place. Three other nonprofit organizations—Forterra, Global Green USA and Project for Public Spaces—also received competitively awarded grants this year to help communities get the kinds of development they want.

As a national leader in the field, Smart Growth America has accumulated extensive experience working with communities to help them use land strategically, make the most of existing resources
and invest strategically to catalyze private development.

**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 to ensuring more homes are built near public transportation or that productive farms remain a part of our communities, smart growth helps make sure people across the nation can live in great neighborhoods. For additional information visit [www.smartgrowthamerica.org](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org).

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