



URBAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (Replaces B204, 302, 303, 305, 306, 307; R2001)

Policy Statement

The American Society of Landscape Architects believes in the healthy growth of our urban environments through responsible and environmentally sustainable development practices. ASLA urges all levels of government to collaborate in developing livable communities that are transit oriented, have abundant green space and parks, protect their water resources and work towards reducing air and thermal pollution.

Current development patterns that encourage sprawl are not in the long-term interest of our cities, small towns, rural communities and wilderness areas. ASLA questions the cost of abandoning existing infrastructure in the city to rebuild it further out and urges the in-fill and redevelopment within our cities over absorbing the open space and prime agriculture lands at the suburban fringe.

ASLA urges the adoption of initiatives by the federal, state and local agencies to expedite the clean-up of brownfield sites to open the door to revitalization of the urban core and town centers, relieving the pressure to develop outlying green space.

Rationale

Urban growth over the past 50 years has occurred in waves radiating from the central urban core along highways creating sprawl conditions and ever-increasing commutes. Decentralized suburban or exurban expansion has created homogeneous communities with no sense of place, while contributing to the deterioration of many urban centers. Smart Growth initiatives argue for responsible growth and development strategies that are regional in scale. Supporting both in-fill and redevelopment and transit-oriented development, smart growth initiatives vary from place to place. There is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all solution. However, ASLA urges responsible development strategies at the federal, state and local levels.

Brownfield development enables communities to reuse abandoned, contaminated properties that are often sited in prime, urban locations with developed infrastructure. Communities should take advantage of programs which focus on facilitating the cleanup and use of brownfields by awarding grants, capitalizing loan funds, providing technical assistance and training and absolving innocent, prospective and contiguous landowners of liability.

Federal agencies are encouraged to site their offices in town centers and support downtown revitalization by helping to retain and attract business and commerce. Tax

credits or other incentives are needed to encourage the rehabilitation of in-town and/or historic residences through.

Advantage should be taken of federal, state and local programs as well as private initiatives to preserve open space for several purposes: curbing scattered development, preserving open space, protecting watersheds, preserving natural habitat, maintaining historic and cultural assets, and providing recreational opportunities.

Communities should also move toward energy conservation through 'green power initiatives' (solar, wind and biomass) which are targeted at conserving non-renewable resources as well as minimizing air, water and thermal pollution.