Smart Growth Policy Recognition Program

The DVSGA is a collaborative initiative with supporters in government, private sector and non-profit organizations in the tri-state region covering Eastern and Central Pennsylvania, Southern New Jersey and the State of Delaware, which recognizes policies that will foster regional growth and redevelopment in a manner that achieves important economic, environmental and quality of life objectives.

The philosophy behind the program

By recognizing your Smart Growth policies, the Delaware Valley Smart Growth Alliance hopes to encourage Smart Growth solutions throughout the public sector. Recognized Smart Growth policies are models for the region that DVSGA will promote to other public sector entities.

What kinds of projects are eligible for nomination?

We support and promote good Smart Growth policies, such as, but not limited to: transit- oriented development ordinances, traditional neighborhood development ordinances, form-based codes, multi-municipal ordinances, green building ordinances, alternative energy ordinances, accessory dwelling unit ordinances, innovative parking ordinances that share, reduce or reserve parking, complete streets ordinances, and official maps. Policies recognized to be in compliance with the Smart Growth Policy Recognition Criteria listed below receive an award at our annual fall event and recognition on our website at www.delawarevalleysmartgrowth.org. All applications are confidential; if you seek recognition and are not recognized, it is not disclosed.

How are the selections made?

In order to ensure that recognized policies are worthy of emulation, a jury will ensure that policies meet the Smart Growth Policy Recognition Criteria. Applications are reviewed by an independent jury of architects, planners, developers, builders, bankers, engineers, and other related disciplines.

How can you participate?

Please submit the application material, as a single multi-page PDF electronically to: info@delawarevalleysmartgrowth.org.

Recognition Criteria

The Jury will review the policy for recognition based on the five Smart Growth criteria of Location, Mobility, Urban Design, Environment, and Community. The proposed policy based recognition is successive, meaning if that anytime a project fails to meet the criteria as ordered; it does not move on and would fail to receive recognition.

The criteria are viewed as Smart Growth priorities, and therefore start with **_Location_** which is intended to confirm that the policy applies to an appropriate Smart Growth priority location, i.e., within an area targeted for growth, within a well-defined village, town, or city center, or is a mixed use/transit oriented development. There are certain Smart Growth policies that may be applicable municipality-wide.

Mobility follows Location as even such initiatives as urban/suburban infill policies must at least address the need to reduce reliance on the automobile and improve access to pedestrian and bicycle use. For instance, a trail system identified in an official map is deemed to be only recreational if it doesn't link residential areas to key commercial/employment destinations.

After Mobility, **_Urban Design_** addresses the contribution of physical design to Smart Growth, if applicable to the policy**.** If a project constructed under the policy provides a poor public realm and does not enhance pedestrian culture, then it likely would not reach recognition status. In other words, transit adjacency is not enough. A policy needs to encourage or require that a project located near a train station or other transit stop/hub must be transit oriented.

Environment follows Urban Design. Municipalities should state how their policy improves the environmental conditions in their community. Due to the variety of policies available for recognition, the benefits to the environment of policy implementation will vary greatly. LEED ND criteria could be a useful model in thinking of ways a policy improves the environment, though DVSGA does not advocate that a policy necessarily apply for LEED ND. We understand that there are limitations to what municipalities can require beyond the existing building code, but are also able to look at voluntary incentives that promote more environmentally friendly development.

Finally, there is **_Community_**. If a project/policy has successfully navigated its way through the recognition framework to the realm of community, we believe it is important that a policy's sponsor has paid some level of attention to the policy's social context, whether that be through an integrated outreach process prior or during entitlement or adoption involving the surrounding/impacted community, or through the provision of some other tangible public benefits.

Smart Growth Policy Recognition Checklist

Please ensure that your project recognition includes the following information and meets the Delaware Valley Smart Growth Alliance's Recognition Criteria for Policy Recognition on our website (www.delawarevalleysmartgrowth.org). If you have questions on the recognition criteria or if your policy/ordinance/law is a good candidate for successful recognition, please contact us at info@delawarevalleysmartgrowth.org.

- ☐ Project Sponsor (Full Contact Information)
- ☐ Project Location (Municipality)
- ☐ Current Stage of Approval (Only adopted policies are eligible for recognition, but draft policies can be provided for review and technical assistance.)
- ☐ Narrative: Complete a project narrative utilizing the recognition criteria as a guideline. The narrative should be no more than 1000 words, describing clearly and concisely how the governmental policy/ordinance/law addresses each of the recognition criteria highlighted below.
- ☐ Attachments: Provide any adopted or draft zoning ordinance, comprehensive plan, formal policy, official map documentation, or other public initiative that you think would assist the Jury in reviewing your program. If you are looking for assistance and review in the creation of a Smart Growth policy, you can provide the level of background most appropriate for the project. If you are looking for recognition of an adopted policy or code/ordinance change, please provide a link to or a pdf of the full policy document. We may use elements of your pdf on our website to visualize your project (e.g., cover, interior graphics). Please include additional photos or drawings that visualize your project for use on our website if recognized and available (e.g., public meeting photos).
- ☐ Presentation: Be prepared to have a municipal representative address the DVSGA Jury to briefly summarize the policy highlighting the smart growth elements. The municipal representative should be prepared to field detailed questions from the Jury.
- ☐ Submission: Submit the application material electronically, as a single multi-page PDF, to: info@delawarevalleysmartgrowth.org.