

# PSG's Blueprint for a Better Region

Created in 2010 by the Partnership for Smarter Growth Policy Team

## **SUSTAINABLE LAND USE POLICIES + SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION POLICIES = THRIVING COMMUNITIES**

**Goal:** Improve transportation and land use policies throughout the region, as well as regional cooperation and public involvement in the planning process, to promote smarter growth and sustainable transportation. The benefits of these changes include strengthening our communities, increasing economic competitiveness, saving money on public infrastructure and in household budgets, improving air and water quality, providing affordable housing, promoting agriculture, improving public health, reducing traffic congestion, protecting natural and historic resources, and providing easier access to jobs.

### *I. Advance Sustainable Development Patterns*

#### **A. Community Revitalization**

Provide greater incentives for infill development, renovation and adaptive reuse of existing structures, and redevelopment (such as tax incentives and grants) and revise zoning and other requirements that bar or limit such projects

#### **B. Compact, Walkable Communities**

1. Give priority to existing communities and designated growth areas when allocating infrastructure and other public service funds
2. Reduce regulatory barriers to more compact, walkable new development (including amending minimum lot and house size, setback, parking, and other requirements).
3. Promote transit-oriented development by providing planning assistance, financial incentives, a streamlined permitting process, zoning changes, and/or public investment for projects that are integrated with public and sustainable transportation options (including near GRTC's planned transfer stations, Main Street, Broad Street, Southside Plaza, Downtown-Southside, and Willow Lawn)

#### **C. Mixed-Use/Mixed-Income and Affordable Housing**

Reduce or eliminate strict separation of land use types and permit mixed use developments, permit additional density where appropriate, encourage a broader range of housing types and take other steps to promote affordable housing

#### **D. Agriculture and Conservation**

1. Preserve rural and natural areas through tools such as tax credits to landowners who place a conservation easement on their property, and fund a program to purchase development rights from willing sellers
2. Protect parks and streams in all communities - urban, suburban, and rural
3. Facilitate agricultural vitality by promoting local farms and community gardens, including connecting local farmers with area markets and institutions

#### **E. Green Building**

Encourage streamlined permitting and require public structures to meet certain standards for high-performance buildings, and change policies to reduce impervious surfaces

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## *II. Promote Sustainable Transportation*

### **A. Connectivity and Complete Streets**

1. Increase efficiency of existing road system through a more complete network of streets, including parallel and connector roads to relieve congestion
2. Adopt -and implement-a “fix it first” policy for localities and the region that places a priority on road maintenance over new construction
3. Develop “complete streets” designed for all users, regardless of age or ability, having the capacity to accommodate pedestrians, bicycles, and buses

### **B. Bicycle and Pedestrian**

Develop a network of greenways, blueways, bike paths, and trails, including:

1. Support the Virginia Capital Trail, Rails to Trails, and Rails with Trails initiatives
2. Identify and implement regional corridors to downtown and major business centers
3. Promote connection of new and existing regional, statewide, and national routes

### **C. Bus and Bus Rapid Transit**

1. Provide more extensive and more frequent bus service
2. Create a dedicated revenue stream to support the Greater Richmond Transportation Company (GRTC) and/or a dedicated state-level funding stream for transit systems analogous to the Rail Enhancement Fund
3. Explore creating a regional transportation authority for raising and allocating funds for a regional transit system
4. Develop Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) as a first step toward a regional transit system
  - a. Develop a convenient, swift, reliable Bus Rapid Transit system with dedicated lanes and Internet access to entice commuters to use the bus
  - b. BRT should begin in the heavily traveled Broad Street Corridor and extend over time through new BRT corridors to major regional destinations such as the airport and the two regional malls
5. Develop light rail

### **D. Intercity Rail Systems**

1. Support High Speed Rail in the Southeast High Speed Rail Corridor from Washington D.C. through Richmond's Main Street Station to Hampton Roads and North Carolina
2. Support the expansion of commuter rail to connect the Richmond region

### **E. Mobilizing Employers**

Create incentives and encourage businesses and government agencies to promote employees to use ridesharing and alternative modes of transportation, including providing incentives for ridesharing, such as programs to fund employee transit fares and to create bike-friendly workplaces.

### **F. Cleaner Motor Vehicles**

1. Promote alternative fuel vehicles that reduce life-cycle environmental impacts, including hybrid and electric vehicles, beginning with government vehicle fleets.
2. Reduce emissions from existing vehicles through steps such as securing funding from the Diesel Emissions Reductions Act

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