



ICSC Office of Global Public Policy

Issue Brief: Growth Management

ICSC does not oppose sound, well thought out growth management planning. However, “smart growth” is not the same as “no growth.” We will work to ensure that we respond to the needs of regional populations in an environmentally and economically sound matter. Neighborhood convenience shopping centers have many benefits to communities including an increased tax base, job creation and reduction of traffic congestion. Development decisions are based on the demands of the local market and community needs and should not be dictated or restricted by the federal government and non-elected federal agencies. Local authority must be maintained in determining how communities choose to develop. It is the local government officials and economic planners that understand the underpinnings of their local economies, their needs and the cultural environment.

ICSC has created a multi-disciplinary task force to address these growth management issues. Working with membership and with other organizations, ICSC will work to preserve local control over growth and development issues. ICSC acknowledges that the concern over growth was not created in a void. Traffic congestion and overcrowded public schools are most often noted as issues of great concern to the general public, especially those who live in growing suburbs. These challenges must be balanced with the positive aspects of growth and development, and positive economic benefits that development in general (and retail development in particular) has on state and local economies, such as an increased tax base, the convenient provision of goods and services to the community, and the creation of jobs.

The owners, developers and retailers of shopping centers understand that growth is a concern, but also recognize that smart growth cannot mean no-growth. If it were to be embraced as a planning tool, the key elements of our growth management strategy would include:

1. Create an environment that encourages citizens to stay in the community instead of moving out: better schools, better infrastructure, less crime and better integration of land uses. Encourage retail development at appropriate locations within the community so that citizens won't have to drive long distances to do their regular shopping.
2. Provide incentives and adopt flexible regulations that allow development to expand.
3. Balance protection of agricultural and forest land, open spaces, scenic and cultural resources and environmentally sensitive lands with the provision of adequate land to meet the future economic and growth needs of the community.
4. Maintain vitality of traditional downtowns, main streets, older suburban and inner city areas where feasible by encouraging redevelopment and infill development while continuing to recognize the need to provide retail to growing areas.
5. Maintain land-use planning and control at the local level, with the states providing financial resources and generalized policies for local planning and economic development.
6. Establish long-term local comprehensive plans providing for adequate supply of land with infrastructure for residential, commercial, recreational and industrial uses to meet future growth needs of the community.
7. Make development decisions predictable, fair, timely and cost effective.
8. Plan for a diversity of shopping opportunities, locating neighborhood and regional scale centers in appropriate locations so consumers have a wide variety of shopping alternatives with reduced travel distances.
9. Develop public/private partnerships to work collectively to meet the needs of the community.
10. Create economic and regional incentives to encourage infill development and the reuse of brownfields.

For more information, contact Rachel McGreevy at 202-626-1400.