

The Livable Communities Coalition

Smart Growth Scorecard



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The Livable Communities Coalition

Smart Growth Scorecard

I. PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

Overview

The purpose of the Program is to increase the number of smart growth projects permitted and built in the metro Atlanta area.

How the Scorecard relates to the work of the Coalition

The Livable Communities Coalition engages communities to implement smart growth projects. Beginning in 2008, the Coalition will expand this mission by evaluating all types of projects which have not yet been built (pre-construction) for consistency with a range of smart growth criteria. Projects that meet or exceed the criteria will be recognized as exemplary smart growth projects. By recognizing exemplary projects, the Coalition will focus attention on smart growth projects and encourage local government approval of similar projects. As more projects are approved, the number of smart growth examples will increase.

A note to local government planning officials and planning professionals

It should be noted that while the Scorecard is designed to be rigorous, no one set of questions can take the place of the ordinances and good practices that planning departments use to ensure smart growth. Some jurisdictions will already have codes and procedures in place that meet or exceed Scorecard criteria. Others may find value in noting the standards suggested in one or more sections of the Scorecard. A few will find the entire criteria helpful.

II. HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

A project developer selects a project that meets the size and location requirements of the program and presents it to the Coalition for review. The project developer must also obtain written acknowledgement from the local government (entitlement authority) that the Coalition review is being sought. The Coalition organizes an independent expert jury to review the project proposal using established smart growth criteria. A passing score from the jury results in Coalition support in the local government permitting

process. Regardless of the scoring outcome, a complete report will be provided to both the developer and the local government after the jury review has been completed.

Important Information for Applicants

2008 applications will be accepted on a quarterly basis by April 30, by July 31, and by October 31.

Important Information for Local Governments

It should be understood that the Coalition generally supports all local and state ordinances as administered by the local government. However, the Coalition may provide support for occasional variances to local government regulations if it finds that the benefits of a waiver or variance would be consistent with smart growth principles.

It should also be understood that the Coalition is not responsible for any changes to project proposals or as-built conditions of projects made by any party after the Coalition's jury review of projects.

Important Information for All Readers

The Livable Communities Coalition gratefully acknowledges its debt to the [Smart Growth Leadership Institute](http://www.sgli.org/), whose representatives graciously offered full use of the institute's superb Smart Growth Toolkit, and especially the toolkit's Project Scorecard, which was the source for most of the questions incorporated in this document. Check out the institute's fine work at <http://www.sgli.org/> As part of its preparation, the Coalition also assessed smart growth criteria and best practices in literature and from other locales. That research turned up valuable ideas and approaches. The Coalition is indebted to colleagues who reviewed materials or shared their work in interviews or via the Internet.

III. HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM

Steps for the Scorecard

- 1) A developer contacts the Livable Communities Coalition to determine eligibility. Call 404.214.0081, ext. 21.

Eligible projects include: Any project land area 25,000 square feet or greater located in at least one of the following six situations:

- a) Within the Mega Corridor areas on the Atlanta Regional Commission Envision 6 map, or
- b) Within the Urban Neighborhood areas on the Atlanta Regional Commission Envision 6 map, or
- c) Within one of the Activity Center areas on the Atlanta Regional Commission Envision 6 map, or
- d) Within one of the Atlanta Regional Commission Livable Centers Initiative planning areas, or
- e) Within ¼ mile (1,320 feet) of an Interstate/Limited Access Facility (road) on the Atlanta Regional Commission Envision 6 Map, or
- f) Within ¼ mile (1,320 feet) of a Regional Strategic Facility (road) on the Atlanta Regional Commission Envision 6 Map

For reference, visit the [Envision 6 link \(http://www.atlantaregional.com/documents/2006_20_REGASP_36x42.pdf\)](http://www.atlantaregional.com/documents/2006_20_REGASP_36x42.pdf).

Note: The Coalition would be pleased to informally review a project that does not meet eligibility requirements for location criteria. However, a jury would not be assembled and score/report would not be produced.

- 2) The developer attends a pre-application meeting with the Livable Communities Coalition staff to verify size and location requirements and to discuss application requirements.
- 3) The developer submits the application materials, along with the written acknowledgement of the local government, to the Livable Communities Coalition. The developer presents the project proposal to the Coalition staff.
- 4) The Coalition appoints a three member jury from the membership rosters of the Coalition's member organizations. A new jury will be appointed for each project. Jury members shall be qualified professionals in one or more of the following areas: urban planning, urban design, architecture, development, or landscape architecture.
- 5) A Coalition jury reviews the application package.

The jury will review each question and select the answer that most accurately reflects the proposed development. The answers range from poor, to good, to very good, to excellent. The score for each is 0, 1, 2, and 3 respectively. The average score for each of the eight sections will be averaged for the final score. An overall composite average of 2 (very good) is required for approval.

The jury will meet at the Livable Communities Coalition office for the first meeting, but may choose to hold the second meeting (if necessary) by conference call. It is important to note that the jury team will remain anonymous until after the review process and applicants shall not have contact with the jury during the review process.

Note that some questions may not apply to a given project. For this reason, a jury may elect to omit some questions from consideration. However it is important to note that staff will reserve the right to retain any question that the jury has deemed not applicable if the staff finds that the subject matter of the question is relevant for the analysis.

- 6) Applicant receives official project evaluation outcome from the Coalition which is guaranteed within six weeks of the quarterly deadline.

If the project is determined to have a "very good" or higher average score, then the process continues in Step 7. If the project is determined to have an average score less than "very good," then the applicant will receive a written report from the jury. The Coalition will also transmit the report to the local government point of contact who signed the Letter of Intent Form.

- 7) For projects that pass the evaluation, the Coalition will support the project in necessary permitting hearings through letters of support and/or personal appearances.

IV. The Application Checklist

The list of items which are required for application

1) Location Map

Submit a map (8"x11" minimum) demonstrating specific compliance with the location requirement. Map must include scale, direction, and date. (4 copies total)

2) Project narrative

Submit a project narrative not to exceed 3,500 words. The narrative should address each question in the criteria. Sources of information should be supplied in the narrative. If the narrative refers to plans, diagrams, maps, etc., then the applicant should refer to each by criterion number. The applicant shall not suggest a preferred score in the application materials. (4 copies total)

3) Plans

Submit four (4) copies of the project plan (24"x 36") including the following items:

- a) Area - with key features of criteria
- b) Access and egress at site
- c) Lot lines and proposed setbacks
- d) Buildings and structures, including door locations
- e) Topography in contour intervals
- f) Surface water bodies
- g) Landscape features including vegetation to be retained
- h) Parking areas and parking ratios
- i) Signs
- j) Site specific samples of architectural drawings showing proposed buildings and structures
- k) Aerial photograph of the site, including surrounding area
- l) Elevation photograph of the site
- m) Proposed street network and cross-section views of all street types including streetscape features
- n) Proposed pedestrian network, including sidewalks, walking paths, and multi-use trails
- o) Locations of any bus stops, rail stations, car share spaces, or bicycle facilities

4) Signed Letter of Intent

Submit a letter of Intent signed by a representative of the local government and the developer/applicant (1 original)

5) Payment

Submit a check made payable to the Livable Communities Coalition for \$2,500.

6) Zoning Ordinance

Submit one (1) copy of applicable zoning district regulation in the local community. For projects seeking rezoning, this shall include both existing and proposed zoning regulations.

Important Information for Applicants

- 2008 applications will be accepted on a quarterly basis by April 30, by July 31, and by October 31.
- Application packages must be provided in print form. Partial or whole applications will not be accepted by email.
- Incomplete application packets will not be accepted. Applications materials which are sent piecemeal will not be accepted.
- Deliver materials to the Livable Communities Coalition, Marquis One Tower, Suite 2450, Peachtree Center Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30303-1222, 404.214.0081.

V. Summary of Criteria by Subject Headings

- A. [Location and Service Provision](#)
- B. [Density and Compactness](#)
- C. [Diversity of Use](#)
- D. [Diversity of Housing](#)
- E. [Accessibility, Mobility and Connectivity](#)
- F. [Pedestrian Safety, Streetscapes and Parking](#)
- G. [Environmental Protection](#)
- H. [Community Needs and Local Development](#)

A. LOCATION AND SERVICE PROVISION

Growing smarter means locating development where infrastructure and services are already developed and have capacity or where infrastructure is already planned that will provide adequate capacity.

Does the project location reinforce and logically extend existing and planned development?

1		check appropriate box
Poor	Project is on a greenfield site, and is not zoned and/or planned for development, and is not located adjacent to any areas already developed or zoned for development.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Project is on a greenfield site but the site is contiguous to already developed areas. Or, the project is not adjacent to any areas already developed but the site is zoned for development at a minimum net density of 5 dwelling units/acre ¹ or at a minimum FAR ² of 0.5.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	Project is on a site zoned for development at net densities of 5 DU/acre or at a minimum FAR of 0.5 and is contiguous to areas already developed or zoned for development.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Project is on a site zoned for development and is, either infill (surrounded by development at net densities of 5 DU/acre or at a minimum FAR of 0.5); or, the project redevelops and increases the density of a previously developed site; or, the project redevelops a brownfield site or a site/location designated to receive federal, state or local assistance to support redevelopment.	<input type="checkbox"/>

NOTE: Brownfields are typically former industrial sites that may have (or may be perceived to have) contamination issues. "Brownfield" is an environmental designation that is often adapted in state or federal regulations to define concomitant requirements for the reuse of the site (such as: stipulations for cleaning and remediation, the provision of state or federal funding for decontamination or the availability of incentives to encourage reuse).

Examples of federal or state designations that qualify a site for assistance include Designated Neighborhoods, Empowerment or Enterprise Zones, Main Streets, Local and National Historic Districts and Community Legacy sites.

¹ All density figures in the scorecard represent net density.

² Floor to Area Ratio.

Is the project located at a site that the community or the local comprehensive plan³ identifies as a priority area for development?

2		check appropriate box
Poor	Project site is outside and not contiguous to and is more than a ¼ mile away from any area that the community (through the local comprehensive plan) has identified as a priority area for development.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Project is contiguous to an area that the community (through the local comprehensive plan) has identified as a priority area for development and is within ¼ of a mile from existing developed areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	Project is within an area that the community (through the local comprehensive plan) has identified as a priority area for development and or inside an Atlanta Regional Commission Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) planning area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Project is within an area that the community (through the local comprehensive plan) has identified as a priority area for development and is within ¼ of a mile from existing developed areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>

³ This scorecard assumes your community has a local comprehensive plan and that the plan is in accordance with your community's vision for smarter growth.

Does the project location align with the community's long-range land use plan?⁴

3		check appropriate box
Poor	Project does not align with the community's long-range land use plan and proposes: development at lower densities than the long-range plan; or single-use development in areas designated for mixed-use development; or requires an expansion/extension of community services (water, sewer) not contemplated by the long-range plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Project aligns with the community's long-range land use plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	Project aligns with the community's long-range land use plan and is contiguous to existing water/sewer and road infrastructure.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Project aligns with the community's long-range land use plan and is located within ¼ mile of existing development.	<input type="checkbox"/>

⁴ This scorecard assumes that your community has a long-range land use plan and that the plan is in accordance with your community's vision for smarter growth.

Does the project provide housing that is consistent with the growth and demand projections (demographic) for the area?

4

check appropriate box

Poor The project provides housing at lower densities than programmed in the long-term land use plan.

Good The project provides housing at lower densities but offsets this through a transfer of development rights to areas designated for higher density development.

Very Good The project provides housing at densities that are consistent with the growth and demand projections for the area.

Excellent The project provides housing at higher densities through the purchase/transfer of development rights and or other local density bonuses.

Does the project require an expansion or extension of the water service in the area?

5		check appropriate box
Poor	No water service is available and the project is NOT adjacent to areas currently served by water service infrastructure.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	The project site is in an area where the community already plans to extend water service and the public sector funding for the extension is programmed and available; or, the project provides its own infrastructure to collect rainwater for drinking and other uses.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	The project is within the water service area and public sector funds that will expand the capacity of the system to accommodate the project are available (and programmed); or, the project provides its own infrastructure to collect rainwater and reuses grey water for drinking, irrigation and other uses.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	The project is within the water service area and takes advantage of existing capacity in the network; ⁵ or, the project is within the water service area and expands the capacity of the existing network by using Living Machines, ⁶ constructed wetlands and other techniques to purify grey and/or black water for drinking, irrigation and other uses.	<input type="checkbox"/>

⁵ Most local jurisdictions have developed standards for measuring adequacy of existing public facilities and the impact of new development on capacity.

⁶ Living Machines are a form of biological wastewater treatment designed to mimic the cleansing functions of wetlands.

Does the project require an expansion or extension of the sewer service in the area?

6		check appropriate box
Poor	No sewer service is available and the project will require individual septic fields for each lot.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	No sewer service is available but the project is adjacent to areas currently served by sewer infrastructure; or the project is in a planned service area, or in an area already programmed for expansion; or, the project provides its own infrastructure such as a packaged wastewater treatment plant that meets or exceeds local health or environment standards. ⁷	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	The project is within the sewer service area and public sector funds that will expand the capacity of the sewer system to accommodate the project are available (and programmed); or, the project provides its own infrastructure to purify and reuse grey and black water for drinking, irrigation and other uses.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	The project is within the sewer service area and takes advantage of existing capacity in the network; or, the project is within the sewer service area and expands the capacity of the existing network by using Living Machines, ⁸ constructed wetlands and other techniques to purify grey and/or black water for drinking, irrigation and other uses.	<input type="checkbox"/>

⁷ Consider the possible negative environmental impacts of the proposed packaged wastewater treatment plants on local water quality before awarding this rating.

⁸ Living Machines are a form of biological wastewater treatment designed to mimic the cleansing functions of wetlands.

Will the project require an expansion of school capacity?

7

check appropriate box

Poor	School capacity is not available and the project targets segments of the housing market likely to need school services (i.e. households that have or generate school-aged children).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Existing capacity is not available but capacity is planned by the school district within the project's development time frame or the project targets segments of the housing market not likely to need school services (i.e. –empty nesters or single-person households); or the project provides new and adequate school facilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	Existing capacity is not available, but expanded capacity (that can accommodate the school children likely to live in the project) is planned by the school district, and public funds are available and already programmed; or the project provides new and adequate school facilities (within the project boundaries) that are within walking distance of most residential areas in the community where the attending school children will likely come from.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	School capacity is available and, for projects likely to attract families with children as residents, project is within one half (1/2) mile from existing schools where the children residing in the project are likely to attend.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Will the project require an expansion of school transportation services?⁹

8

check appropriate box

Poor	Project is not within the coverage of current school bus routes. Project requires a significant expansion of the school bus route and is likely to increase the operating costs of the existing school bus system.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Project is within ¼ mile of the current school bus routes. Project provides safe walking routes to the existing bus routes and the existing school bus service has adequate capacity.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	Project is within the existing school bus routes and the existing school bus service has adequate capacity.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Project is within walking distance from existing schools where the children residing in the project are likely to attend. Additionally, the project plans demonstrate how children can walk safely to school.	<input type="checkbox"/>

⁹ Consider this criterion only if the project is likely to generate school aged children.

Does the proposed project adversely impact the fiscal health of local or other government entities?

9		check appropriate box
Poor	Considering both revenues ¹⁰ and expenditures, the project will be a fiscal loss to the community and other government entities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Considering both revenues and expenditures, the project will be fiscally neutral to the community and other government entities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	Considering both revenues and expenditures, the project will be fiscally positive for the community and other government entities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Considering both revenues and expenditures, the project will be significantly fiscally positive to the community and other government entities	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note: This question may not be appropriate for certain public uses or projects utilizing publicly sponsored incentives to promote certain kinds of development.

Note: This criterion favors projects with commercial uses (either single use or mixed uses). Balance this criterion against the criteria set in sections C, Diversity of Use, and D, Diversity of Housing.

¹⁰ Caution should be taken when considering impact fees in the equation. Ideally, revenues and expenditures should be considered in the long-term, e.g. –future revenue streams vs. future operating and capital expansion costs.

B. DENSITY AND COMPACTNESS

Growing smarter means encouraging energy efficiency and consuming less land by encouraging higher density development and compact building patterns.

Is the project developed at planned densities?

10		check appropriate box
Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Residential: Less than 4 d.u./acre ¹¹ and/or less than 80% of as-of-right zoning.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Residential: Less than a FAR ¹² of 0.25.	
Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Residential: Equal to or greater than 4 d.u./acre and within 80% of as-of-right zoning.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Residential: Equal to or greater than a FAR of 0.4 and 80% of as-of-right zoning.	
Very Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Residential: Equal to or greater than 4 d.u./acre and within 90% of as-of-right zoning.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Residential: Equal to or greater than a FAR of 0.4 and 80% of as-of-right zoning	
Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Residential: Equal to or greater than 4 d.u./acre and meets or exceeds ¹³ as-of-right zoning.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Residential: Equal to or greater than a FAR of 0.4 and meets or exceeds of as-of-right zoning.	

Note: The scorecard looks at density per net buildable acre, excluding rights of ways, parks and other public tracts. Ideally, the project should increase density over as-of-right provisions through density bonuses or the transfer of development rights.

¹¹ Dwelling Unit. Figures represent net density.

¹² Floor to Area Ratio

¹³ Density is increased through density bonuses given in return for the project's provision of public amenities or through a transfer of development rights.

Does the project plan minimize areas devoted to parking?

11	check appropriate box
Poor	All Commercial: more than 5 parking spaces per 1000 gross square feet of building area Residential: more than 2 parking spaces per dwelling unit <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/>
Good	All Commercial: 3-5 parking spaces per 1000 gross square feet of building area Residential: 1.5 to 2 parking spaces per dwelling unit <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	All Commercial: 2-3 parking spaces per 1000 gross square feet of building area Residential: 1 to 1.5 parking spaces per dwelling unit <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	All Commercial: less than 2 spaces per 1000 gross square feet of building area Residential: less than 1 parking space per dwelling unit. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/>

Note: All on-street parking must be counted towards the parking requirement.
 Note: Structured parking and shared parking arrangements within ¼ mile are encouraged.
 Note: Site specific modifications may necessary for retail and office uses within the commercial standard above.

Does the project meet or reduce the on-site parking requirements with the inclusion of on-street parking and/or with complimentary parking strategies such as shared¹⁴ or joint¹⁵ parking?

12		check appropriate box
Poor	Project does not provide street parking and project does not attempt to reduce parking requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Project meets its parking requirements with on-street parking. Some of the parking requirements are met through the provision of joint or shared parking spaces.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	Project meets its parking requirements with on-street parking. A majority of the parking requirements are met through the provision of joint or shared parking spaces.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Project meets its parking requirements with on-street parking. A majority of the parking requirements are met through the provision of joint or shared parking spaces. In addition, project uses a demand-driven parking fee schedule ¹⁶ for on-street parking (metered) and for parking facilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>

¹⁴ Shared parking – a parking facility use of which is allowed to two or more users based on different peak hours (e.g. businesses with peak patronage during the day, theaters and restaurants with peak patronage at night); promotes efficient use of space.

¹⁵ Joint parking- a common parking facility designed for simultaneous use by two or more uses (e.g. municipal structures or lots; privately developed structures or lots); allows for off-site provision of parking.

¹⁶ Parking and parking meter fees vary with demand based on time of day and/or day of week. Also, base price is calibrated to maintain only 20% vacancy.

Does the project benefit from the following general guidelines for facades?

13

check appropriate box

Poor	The proposed development inappropriately designs façade guidelines (below) and or misses one or more key opportunities to incorporate ideal façade guidelines.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	The proposed development misses several opportunities to incorporate ideal façade guidelines in the plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	The proposed development adequately incorporates some of the ideal façade guidelines in the plan. The street level facades of large buildings with long street frontages are broken up into smaller, distinct faces or feature multiple ingress and egress points. Building entrances and frontages provide shade and weather protection for pedestrians (awnings, etc.) or include features intended to encourage street life.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	The street level facades of large buildings with long street frontages are broken up into smaller, distinct faces or feature multiple ingress and egress points. Building entrances and frontages provide shade and weather protection for pedestrians (awnings, etc.) or include features intended to encourage street life. In addition, the proposed development incorporates as many of the guidelines (below) as possible through exemplary architectural design.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note: Selected guidelines:

- a) Heavier building material is always proposed below lighter material.
- b) Street level facades and parking structures do not have blank walls; architectural design should reflect vision relief and or visual interest to passing pedestrians and motorists.
- c) No more than three of the same single-family home plans are adjacent to one another in the proposed plan.
- d) Proposed mechanical equipment (on and around buildings), utilities, and refuse containers are concealed and or buffered through architectural design and or landscape planning.
- e) Proposed development elevations demonstrate a variety of roof shapes.

Does the development maximize smart growth parking location and design elements?

14	<i>check appropriate box</i>	
Poor	<p>Parking lots are located in front of major buildings and facilities. No impervious surface areas exist. Parking lots contain minimums for planting islands and trees.</p> <p>Garage doors dominate single-family house fronts.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<p>Most parking is concealed from view either by location or through screening (material or vegetation).</p> <p>A rear alley serves all row house lots, and all single-family house garage faces are set back a minimum of 20 feet from house faces.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	<p>Most parking is concealed from view. Parking lots are visually and functionally segmented into several smaller lots. Parking lots should demonstrate alternative designs that incorporate planting islands and trees and create separate and distinct outdoor rooms for no more than 36 cars per room. The size of any lot should be limited to three acres unless divided by a street or building.</p> <p>A rear alley serves all single-family house lots narrower than 50 feet, and all garage faces are set back a minimum of 20 feet from house faces.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	<p>100% of parking is located either behind buildings or in the interior of a block and not visible from a street. Parking lots should be visually and functionally segmented into several smaller spaces. Parking lots should demonstrate alternative designs that incorporate planting islands, vegetative screening, and or trees and create separate and distinct outdoor rooms for no more than 36 cars per room. The size of any lot should be limited to three acres unless divided by a street or building. 15% of parking accommodated by pervious surfaces. Pedestrian travel lanes are created and dedicated and 100% separated from automobile traffic.</p> <p>A rear alley serves all single-family house lots narrower than 65 feet, and all garage faces are set back a minimum of 20 feet from house faces.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Does the development reflect effective architectural design and planning for density? Effective architectural design and planning for density enables land to be used more intensely while minimizing negative impacts to the surrounding area and improving visual aspects of the site.

15

check appropriate box

Poor Architectural design and planning considerations are not made at the site and density is clearly conflicting with the site and the surrounding areas.

Good Architectural design and planning tools have been applied to the density at a given site; only a few opportunities have been missed.

Very Good Architectural design and planning tools have been effectively applied to the density at a given site as seen through one or more of the following:

- Massing consideration (has the developer organized the volume of the structures most effectively for surrounding buildings and existing communities?)
- Height consideration (has the developer avoided excessive solar obstruction and view obstructions?)
- Transition (has the developer utilized architectural designs that provide transitions from low higher densities to lower densities?)
- Buffers (has the developer appropriately utilized structural or vegetative buffers where needed?).

Excellent Density at the site is expected to be completely seamless. Exemplary demonstration of architectural design and planning tools has been made using the following methods and others:

- Massing consideration (has the developer organized the volume of the structures most effectively for surrounding buildings and existing communities?)
- Height consideration (has the developer avoided excessive solar obstruction and view obstructions?)
- Transition (has the developer utilized architectural designs that provide transitions from low higher densities to lower densities?)
- Buffers (has the developer appropriately utilized structural or vegetative buffers where needed?).

C. DIVERSITY OF USE

Growing smarter means creating walkable neighborhoods by mixing land uses. By building stores, offices and residences next to (or on top of) each other in appropriate locations, people might more easily work, shop and enjoy recreation close to where they live. Mixing land uses makes walking more attractive and convenient (encouraging healthier lifestyles) and also protects the environment and conserves energy by reducing dependence on cars.

Does the project provide a mix of land uses? For single-use projects, does it add to the diversity of uses within ¼ mile?

16

check appropriate box

Poor	Provides single use that is prevalent in surrounding area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	For small projects, provides a single use that IS NOT prevalent in the surrounding area (within ¼ of a mile from the project). For large projects, provides at least four (4) of the above uses within ¼ mile of each other.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	For small projects, provides at least two uses that ARE NOT prevalent in the surrounding area (within ¼ of a mile from the project). For infill projects, provides at least two of the above uses. For large projects, provides at least six of the above uses.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	For small projects, provides at least four uses that ARE NOT prevalent in the surrounding area (within ¼ of a mile from the project). For infill projects, provides at least two uses and one of the uses is NOT prevalent in the surrounding neighborhood (within ¼ of a mile from the project). For large projects, provides at least 8 of the above uses.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note: large projects =10 or more acres

Note: When considering the mix of land uses, refer to this list:

- Single family detached housing
- Small lot¹⁷ single family detached housing
- Single family rowhouses
- Condominiums
- Rental units
- Grocery/convenience shopping
- Restaurant/entertainment
- Significant office
- Recreational/community facility
- Park/playing fields
- School/day care
- Religious or other institutional

¹⁷ One-fifth of an acre or less.

Does the project physically mix uses or types within the site or within the adjacent (1/4 mile) neighborhood? When considering the mix of land uses, refer to the list below.

- Single family detached housing
- Small lot¹⁸ single family detached housing
- Single family rowhouses
- Condominiums
- Rental units
- Grocery/convenience shopping
- Restaurant/entertainment
- Significant office
- Recreational/community facility
- Park/playing fields
- School/day care
- Religious or other institutional

17

check appropriate box

Poor	Uses are separated into homogenous clusters.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Different uses are located within ¼ mile of each other and can be easily accessed on foot.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	Different uses are located on adjacent blocks and can be easily accessed on foot.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Different uses are located along the same street (within 300-500 feet) and/or within a block; and/or different uses are vertically mixed in a single building.	<input type="checkbox"/>

¹⁸ One-fifth of an acre or less.

D. DIVERSITY OF HOUSING

Growing smarter means providing a diversity of housing options. Not everyone has the same housing wants or needs. Some singles prefer to rent small apartments, young couples need starter homes, empty nesters look for a condominium close to town and retirees need a caring community. Neighborhoods should offer a range of options: single-family houses of various sizes, duplexes, garden cottages, apartments, condominiums, affordable homes for low or fixed-income families, "granny flats" for empty nesters, and accommodations for dependent elders.

Does the project provide different housing types and/or does it increase the diversity of housing options in the immediate (1/4 mile) neighborhood?

Use the following housing types:

- Single family detached
- Small lot¹⁹ single family detached housing
- Single family attached
- Live work
- Condominiums
- Apartments
- Senior housing

18

check appropriate box

Poor	For large projects (over 50 units), provides a single type of housing and same housing type that is prevalent in the surrounding neighborhood.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Provides two housing types or provides a single housing type but adds a new housing type to surrounding neighborhood.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	Provides three housing types.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Provides four housing types.	<input type="checkbox"/>

¹⁹ One-fifth of an acre or less.

Does the project provide a variety of housing prices accessible to different income levels and/or increase the diversity of housing prices in the immediate (1/2 mile) neighborhood and/or does it provide workforce housing?

To provide a rough calculation of the gradations between price point levels, look at income levels using various percentages of the Adjusted Area Median Income²⁰ (AMI) for a family of four in the county. No more than thirty percent (30%) of pre-tax household income should be allocated towards housing²¹ for any income level.

Use the following breakpoints for income levels:

80% or less of AMI	80% to 120% of AMI
120% to 180% of AMI	180% or more of AMI

Multiply each figure above by 30% to get the price point that is the acceptable annual cost of housing (mortgage or rent) for that income level. For example, if the Adjusted Area Median Income for a family of four in your county is \$ 40,000, then housing available to families earning 80% of AMI (\$ 32,000) should cost the household no more than \$ 9,600 a year in mortgage payments or rent. Workforce housing is housing that your local firefighters, police, teachers, nurses and other civil servants can afford. In some places, people in these occupations may earn 80% or less of AMI.²²

19

check appropriate box

Poor	For large projects (over 50 units), provides single housing price option that is similar to housing prices in the immediate neighborhood.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
Good	Provides single housing price option but adds a new housing price option to surrounding neighborhood	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
Very Good	Provides two to four housing price options.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>		
Excellent	Provides four (or more) housing price options.	<input type="checkbox"/>

²⁰ The Adjusted Area Median Income is the Area Median Income adjusted by HUD for family size and it is used to determine eligibility for their various programs

²¹ US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

²² The Bureau of Labor Standards provides an online list of lists occupational wages for the nation, counties and MSAs at http://www.bls.gov/oes/oes_dl.htm

Does the project physically mix housing types and/or price levels within the project or within the adjacent (1/4 mile) neighborhood?

20

check appropriate box

Poor Housing types/prices are separated into homogenous clusters.

Good Different types/prices are located within ¼ mile of each other and can be easily accessed on foot.

Very Good Different types/prices are located on adjacent blocks and are easily accessed on foot.

Excellent Different types/prices are located along the same street (within 300-500 feet) or are mixed in the same building.

Are at least 10% of the residential units provided by the project affordable (less than 120% of AMI x 30%), or at a price level or type that meets an explicitly stated housing goal of the local government?

21

check appropriate box

Poor	No residential units are affordable or at a price level or type that meets an explicitly stated housing goal of the government.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Between 5%-9% of the residential units are affordable or at a price level or type that meets an explicitly stated housing goal of the government.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	10% of the residential units are affordable or at a price level or type that meets an explicitly stated housing goal of the government.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Greater than 10% of the residential units are affordable or at a price level or type that meets an explicitly stated housing goal of the government.	<input type="checkbox"/>

To what extent has the developer consulted with housing affordability advocates or addressed regional affordability needs?

22

check appropriate box

Poor

The developer has not consulted with regional advocates of affordable housing and or included affordable units in the development.

Good

The project has consulted with one or more regional advocates of affordable housing while planning the housing element of the development.

**Very
Good**

The project is presented with endorsement from one or more regional advocates of affordable housing.

Excellent

The project challenges local government standards on minimum lot size and minimum room size in order to accommodate affordable units. The project presents such a challenge with guidance and support from one or more regional advocates of affordable housing.

E. ACCESSIBILITY, MOBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY

Growing smarter means providing a variety of transportation options such as safe and reliable public transportation, sidewalks, bike paths and walking trails. These options promote and improve public health, conserve energy and safeguard the environment. Reducing dependency on automobiles is possible only if there are other attractive and convenient ways to get make trips.

Are frequently visited uses within 1/2 mile of the proposed project?

Frequently visited uses include the following:

- Housing
- Grocery/convenience shopping
- Restaurant/entertainment
- Significant office
- Recreational
- School/day care
- Religious or other institutional

23	check appropriate box
Poor	None or only one frequently visited use is within 1/2 mile of the majority of the project. Or, there are physical barriers that effectively prevent access to frequently visited uses without use of a car (such as high speed roadway or highway). <input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Two to four frequently visited uses are within 1/2 mile of the majority of the project. <input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	Five or more frequently visited uses are within 1/2 mile of the majority of the project. <input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Five or more frequently visited uses are within 1/4 mile of the majority of the project and most are accessible on foot. <input type="checkbox"/>

Will the majority of the residents or employees in the proposed project safely and reasonably reach existing or planned public transit service without a car (either by walking, biking or using a shuttle)?

24

check appropriate box

Poor	There is no available transit service, or most of the people in the project (residents or employees) will not be able access existing or planned transit facilities without a car.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Transit service that provides a direct and efficient route to likely destinations is available and is accessible to a majority of people (residents or employees) in the project even without a car. Or, transit service is not currently available, but an existing service plan or TDP ²³ will provide accessible service to the majority of people in the project. Funds are available and already programmed to implement the service plan or TDP.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	Existing transit service provides a direct and efficient route to likely destinations and transit facilities are located within a ½ mile of the project. The transit service is accessible to a majority of people (residents or employees) in the project even without a car.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Project extends and supports existing transit service by providing transit facilities within the project. Transit service provides a direct and efficient route to likely destinations. Transit facilities are located within a ¼ mile radius of the majority of people in the project and are accessible on foot. Project provides bus shelters where existing bus service exists	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note: To provide effective alternatives to private car use, transit services should run frequently, providing services at 15 minute intervals particularly during rush hour. Projects that offer connecting shuttle services should run the shuttle at the same intervals as the transit service.

²³ *Transportation Development Plan*

Does the project interconnect the surrounding street system and does it provide an interconnected internal street network? Does it improve connectivity for pedestrians and for all forms of transport?

25		check appropriate box
Poor	The project is accessible from surrounding development only through one or two arterial road connections. Addresses within the project can only be reached through one or two internal collector roads. All or part of the project will have access restricted security gates.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	The project is accessible from surrounding development through several arterial and non-arterial road connections and through bicycle and pedestrian connections. (With connections occurring, on the average, more than 600 feet apart.) Addresses within the project can be reached through several interconnected main roads and arterials.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	The project is accessible from surrounding development through several arterial and non-arterial road connections and through bicycle and pedestrian connections. (With connections occurring, on the average, every 600 feet or less.) Pedestrian crosswalks link the project with existing points of interest. The internal road network is a grid (or warped grid), is highly interconnected and provides multiple route options to get to any address within the project. Additionally, trails and or sidewalks should be planned and designed so that they connect points of interest, are safe, and aesthetically pleasing. Additionally, all roads within the project are designed for speeds rated safe for pedestrians and bikers ²⁴ and project plans explicitly provide for bike lanes on all major roadways.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	The project plan takes every road that abuts its boundaries, ²⁵ brings it in and through the project and connects it into the internal road network. Pedestrians crosswalks fully integrate existing development with new development and are designed to provide a safe, effective, and pleasant means of reaching points of interest outside the project. The project street plan also provides for future connections with adjacent as yet undeveloped properties or properties likely to redevelop in the next 25 years. The internal road network is a grid (or warped grid), is highly interconnected and provides multiple route options to get to any address within the project. The internal road system also provides multiple pedestrian and bicycle connections to addresses within the project and to the surrounding areas. All roads within the project are designed for speeds rated safe for pedestrians and bikers ²⁶ and project plans explicitly provide for bike lanes on all major roadways. Trails and or sidewalks should be planned and designed so that they connect points of interest, are safe, and aesthetically pleasing. Additionally, the development will potentially expand and interconnect existing transit networks.	<input type="checkbox"/>

²⁴ See section on Pedestrian Safety, Street Design and Parking

²⁵ Consider restrictions such as wetlands or other sensitive environmental areas.

²⁶ See section on Pedestrian Safety, Street Design and Parking

Does the street plan avoid cul-de-sacs and promote connectivity?

26

check appropriate box

Poor	Most streets are cul-de-sacs, or complete blocks (with through streets on all four sides) average over 2000 feet in perimeter.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Few streets are cul-de-sacs, and complete blocks (with through streets on all four sides) average between 1600 feet and 2000 feet in perimeter.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	No streets are cul-de-sacs, and blocks average less than 1600 feet in perimeter.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Additionally, mid-block pedestrian paths are provided through all blocks longer than 500'.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Does the project provide easy pedestrian access to parks and open spaces?

27

check appropriate box

Poor No active parks or pocket parks within safe walking distance.

Good Safe 1-mile walk to active park, safe 1/4-mile walk to pocket park.

Very Good Safe 1/2-mile walk to active park, safe 1/4-mile walk to pocket park.

Excellent Safe 1/4-mile walk to active park, safe 1/8-mile walk to pocket parks.

Note: Safe walk = via sidewalks or walking trails, preferably without crossing large (high speed) arterials.

Does the project fit seamlessly with the existing area? As the Congress for New Urbanism Charter states, "individual architectural projects should be seamlessly linked to their surroundings (open space, circulation, housing, retail, commercial, recreation, etc.) This issue transcends style." This is particularly important if the existing surroundings have a predominate function, appearance, and character.

28

check appropriate box

Poor	The project is wholly inconsistent with its surroundings. Several viable linkage opportunities have not been utilized and or the proposed project represents a disruption to the existing surroundings	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	The project is somewhat consistent with its surroundings. Linkage is fair, but some linkage attempts are weak and or missing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	The project attempts to be seamlessly linked to its surroundings and some or all linkage attempts are adequate.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	The project is seamlessly linked to its surroundings.	<input type="checkbox"/>

F. PEDESTRIAN SAFETY, STREETSCAPES AND PARKING

Growing smarter means creating walkable neighborhoods that have streets and streetscapes designed for the safety and comfort of the pedestrian and where bike riders can safely share the road with vehicles. Such streets are safer and healthier for seniors and children, who can walk or bike without having to dodge high-speed traffic.

Does the project promote safe environments for pedestrians by using appropriate road design speeds and appropriate street widths for new streets in the project site?

29	check appropriate box	
Poor	<p>Streets have design speeds of greater than 35 MPH, sidewalks are frequently crossed by drives, and curb-return radii exceed 25 feet.</p> <p>Driving lanes are more than 11 feet wide and parking lanes are more than 8 feet wide, measuring curb-face to curb-face.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<p>Streets have design speeds of 30-35 MPH, sidewalks are sometimes crossed by drives, and curb-return radii are between 20 feet and 25 feet.</p> <p>Driving lanes are 10-11 feet wide and parking lanes are 7- 8 feet wide, measuring curb-face to curb-face.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	<p>Streets have design speeds of 25-30 MPH, sidewalks are rarely crossed by drives, and curb-return radii are between 15 feet and 20 feet.</p> <p>Driving Lanes are 11 feet wide and parking lanes are 8 feet wide, measuring curb-face to curb-face.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	<p>On heavily trafficked streets, driving lanes are 11 feet wide and parking lanes are 8 feet wide, measuring curb-face to curb-face.</p> <p>On less heavily trafficked streets, driving lanes are 10 feet wide and parking lanes are 8 feet wide, measuring curb-face to curb-face. Multiple-lane one-way streets are avoided.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are the local streets in single-family residential areas designed for safety?

30

check appropriate box

Poor Queuing streets are not provided.

Good Queuing streets are not provided, but local single-family thoroughfares have driving lanes that are less than 10 feet wide and parking lanes are 7- 8 feet wide, measuring curb-face to curb-face.

Very Good Queuing streets are provided, but not consistently.

Excellent Queuing streets are provided for all local thoroughfares adjacent to single-family housing units.

Note: Use these standards for streets that are meant to carry only local traffic and serve areas dominated by single-family (attached or detached) housing units. Thoroughfares in these areas may be designed as queuing streets²⁷ in which one or two 7 foot-wide parking lanes flank a shared two-way, 12 foot-wide travel lane.

²⁷ Refer to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Green Book.

Is the project pedestrian friendly? Does it provide adequate sidewalks?

31

check appropriate box

Poor Few or no sidewalks are provided in the project.

Good Every street has a sidewalk on at least one side, and the sidewalk is at least 5 feet wide.

Very Good Every street has a sidewalk on both sides, and sidewalks are at least 5 feet wide.

Excellent Every street has a sidewalk on both sides or similar pedestrian provisions adjacent to a park or greenway trail. Residential-fronting sidewalks are at least 5 feet wide, and commercial-fronting sidewalks are at least 10 feet wide.

Does the project encourage walking through the provision of trees and tree cover?

32

check appropriate box

Poor	Sidewalks are not provided with regular tree cover.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Sidewalks are provided with fairly consistent tree cover.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	All sidewalks are provided with consistent tree cover, such that deciduous shade trees are planted at an on-center distance that matches their mature crown width.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	In addition to the above: trees in residential areas are placed in a continuously landscaped strip at least 7 feet wide located between the street and the sidewalk; trees in commercial areas are placed in sidewalk planters approximately 5'-square in size. Ideally, a continuous root trench connects these planters such that the outer 5 feet of sidewalk edge is surfaced in permeable pavers.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Does the project provide pedestrian-friendly streetscapes?

33	check appropriate box
Poor	<p>Few or no improved sidewalks are provided in the project, and weather-protected benches are not provided in transit areas. Project only meets minimum ADA requirements of 4 feet of unobstructed travel way.</p> <div style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></div>
Good	<p>Improved sidewalks on all street frontages and/or improved, defined paths are provided throughout the project. Project exceeds ADA requirements for accessibility.</p> <div style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></div>
Very Good	<p>In addition to full sidewalk and/or path improvements and exceeding ADA requirements, the project provides pedestrian-scaled lighting, street trees and landscaping and transit stops with weather-protected benches.</p> <div style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></div>
Excellent	<p>In addition to the above, the project also provides pedestrian safety features such as crosswalks or curb extensions, particularly in high-traffic areas.</p> <p>In areas with residential or retail uses, on street parking and/or landscaping protects pedestrians from the roadway.</p> <p>In areas with commercial uses, the streetscape is designed with a full array of pedestrian and transit-friendly amenities (such as bicycle racks, transit signs and way finding signage).</p> <div style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/></div>

Does the plan establish a consistent street edge? Are buildings oriented toward the street?

34

check appropriate box

Poor	<p>For buildings: Buildings are oriented away from the main street frontage and provide no pedestrian access from street front. Buildings have an irregular street line, and multiple curb cuts for vehicle entrances occur within 200ft of each other. Buildings retract from prescribed build-to line (vs. adjacent existing development). Or, building frontages are dominated by parking or vehicular access (driveways) and provide no pedestrian friendly streetscape features.</p> <p>For large developments: Buildings are set back more than 100ft from the road and/or buildings on the same street have irregular build-to or setback lines. Building frontages are dominated by parking with no provisions for pedestrian buffers (hedges, trees, etc.). Vehicle entrances (driveways) take up most of the building frontages. Service vehicle entrances or loading docks front the main street.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	<p>For buildings: Buildings are oriented towards the main street frontage and provide good pedestrian access (ingress/egress) from the street front. Buildings follow the street line and curb cuts for vehicle entrances are held to a minimum. Buildings follow existing setback/build to lines.</p> <p>For large developments: Plan maintains a consistent or an intentionally shaped street edge for all buildings on the same street. Vehicle entrances, parking lots and loading docks are located behind buildings.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	<p>For buildings: Pedestrian access is prominent on building frontages. Buildings restore intended build-to or setback lines (particularly in areas designated for redevelopment) and provide landscape buffers where the building must unavoidably set back from the road. Vehicle entrances are located behind or on the sides of buildings.</p> <p>For large developments: Efforts are made to retain the human scale of the street by maintaining comfortable build-to lines; locating vehicle entrances, parking lots and loading docks behind the building/s and minimizing curb cuts by sharing driveway access between adjacent buildings.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	<p>For buildings: In addition to the above, building entrances include provisions for access for the disabled at the front.</p> <p>For large developments: In addition to the above, the plan intentionally provides pedestrian friendly streetscapes.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do the proposed buildings present visually interesting street frontage?

35	check appropriate box	
Poor	Buildings present a blank wall on all façades facing the main streets. Building faces are visually monotonous and are dominated by opaque materials. Blank walls face the sidewalk and there are no views from street level into the building.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Buildings present façades that provide regular views into the building from street level such that pedestrians can catch glimpses of activities within the building.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	In addition to the above, the street level facades of large buildings with long street frontages are broken up into smaller, distinct faces or feature multiple ingress and egress points. Building entrances and frontages provide shade and weather protection for pedestrians (awnings, etc.) or include features intended to encourage street life.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	In addition to the above, buildings actively engage the street and attempt a civic presence or contribute to the public realm through the provision of public art or by highlighting local history or local and regional landmarks.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Does the project provide on-street parking?

36

check appropriate box

Poor Parking spaces are not provided on street.

Good Some streets provide angled or parallel parking spaces on at least one side.

Very Good All streets provide angled or parallel parking spaces on at least one side.

Excellent All streets provide parking spaces. These spaces are distributed based upon intensity of use, roughly as follows:

- One side parallel for single-family neighborhoods.
- Both sides parallel for multifamily and mixed-use neighborhoods.
- Both sides parallel or angled parking for commercial streets

How does the development propose use of signs? Commercial signs or commercial signs which are wholly separated from the uses which they represent do not exist in the plan. These signs include monument signs, freestanding signs, temporary signs, projecting signs, roof signs, wall signs, awning signs, window signs, and banner signs).

37

check appropriate box

Poor	The development proposes one or more commercial signs (monument signs, freestanding signs, temporary signs, projecting signs, roof signs, wall signs, awning signs, window signs, and banner signs included) located off-premise or wholly separated from the uses which they represent.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Off-premise commercial signs or commercial signs which are wholly separated from the uses which they represent are not proposed, but one combined sign (projecting sign or wall sign only) is proposed for all off-premise uses.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	The development contains only a limited number of wayfinding or directional signs for uses located off-premise or wholly separated from the uses which they represent.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	The development does not propose commercial signs (included) located off-premise or wholly separated from the uses which they represent.	<input type="checkbox"/>

G. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Growing smarter also means addressing environmental protection through smart growth principles.

Does the project use design techniques such as clustering and vertical development to avoid sensitive environmental features, minimize development area and/or maximize areas of contiguous open space on site?

38

check appropriate box

Poor

In light of clear and important opportunities at the site, the project does not use any noteworthy design techniques to avoid sensitive environmental features, minimize development area and/or maximize areas of contiguous open space on site.

Good

The project employs at least one design technique such as clustering and vertical development to achieve at least one of the following benefits: avoid sensitive environmental features, minimize development area and/or maximize areas of contiguous open space on site, but

Very Good

Project employs at least one design technique such as clustering and vertical development to achieve at least two of the following benefits: avoid sensitive environmental features, minimize development area and/or maximize areas of contiguous open space on site.

Excellent

More than one design technique is employed at the site and they are exemplary. The use of these techniques achieves at least two of the following benefits avoid sensitive environmental features, minimize development area and/or maximize areas of contiguous open space on site.

Does the project relieve development pressure on natural resources on or off site through the use of transfer of development rights, long-term protection strategies or other means?

39

check appropriate box

Poor	Though a known opportunity exists at the site, the project does not utilize transfer of development rights, long term protection strategies, or other means to relieve development pressure on natural resources on or off site.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	The project developers have demonstrated an attempt to relieve development pressure on natural resources on or off site through the use of transfer of development rights, long-term protection strategies or other means.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	The project relieves development pressure on natural resources on or off site through the use of transfer of development rights, long-term protection strategies or other means.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Project relieves development pressure on natural resources on or off site through more than one of the following methods: transfer of development rights, long-term protection strategies or other means.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Does the project respect the site's original topography, highlight natural features in the existing landscape and maintain or rehabilitate existing structures for continuing use?

40

check appropriate box

Poor	Historic and/or usable buildings are demolished and new landscaping, grading or paving eliminates natural features.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Some existing, viable structures are rehabilitated and reused. Some existing landscape features are preserved.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	Most existing, viable structures are rehabilitated and reused; and/or historic structures are preserved. Most of natural features are highlighted as public amenities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Project rehabilitates and reuses significant community asset or historic structures. Most of the project site's original topography is preserved and natural features are highlighted as public amenities.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Will the project design and location likely contribute to improving regional air quality?

41

check appropriate box

Poor	The project will result in worsening regional air quality or increase air pollution at a rate consistent with conventional development patterns by encouraging more car use or maintaining the existing rate of emissions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	The project reduces average vehicle miles traveled for its employees or residents (by increasing density and mixing uses or by its proximity to frequently visited uses or already developed areas) such that the project will have a net neutral effect on regional air pollution	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	In addition to the above, the project promotes transport alternatives by providing the densities required to support mass transit.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	In addition to the above, the project will contribute to arresting air pollution and improving regional air quality by providing carbon offsets or mechanisms for carbon capture.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Will the project use “green building” design techniques (for site selection, construction and operation practices, energy and water use efficiency, and the provision of healthy building spaces)?

42		check appropriate box
Poor	The project provides only conventional energy and water use features and no recycling during or after construction.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Buildings are designed to take advantage of the local climate and a majority of the buildings in the development contain at least one significant green building feature such as solar or wind energy, passive heating or cooling systems, green roofs, gray or black water reuse.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	All buildings in the project are designed to be EarthCraft or LEED® Certified or achieve LEED® Silver standard, or the project is an infill development or is a Transit Oriented Development (TOD). Proof of LEED registration or progress in compliance may be considered in scoring.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	All buildings in the project are designed to achieve the LEED® Gold or Platinum standard. Proof of LEED registration or progress in compliance may be considered in scoring.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note: Your community should consider waiving the use of this scorecard for any projects that achieve LEED® for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND®) certification or achieve any of the LEED-ND® ratings.

How does the project treat wetlands, streams, shorelines and related buffer areas?

43

check appropriate box

Poor	The project avoids wetlands, streams, shorelines and buffer areas pursuant to regulatory requirements, except for minimized access and utility impacts, and avoids impacts during any site grading.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	The project provides protection of wetlands, streams, shorelines and buffer areas in excess of minimum regulatory requirements and/or proposes to improve degraded environmental resources. Project also clusters development and reduces impervious surfaces.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	In addition to the above, the project provides long-term protection for existing wetlands and actually improves the local hydrologic regime by reducing run-off, or by creating artificial wetlands as part of storm water and sewer mitigation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	In addition to the above, the project incorporates the existing or expanded water features into the design aesthetics of the development. Project also improves local water quality by recycling and purifying gray and black water for drinking, irrigation and other purposes.	<input type="checkbox"/>

How does the project plan treat slopes steeper than 15%, or floodplains, or habitat for threatened or endangered species? How does it treat significant rock outcroppings, or tree stands, or farmland or critical and historic cultural icons?

44

check appropriate box

Poor	Project meets regulatory requirements for avoiding flood plains, steep slopes or and/or habitat for threatened and endangered species,	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	No on-site flood plains, steep slopes or and/or habitat for threatened and endangered species; or project development avoids these areas and provides long-term protection. Project site is developed in such a way as to maximize the preservation of high quality trees and/or significant groups of trees.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	In addition to the above, project avoids developing close to existing natural features (older tree stands, rock outcroppings, significant streams, etc.) and guarantees that these features are publicly accessible by partially fronting the features with public thoroughfares or with public tracts.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	In addition to the above, the project preserves and enhances existing natural or historic and cultural features by turning these into public amenities or publicly accessible natural preserves. The project celebrates significant hilltops with public tracts and/or civic buildings. Mountaintops and ridges are kept clear of private development.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Does the project's open space plan align with or complement the community's plan to preserve open spaces and environmentally sensitive areas.²⁸

45		check appropriate box
Poor	The project's open space plan is not contiguous to community's open space network and does not complement the community's environmental preservation plan. Open spaces are not contiguous and/or open spaces used mainly as buffers for the perimeter of the project.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Project provides open space mainly on land not suitable for development but design of open spaces preserves environmentally sensitive areas and includes accessible walking and bike trails. The plan implements the community's environmental preservation plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	Project provides open spaces via a network that is contiguous to the community's open space plan. The design of open spaces preserves environmentally sensitive areas and includes accessible walking and bike trails. The plan implements and enhances the community's environmental preservation plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Project provides significant open spaces that connect and expand the community's open space plan. The design of open spaces preserves environmentally sensitive areas and includes accessible walking and bike trails that are connected to community-wide or regional trails. The plan implements and enhances the community's environmental preservation plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>

²⁸ This scorecard assumes that your community has an open space or environmental protection plan and that the plans correspond to your community's vision for smarter growth.

H. Community Needs and Local Development

Growing smarter means valuing projects that meet both the needs of communities and provide well functioning, interesting communities. It is also important to consider projects that directly contribute to our local economy – and whether the project will add jobs or will improve the balance of jobs and housing in our region. It is also important to consider if the jobs that will be created are available to nearby residents or if the housing that will be built will be affordable to nearby workers. This approach will support efforts to create walkable neighborhoods, provide a variety of transportation choices and reduce the shared impact on the environment.

Does the development plan reflect a thorough analysis of the interaction of elements (buildings, streets, open spaces, surrounding areas, existing assets, existing obstacles, awnings, fences, walls, signs, pavement, doors, and windows) in context of these objective design principles?

alignment	balance	building materials
connectivity	economy (efficiency, innovation)	function
height	human scale	massing
patterns	shapes	spatial organization
texture	transition	weather (the elements)

46

check appropriate box

Poor

The proposed development fails to apply one or more of these principles for key opportunities at the site and or incorrectly applies one or more of these principles at the site.

Good

The development plan reflects an adequate analysis of the interaction of elements in context of these objective design principles. At least one of the principles applied results in distinctive benefit for the development.

Very Good

The development plan reflects a sound analysis of the interaction of elements in context of these objective design principles. Several principles applied result in set of distinctive benefits for the development.

Excellent

The development plan reflects a thorough analysis of the interaction of elements through exemplary use of the above design principles.

Will the development plan result in a distinctive place or posses a sense of place because project developers maximized the possibilities in context of one or more of these objective design principles?

analogy	architectural style	creativity
cultural expression	existing landscapes	gateways
heritage (individual, event, historic building, historic landscape)	inspiration	landmark (historic or contemporary)
natural views	originality	symbolism
terminal vistas	variety	

47

check appropriate box

Poor	The proposed development fails to apply one or more of these principles for key opportunities at the site and or incorrectly applies one or more of the above design principles.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Several site characteristics are maximized or revealed through the context of one or more of the above design principles.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	Several site characteristics are maximized or revealed through the context of one or more of the above design principles.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	The development plan will result in a distinctive place or posses a sense of place because project developers maximized or revealed site characteristics through exemplary use of the above design principles.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Does the proposed project positively impact employment opportunities within the community? This may include increasing community opportunities and access to training and education.

48

check appropriate box

Poor The project will eliminate or destabilize existing jobs.

Good The project stabilizes and/or maintains existing community jobs and/or provides planned and funded job relocations.

Very Good The project creates permanent and/or construction jobs available to the community.

Excellent The project creates a net increase in permanent jobs that provide "living wages" and are available to the community.

Does the project promote jobs/housing balance in the region?

49	check appropriate box		
Poor	<input type="checkbox"/> Residential:	A majority of the future residents of the project will likely commute for 30 minutes or more by car to get to work.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Residential:	A majority of the future workers in the project will likely commute 30 minutes or more by car to get home.	
Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Residential:	A majority of the future residents of the project can opt to take public transit to work or will likely take less than 30 minutes to get to work by car.	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Residential:	A majority of the future workers of the project can opt to take public transit to get home or will likely take less than 30 minutes to get to home by car.	
Very Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Residential:	The site is within 1/3 mile of a direct transit link to a major job center (i.e. Buckhead, Cumberland, Downtown, Midtown, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	The project represents a substantial mix of uses as no single use within the project exceeds 80% floor area. More than one transit option exists at the site or within ¼ mile. The project is located within ½ mile of a major job center.		<input type="checkbox"/>

Note: While it is often hard to determine the appropriate balance of jobs vs. housing in any area, communities should prioritize and reward projects that provide employment opportunities to nearby residents, or provide housing opportunities that cater to the income levels of nearby workers.

Outside of tax receipts, does the project contribute new public resources to the community from the onset?²⁹

50		check appropriate box
Poor	Project relies on community funds or government subsidies (direct or through tax waivers) and provides no community amenities or future revenue streams (apart from property taxes) that will offset the provided funds.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good	Project does not require any government subsidy (direct or through tax waivers). Project provides public amenities (publicly accessible open spaces, natural preserves, public transit, community facilities, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Very Good	Project provides public amenities (publicly accessible open spaces, natural preserves, public transit, community facilities, etc.) and provides private funding mechanisms or direct funding streams for the maintenance of the public amenities.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Excellent	Project provides public amenities (publicly accessible open spaces, natural preserves, public transit, community facilities, etc.) and provides private funding mechanisms or direct funding streams for the maintenance of the public amenities. Project permanently protects environmentally sensitive areas or cultural or historic locations/structures valued by the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>

²⁹ *Your community should balance this criterion against location incentives to encourage desired development or redevelopment projects or projects that meet your communities stated housing or economic goals.*

VII. Letter of Intent Form



The Livable Communities Coalition

Smart Growth Scorecard

Letter of Intent Form

Developer

Project Name _____

Project Address
(including nearest intersection) _____

Project Developer _____

Point of Contact _____

Project Web Site _____

Permit No. (if applicable) _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

Street Address _____

State _____

Zip _____

Point of Contact Signature and Date _____

Local Government

Point of Contact Name and Title _____

Department Web Site _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Fax _____

Street Address _____

State _____

Zip _____

Point of Contact Signature and Date _____

VIII. About the Livable Communities Coalition

With 42 member organizations, the Livable Communities Coalition brings together a diverse group of citizens, organizations, institutions, and businesses that all share a determination to promote smart growth in the metro Atlanta region. No group working on growth and development in metro Atlanta has broader representation. Coalition members believe that everybody has an interest in making our community a better place, and it works to serve as a catalyst for thoughtful, inclusive decision making about growth and development.

Goals and Methods

The Coalition works to:

- Support greater densities and mixed-use developments in appropriate areas, especially in our region's centers and transportation corridors
- Increase housing choices by removing barriers that artificially restrict the market
- Integrate transportation and land use decisions
- Ensure that greenfield development is designed to achieve a sense of community, provide more housing choices, leverage existing infrastructure, and conserve natural resources.

By adhering to these four principles of smart growth, the Coalition believes that our region can build stronger communities, improve quality of life, provide more and better choices in housing and transportations, reduce traffic, recycle underutilized and blighted properties, make more efficient use of public infrastructure, and save green space.

Coalition work generally to focuses on three areas:

- Projects, including providing technical assistance and other support to local governments and citizen groups that support smart growth. It also encourages private investment consistent with that growth.
- Public policy, especially advocacy of policies, ordinances and regulations that advance smart growth.
- Communication and education, especially informed public discussion of growth issues facing the region.

History

The Livable Communities Coalition grew from recommendations formulated by the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce's Quality Growth Task Force after eight months (2003 – 2004) of research and analysis of growth patterns in the region. The task force concluded that the metro Atlanta region can grow in a way that protects and improves our quality of life and strengthens our business environment if it adopts quality growth principles to guide that growth. It also recommended than an independent nonprofit agency be created to pursue ongoing and long-term education and advocacy efforts on behalf of those principles. The Livable Communities Coalition was formed in 2005 to meet that need.

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