



Tool: Sustainable Land Use Code Audit

Provider: Smart Growth America and Clarion Associates

Summary:

Audits of local land use codes are being undertaken by an increasing number of communities that recognize their zoning and subdivision regulations are an important key to long-term sustainable development patterns and practices and economic growth. These code audits examine 10-12 sustainability issues such as energy conservation, renewable energy, and community health that are chosen by the community and provide an assessment of barriers and regulatory gaps in the codes to attaining community sustainability goals in these areas and potential implementation strategies.

Areas of potential focus include:

The focus areas for the code audit are chosen by the community and can include topics such as:

- renewable energy
- energy conservation
- climate change
- recycling
- community health
- water conservation
- housing diversity
- urban agriculture
- green infrastructure and water quality
- outdoor lighting
- natural resource protection

The presentations and discussions will also cover costs and benefits of sustainable code provisions and implementation strategies.

How it works:

- One-day session with community leaders and staff begins with an overview (typically 1 hour) that answers the question: What is a sustainable development code and why undertake a sustainable code diagnosis?
- Short presentations on the economic and other benefits of sustainable code provisions; specific sustainability topics such as renewable energy and water conservation, addressing barriers, incentives, and regulatory gaps.
- Examples of best practices from around the nation
- Hands-on working session with local officials to conduct an initial sustainable code assessment

Outcomes:

- Hands-on initial assessment of local zoning and subdivision ordinances
- Understanding of code issues inhibiting sustainable development patterns and growth.
- Know-how to conduct a detailed code assessment
- Tips and advice on implementation



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