

GreenStep Cities Best Practice # 8 **- final draft for comment through May 2010 -**

❖ *Efficient and Healthy Development Patterns*: Mix land uses.

Optional for all cities

Category: Land Use

Summary

Complete, compact and connected are the goals for developing a city's land area that mixes land uses in ways that lower city infrastructure costs, environmental impacts and that facilitate more physical activity. A city can use its land use authority and other tools to help create a vibrant community that attracts jobs, fosters economic development, and that is an appealing place for people to live, work, and recreate without having to drive everywhere for every activity of daily living.

Best Practice Actions

- Category A and B cities that choose to implement this best practice must complete at least one Action.
- Category C cities that choose to implement this best practice must complete at least two of the following Actions.
 - (1) Create a main street program or organize a Minnesota Design Team planning charrette.
 - (2) Locate or lease a new government facility that is:
 - a. Near an existing employment or residential center.
 - b. Accessible by walking and biking.
 - c. Accessible by any existing regular transit service.
 - (3) Modify a planned unit development – PUD - ordinance to emphasize mixed use development or to limit residential PUDs to areas adjacent to commercial development.
 - (4) Certify a new development as complying with LEED-ND standards, including the mixed-use credits.
 - (5) Create, or modify an existing, downtown zoning district to allow residential and small compatible commercial development, based on the 2009 Minnesota *Model Ordinances for Sustainable Development*.
 - (6) Create, or modify an existing, district to use form-based zoning standards that de-emphasize use-based standards.
 - (7) Create incentives for vertical mixed-use development in appropriate locations (downtown, commercial districts near colleges or universities, historic commercial districts).

See also actions under the *Higher Density* and *Demand-Side Travel Planning* best practices.

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Implementation Resources

(tied to the relevant Action by number)

- (1) National Trust for Historic Preservation's Minnesota Main Street program assistance: <http://www.mnpreservation.org/programs/main-street>
- (1) The Minnesota Design Team charges a very small fee to assemble teams of approximately 20 volunteer professionals who use design to help small Minnesota communities develop a shared vision

of a healthy future, often focusing on design recommendations for making communities more complete, compact and connected: <http://www.minnesotadesignteam.org>

- (2) Government facilities include city buildings, libraries and schools, and county, state or federal facilities.
- (2) *Design Guidelines for Pedestrian-Friendly Neighborhood Schools* and other resources at the web site of Smart Growth Schools: <http://www.smartgrowthschools.org>
- (2b) See the GreenStep *Complete Green Streets* best practice implementation resources.
- (2c) On average, people are willing to walk up to $\frac{3}{4}$ mile to access a transit stop with at least hourly transit service.

- (3) *Planned Unit Development Ordinance* from the 2009 Minnesota *Model Ordinances for Sustainable Development*: <http://www.crplanning.com/susdo.htm>

- (4) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Neighborhood Development: <http://www.usgbc.org/leed/nd>
- (4) *A Local Government Guide to LEED for Neighborhood Development* (USGBC: 2010): <http://www.usgbc.org/ShowFile.aspx?DocumentID=6131>
- (4) For a comprehensive evaluation metric similar to LEED-ND that emphasizes health and social needs in development plans and projects, see San Francisco's Healthy Development Measurement Tool at www.TheHDMT.org

- (5) *Village Mixed-Use District* and *Downtown Mixed-Use District* from the 2009 Minnesota *Model Ordinances for Sustainable Development*: <http://www.crplanning.com/susdo.htm>
- (5) Comprehensive web sites on smart growth implementation in Minnesota, and nationwide: <http://www.landof.org> and <http://www.smartgrowth.org>

- (6) Form-based, transect-based codes in the Sustainable Urbanism SmartCode Module: www.smartcodecentral.com

- (7) Model live-work and 20 other mixed-use model ordinances in *Smart Codes: Model Land-Development Regulations* (American Planning Association's PAS Report 556: 2003): <http://www.planning.org/research/smartgrowth>

Benefits

- Twin City maps of carbon emissions by neighborhood, and a housing and transportation affordability index that highlights the benefits of mixed use locations: http://www.nextstep.state.mn.us/res_detail.cfm?id=2269
- Households in pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods make more than three times as many transit trips and nearly four times as many walk and bicycle trips as households in neighborhoods with poor pedestrian environments. In typical single-use office parks, only 3% - 8% of midday lunch or errand trips are made on foot, but in pedestrian-accessible, mixed-use areas, 20% - 30% of such trips are made on foot.
- Changes in the physical design of a city integrate physical activity into daily routines, through activities such as biking, walking and taking transit. The benefits of these active living by design, or design for health, strategies, documented at <http://www.designforhealth.net/>, include:
 - Improved physical and mental health
 - Decreased risk of chronic disease
 - Reduced medical costs associated with chronic disease
 - Reduced transportation costs

- Reduced pollution, energy use, green house gas emissions, and improved air quality
- Stronger, safer communities
- PLACE³S, a land use and urban design software package, quantifies energy, economic, and environmental effects of alternative plans:
<http://www.sustainable.doe.gov/articles/place3s.htm#process>.
- *Walking the Walk: How Walkability Raises Housing Values in U.S. Cities* (CEOs for Cities, 2009):
<http://blog.smartgrowthamerica.org/2009/08/20/walkability-is-great-but-is-it-valuable/>
- In cities across the nation, compact development with a mix of land uses, transportation options and pedestrian-friendly design has reduced driving from 20% to 40%:
http://www.nextstep.state.mn.us/res_detail.cfm?id=4021
- *Greenhouse Gas Reductions Achievable Through Smart Growth and Improved Transportation Choices* (Center for Clean Air Policy: 2009) :
<http://www.ccap.org/index.php?component=news&id=236>
- People in more sprawling suburban areas weigh more (as much as six pounds more in the most sprawling areas) and have higher blood pressure than people in more densely developed areas (see <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/healthreport.html>). Partly this is due to fewer easy opportunities to exercise, and partly this is due to people who are less inclined to be active tend to live in less pedestrian-friendly locales - evidence that people are sorting themselves.
- “We cannot afford to continue to backfill public infrastructure to accommodate past growth. We need growth to happen in a manner where roads, transit, schools, public safety, environmental services, and access to retail, commercial, and industrial facilities are planned for and efficiently provided through connection and coordination with existing regional services.” – Craig Johnson, League of MN Cities, 2009.

Connection to State Policy

- As of July 1, 2009 the new Minnesota Education Omnibus Law includes provisions to eliminate minimum acreage requirements for schools, and to remove the bias against renovating, rather than rebuilding, old, typically more compact schools within walking and biking distance of residential neighborhoods.

www.MnGreenSteps.org