



## Introduction

All across America — from Maine to Arizona, from Washington State to Florida, and from Louisiana to Michigan — governors have recognized how important their actions are in shaping the communities of their states. Even when most land use authority rests at the local level, state actions still have a large and direct impact on economic development, land conservation, environmental protection, transportation, education, and the provision of water, sewer, and other infrastructure. State actions directly or indirectly help determine whether land should be developed or protected, farmed or subdivided, served by transit or crisscrossed by roads, and much more. In state after state, governors are searching for ways to make smarter land use decisions. An increasing number of governors are looking for tried and trusted policies that can help them produce more cost-efficient and environmentally sustainable patterns of growth.

*Policies that Work: A Governors' Guide to Growth and Development* is intended to help governors make that happen. Taken in total, this Governors' Guide lays out a systematic approach to smart growth policymaking at the state level. It is designed to provide governors and their staff and cabinet secretaries with hundreds of ideas about policies, administrative actions, and spending decisions that have actually produced smarter growth in other states – ideas and outcomes that they may be able to replicate in their own states.

The phrase “smart growth” as used in this guide generally refers to development that supports the economy, the community, the environment, and public health through encouraging mixed land uses, fostering a sense of place, preserving open space, and creating walkable communities. There are 10 Smart Growth Principles.

We hope governors and their aides will use this Governors' Guide as a shortcut to good ideas.

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This Governors' Guide is divided the way state governments are usually divided: by areas of departmental responsibility. It begins with a section on Comprehensive Approaches that any state interested in smarter growth should consider. That is followed by sections that specifically deal with actions most likely to be taken by a single agency, such as a Department of Housing, a Department of Economic Development, or a Department of Planning. But to squeeze the most usefulness out of this Governors' Guide, governors, their staff, and cabinet officials should not look at one set of "departmental" recommendations as if they stand alone, unrelated to the policies of other departments. Instead, users of this Governors' Guide are encouraged to look at how the policies in one department can support and even enhance the policies of another: How, for instance, the policies of a Department of Transportation might also mesh with and support the goals of a Department of Health. A fundamental goal of the Governors' Guide is to encourage governors and their aides to look at the activities that state departments typically take on and see them in a new light.

There is, of course, no single action in this document, or even a single set of actions, that by itself will produce smarter growth. Rather, the comprehensive application of as many of these policies as possible will be most likely to produce smarter, more sustainable growth.

Those who compiled the ideas contained in this Governors' Guide recognize that every state is different; every state has its own history, geography, economy, and political culture. Growth presents a variety of pressures and challenges from state to state and even from region to region within states. Some states have already implemented many of the policies suggested in this Governors' Guide; others may find these ideas to be new and innovative ways to address old problems.

We hope *Policies that Work: A Governors' Guide to Growth and Development* is used by governors as a resource, that it is shared with staff and cabinet, and that many of the ideas contained here can be replicated or adapted for use in as many states as possible. State leaders who do so, we believe, will help bring vitality to their towns and cities, protect the most beautiful and ecologically sensitive lands that remain in their states, increase public health, and reap economic rewards from providing their citizens with a better quality of life.

*This document is available on the Internet at [www.govinstitute.org/policyguide](http://www.govinstitute.org/policyguide). It will be periodically updated.*