Saving the World Through Zoning – Small Town Success Stories

New Partners for Smart Growth
Baltimore, MD

January 30, 2015

Presentation objectives

- Explore the evolving relationship between planning, zoning and smart growth outcomes in small city and rural America.

- Understand the range of options available to small cities to achieve smart growth objectives and how to successfully engage community stakeholders to bring about regulatory reform.

- Learn how to find the "low hanging fruit" of regulatory reform in your community.

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Smart Growth

Smart growth means building urban, suburban and rural communities with **housing and transportation choices near jobs, shops and schools**.

These strategies **support thriving local economies** and protect the environment.

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What I hear about smart growth

Wengen

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Smart growth is ugly.

Riomaggiore, Italy

We have no history with it.

Mesa Verde, CO

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Nobody would want to live there.

Aspen, CO

It just doesn't work here.

Pearl District, Portland, OR

Shut up and drive!

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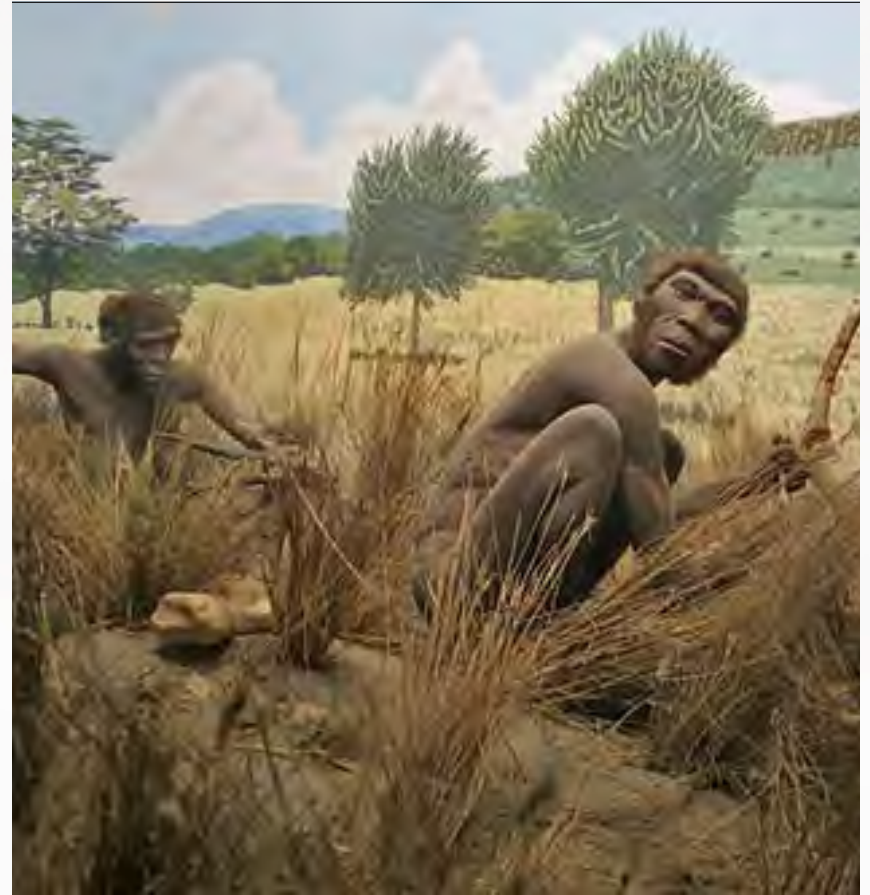
"Trend is not destiny."

-Lewis Mumford

Smart Growth America providing free technical assistance

- As a national leader in the field, Smart Growth America has accumulated extensive experience working with communities across the nation

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Smart Growth America providing free technical assistance

- We are now offering technical assistance to local communities interested in building stronger local economies and realizing fiscal cost savings while protecting human health and the environment

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Smart Growth America providing free technical assistance

- This assistance helps local leaders in urban, suburban and rural communities create local smart growth strategies that make sense for your community

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Technical Assistance ready to go through 12 smart growth tools

12 Smart Growth Tools	
Implementing Smart Growth 101	Planning for economic and fiscal health
Regional planning for small communities	Sustainable land use code audit
Smart growth zoning codes for small cities	Complete streets
Walkability workshop/audit	Transportation performance measurement
Parking audit	Implementing transit-oriented development 101
Cool planning: local strategies to slow climate change	Using LEED-ND to accelerate the development of sustainable communities

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Pittsburgh, PA

- Sustainable Land Use Code Audit

- BIG ideas

- Energy conservation/ alternative energy

- Green infrastructure and stormwater management

- Housing diversity and choice

Image from Flickr by Wallyg

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Derry Township, PA

- Smart Growth Zoning Code for Small Cities
- BIG ideas
- Energy conservation/ alternative energy
- Green infrastructure and stormwater management
- Housing diversity and choice

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Unnamed Place

- Implementing Smart Growth 101
- Lessons learned

Sustainable Land Use Code Audit

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3 Basic Steps

1. **Inventory** of sustainability topics, policies, and goals,

2. **Audit** of existing code and ordinance provisions, and

3. **Priority** amendment selection.

Inventory

Audit

Priority Changes

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1. Inventory

Taking Stock:

What Does Sustainability Mean To Your Community And What Are Key Goals?

GHG reductions?   Save energy?   Green businesses?

Reduce vehicle miles? Renewable energy?

Provide housing diversity?   Recycling?

Food production/community gardens?

Natural resource protection?

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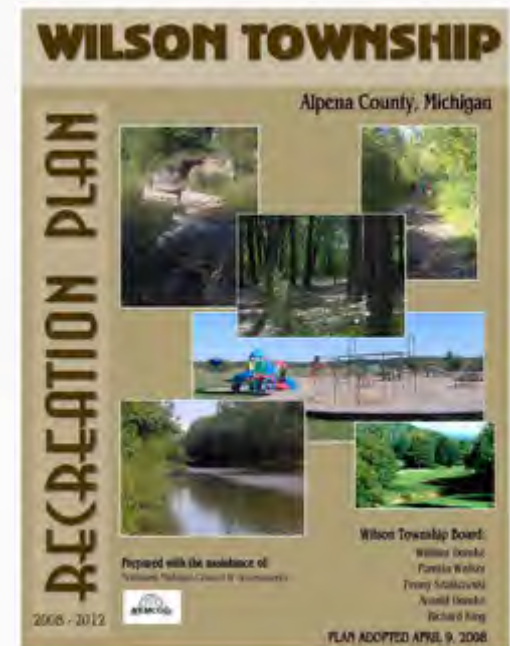# 1. Inventory

Sample topics might include:

- climate change

- alternative energy and conservation

- urban agriculture/farmland conservation

- recycling/waste reduction

- water quality/conservation

- community health

1. Inventory

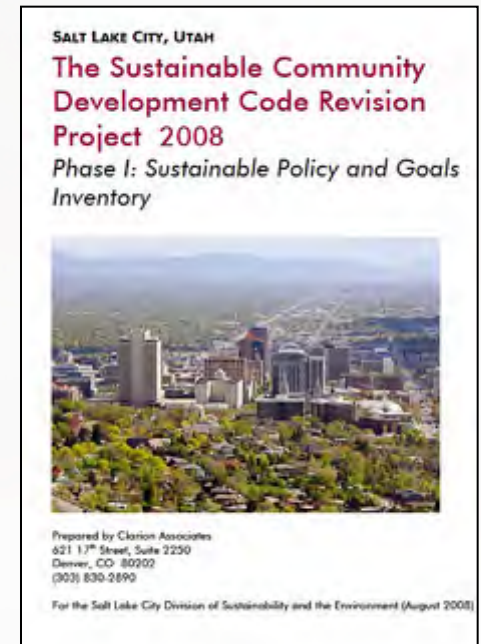**Sources for Community Policies and Goals In Key Sustainability Areas:**

- Comprehensive plan/city master plan
- Neighborhood plans
- Climate action plan
- Housing plan
- Parks, trails, open space, and recreation plan
- Other

1. Inventory

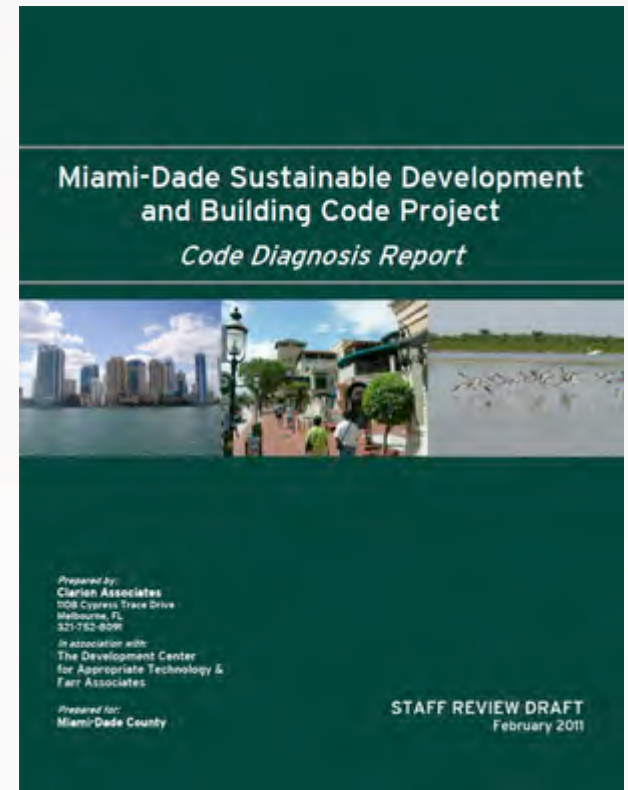**Three Policy Inventory Options:**

- Create new comprehensive plan with sustainability focus
- Distill sustainability policies and goals from existing plans
- Add new sustainability chapter to comprehensive plan

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

The Sustainable Community Development Code Revision Project 2008

Phase I: Sustainable Policy and Goals Inventory

Prepared by Clarion Associates
621 17th Street, Suite 2250
Denver, CO 80202
(303) 830-2890

For the Salt Lake City Division of Sustainability and the Environment (August 2008)

1. Inventory

Product: Summary of community sustainability goals

- 2-3 pages per topic
- List of references and sources
- Perspectives from staff
  and stakeholders

Miami-Dade Sustainable Development and Building Code Project
Code Diagnosis Report

Prepared by:
Clarion Associates
1108 Cypress Trace Drive
Melbourne, FL
321-752-8091

In association with:
The Development Center
for Appropriate Technology &
Farr Associates

Prepared for:
Miami-Dade County

STAFF REVIEW DRAFT
February 2011

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2. Diagnosis—Assessing Your Codes and Regulations

Think B-I-G!

- **B**arriers to sustainability

- **I**ncentives to promote sustainability

- **G**aps in the code

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2. Diagnosis

Methodical chapter-by-chapter assessment of zoning code:

• Definitions

• Purpose statements

• Zone districts and use tables

• Accessory uses and non conforming uses

• Specially planned and planned unit developments

• Dimensional standards

• Supplemental regulations – lighting, home occupations, etc.

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2. Diagnosis

<u>DON'T FORGET</u>…Other regulations related to land use:

- Subdivision regulations
- Design review standards
- Historic preservation code and guidelines
- Landscape and tree protection regulations
- Streets and public works specifications
- Utility department regulations – water, sewer, electricity
- Building and energy codes

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2. Diagnosis

B) Diagnose the Code - Think B-I-G

- Find **B**arriers to sustainability
- Create **I**ncentives to encourage sustainability
- Fill regulatory **G**aps

Diagnosis: Open Space, Parks, and Trails		
Existing Provisions	**Possible Revisions**	**Examples**
REMOVE BARRIERS		
OS-B.1: Current regulations do not clearly allow credit towards common open space requirements for community gardens, green roofs, and other "sustainable" open space forms	Clarify throughout the LUC and Development Standards that alternative "sustainable" forms of open space are allowed to be counted towards any required opens space.	• Portland, OR, allows green, vegetated roofs to count toward open space requirement. • Proposed code amendments in Salt Lake City allow community gardens and green roofs to count towards open space requirements.
OS-B.2: Current regulation do not allow sale of produce from community gardens in residential areas.	Make clear that limited size community gardens may sell produce to encourage active open space usage.	• Cleveland, OH, has adopted a comprehensive regulatory approach to urban community gardens.

potential zoning revisions

national best practices

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2. Diagnosis

Sources for best practices:

- U.S. EPA web site and publications
- RMLUI Model Sustainable Development Code
- LEED For Neighborhood Development (US Green Building Council)
- Nearby communities' experience and legislation
- Research by other communities (Tucson, Miami-Dade County, Salt Lake City)

3. Priorities

Setting Priorities for Code Amendments and Revisions

What should we amend first?

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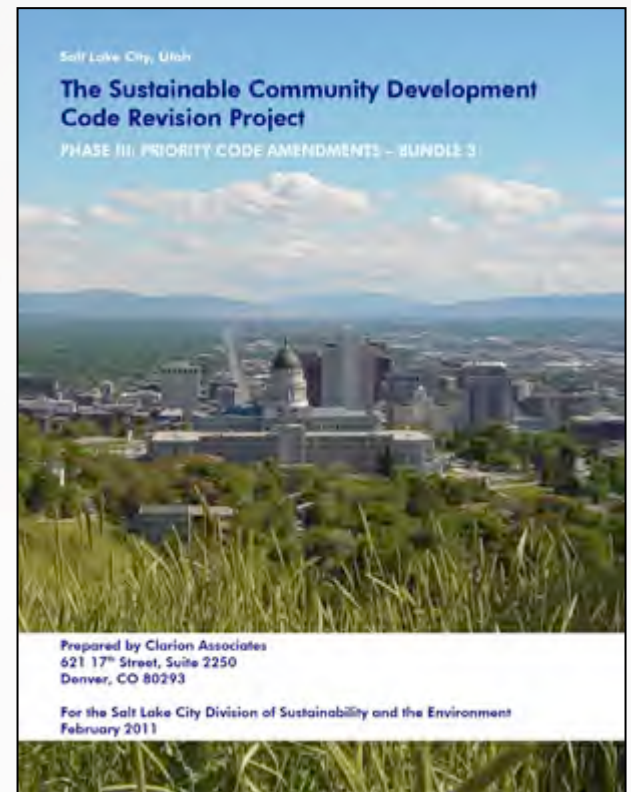Making Neighborhoods Great Together

3. Priorities

A) Set priorities

- Staff driven with direction from elected officials, focus groups, surveys, etc.

- What will make the most difference to achieve my community goals? What is politically attainable?

- Are there "low-hanging fruit" amendments that can be showcased as early successes?

- What are potential costs and benefits?

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3. Priorities

Product: List of 20-30 priority code amendments

- Set timelines and goals for amendment adoption
- Full sweep of code amendments?
- Organize in achievable "bundles" of code revisions?
- Strategic multi-year approach?

Salt Lake City, Utah

The Sustainable Community Development Code Revision Project

PHASE III: PRIORITY CODE AMENDMENTS – BUNDLE 3

Prepared by Clarion Associates
621 17th Street, Suite 2250
Denver, CO 80293

For the Salt Lake City Division of Sustainability and the Environment
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http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/buildingblocks.htm

We have the freedom to make informed, humane, and intelligent choices about the kind of world we want to leave for our children and grandchildren. We also have the freedom to make uninformed, selfish, and stupid choices. Which will it be? - Greg Pahl

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@MillarRoger

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