

# Building Better Communities

Fall 2004

*A Getting Started  
Resource Guide  
for Community  
Foundations*

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The mission of the **Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities** is to expand funders' abilities to support organizations working to build more livable communities through smarter growth policies and practices. The Network serves as an active resource and focal point for foundations, nonprofit organizations, and other partners working to solve the environmental, social, and economic problems created by suburban sprawl and urban disinvestment and attempts to leverage organizational, financial, and intellectual resources towards solving these problems. The Network's primary roles and responsibilities include raising awareness of the connections between sprawl and quality of life issues to communities of funders; bridging gaps between sectors that are working on issues separately; ensuring that diverse constituencies better understand the goals, objectives, and benefits of smarter growth policies and investment practices; adding knowledge through research and cataloging; and convening and networking change agents in the field.

The **Community Foundations Leadership Project (CFLP)** was launched in 2000 by community foundations within the Funders' Network that joined forces to nurture community foundation leadership in the livable communities movement and within the Network. Many of the actions needed to be taken to assure that communities grow in ways that benefit everyone are local. Community foundations represent an existing philanthropic infrastructure capable of influencing change at the local level across North America. The CFLP strives to assure that this critical constituency of place-based grantmakers has the information, resources, and connections it needs in order to effectively impact community growth and development issues. The CFLP is guided by a national steering committee, chaired by Angel Fernandez-Chavero from The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven.

## Foreword

Many community foundations across North America are acting to assist their communities to make better decisions about growth and development. This Getting Started Resource Guide draws on their experiences to serve as a resource for other community foundations interested in ensuring that better choices are made by their communities regarding how and where they grow. Well-planned future growth and development represents an opportunity to improve communities and the environment. But this requires good decisions to be made. Community foundations can help in this process. This guide describes the roles that community foundations can play in building better communities and offers corresponding examples from community foundations currently engaged in this work and resources available to help.

The Community Foundations Leadership Project of the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities is a member-driven effort that strives to assure that community foundations and other place-based grantmakers have the information, resources, and connections they need. To help foster information-sharing and raise awareness among the more than 600 community foundations in North America, the Network documents the stories and experiences of the community foundations with whom we currently work. If this guide interests you, we would encourage you also to read the Network's publication, *Leading the Field: Volume Two*, which profiles the work of 25 leading community foundations. Perhaps your community foundation will be profiled in Volume Three?

On behalf of the members, board, and staff of the Network, we are pleased to share this resource guide with you. We are continually impressed by the leadership commitment, resourcefulness, and imagination demonstrated by community foundations. We welcome your advice, input, and involvement in this work.

L. Benjamin Starrett  
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Fall 2004

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## Introduction

The manner in which regions grow and invest can assure they consist of vibrant, healthy communities or can saddle them with ever-worsening traffic, air quality, income stratification, and a declining overall quality of life. Growth and development decisions typically are determined in public policy arenas that govern the use of land and transportation investments. While these may not be traditional areas of grantmaking or action for community foundations, they are critical influences on other programs areas such as public education, economic opportunity, housing, environment, and health (some of the topics in what is referred to as the suite of quality of life issues). If communities make choices about their growth and development that lead to suburban **sprawl**<sup>1</sup> and urban disinvestment, these choices are ultimately root causes for other community concerns, such as poverty, environmental degradation, and lack of opportunity for disadvantaged children and families.

Some community foundations are refocusing their attention to these root causes, recognizing that addressing them is integral to improving a community's overall quality of life. For example, community foundations are engaging in local efforts to create urban and suburban neighborhoods that, among other things: provide housing opportunities affordable to everyone; give children the option to walk and bike safely to school; protect **open space** and productive farmland; and retain working families' access to good jobs.

Because the missions of community foundations relate directly to improving the quality of life for all residents of a community, becoming engaged in work that encourages smarter growth development patterns and improves the **livability** of a region can be a natural evolution. Community foundations are using tools such as grantmaking, creating collaborations, convening public officials, educating community members, or creating new initiatives to affect public land-use decisions.

For some community foundations, becoming involved in what some call "**smart growth**" work is a gradual process, while others are initially introduced to these issues in the context of a specific opportunity or catalytic event. Regardless of how it begins, it is important not to get caught up in the labels. Whether one calls it smart growth, livable communities, quality growth, sensible growth, or fair growth, the bottom line is to help assure that communities grow in ways so that everyone benefits. Important steps include helping residents to have meaningful opportunities to participate in planning processes, encouraging public officials to undertake planning with an eye on the big picture, and ensuring that development benefit the entire community, not just single interests.

Activities available to community foundations range from simple, short-term efforts, to multi-year, comprehensive initiatives that engage all facets of a foundation. Many community foundations have found

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this guide, the first reference to terms that are defined in the glossary are highlighted in bold. Turn to the Glossary of Terms section that begins on page 39 for full definitions.

that they are well positioned to address these issues due to their standing as respected conveners and civic leaders in their community with a commitment to place and that this work is directly connected to other community issues they care about. Because leadership is always attractive, this type of work has attracted donors, due to its urgency and effectiveness.

Opportunities for getting involved in land-use and transportation activities are available to fit nearly every budget and endowment range for community foundations. Community foundations are well suited to address these issues—and resources are available to help. In addition, national experts from the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities are ready to help. The Network maintains a roster of community foundation trustees, CEOs and program officers that are willing to help or to serve as resources to other community foundations.

Designed to demystify the language and processes associated with land-use and transportation planning, this resource guide outlines the connection between these issues and other quality of life concerns and provides examples of community foundations that are currently engaged in this type of work. The guide is primarily intended for community leaders who are interested in addressing these problems but may not know how best or where to start. Community foundation donors and potential donors, trustees, CEOs, and program and other staff considering this direction will each benefit from the resources listed in these pages.

While this guide was written with community foundations in mind, many of the ideas and methodologies in the following chapters are equally applicable to any foundation with a commitment to place (meaning commitment to a specific geographic place, as opposed to commitment to an issue).

The following section, *Connecting Community Foundations to Livable Communities Issues*, highlights the connections between numerous areas in which foundations typically work and the opportunity to improve quality of life through smarter growth strategies. Later in the guide, *Building More Livable Communities* introduces issues, planning processes, and solutions that have worked in other communities. *Taking Action* describes a number of roles that various community foundations have employed in this work. Finally, *Bringing in Financial Resources* suggests ways of attracting additional funds to augment a community foundation's investment in this arena. Examples from community foundations currently engaged in various efforts are featured throughout the guide. Further, a listing of organizations that can provide additional web-based and printed resources appears towards the end of the guide. The guide concludes with a glossary that defines some of the terms related to smart growth and livable communities issues. Throughout the document, the first reference to a term that appears in the glossary is highlighted in bold.

## Connecting Community Foundations to Livable Communities Issues

**T**he core mission of community foundations, by and large, is to improve quality of life in the communities they serve, particularly for low-income and other disadvantaged residents. Historically, this has meant grantmaking focusing on the visible symptoms of the social and economic problems faced by low-income communities and working families. But the challenges they face are rooted in deeper problems stemming from how communities are growing. As development has moved farther from the urban core, finite public resources have been stretched outward as well, leaving behind those who can neither afford nor access suburban housing and jobs. Educational inequity and declining urban tax bases emerge as a result. Further, research shows that inner cities are not the only places that suffer the consequences of dispersed development patterns. New development on a region's edge also means loss of open space and farmland, reduction of rural character, and immense traffic congestion as commuters travel to new jobs that are scattered far from traditional employment centers and public transit.

Beyond the inefficient location of new development, the preponderance of large lot single-family homes also has contributed to other quality of life issues about which community foundations care. Such development—by virtue of its single use, spread-out nature—isolates neighbors from informal interaction that takes place and the civic engagement that occurs when residents can walk to community destinations and spend less time in traffic.

Community foundations that are supporting efforts to entice development back to established cities and inner-ring suburbs understand that working on land-use and transportation issues is essential to achieving their missions. For example, appropriate public land-use regulations and subsidies can stimulate the private market to provide a mix of housing types, commercial centers, and transportation options. Community foundations can play a role in changing the regulations and incentives to encourage this type of action.

Foundations may find it helpful to look at the work in which they already are engaged through the lens of smart growth and livable communities. The series of Translation Papers published by the Funders'

Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities describes the links between smart growth land-use frameworks and many other issues of importance to community foundations. Examples include:

**Civic Participation** It is increasingly difficult for members of

many communities to participate in their children's schools, to volunteer on local boards and commissions, even to vote. These trends are, in part, a result of commuters spending more time driving and less time taking part in their communities. Revitalizing urban areas and building diverse, **mixed-use** communities in the suburbs offers workers housing and transportation choices which have the potential to reduce average commutes, provide opportunities for walking, and give families more time to spend together and participate in determining their communities' future (*Translation Paper No. 4*).

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*Due to their knowledge of local issues and reputation as neutral, even-handed leaders, community foundations are well-positioned to tackle growth and development concerns. They can choose to support local community-building efforts through traditional grantmaking or by participating in or initiating local planning processes.*

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**Agriculture** Farmers—particularly those at the edges of urban areas—are constantly tempted by the prices their land could bring if sold for development. To help sustain agriculture and preserve the unique character of rural areas, farmers need substantial financial incentives to continue farming and effective land-use regulation to keep their land in agricultural production (*Translation Paper No. 5*).

**Education** In recent years, when a community approved the construction of a new school, it was often sited on the edge of the community. A new movement is afoot to reverse this trend, whose goals include investing in existing urban schools and locating new schools in existing neighborhoods (thereby knitting them into the fabric of the surrounding community). Advocates of this movement argue that schools being built today at the edges of communities fail children in at least three ways: site size, funding that favors new construction, and lack of walkable schools (*Translation Paper No. 8*).

**Children and Families** The negative effects of current patterns of growth and development on poor and minority families by now are well understood. But the evidence is mounting that sprawl has begun to take a toll on middle class children and families, too. While conventional suburban design has been marketed, and largely perceived, as an environment created especially for families, concern is growing that its extensive focus on the dictates of the automobile and neglect of some basic human needs may actually come at the expense of children. Growing commute distances among two-worker families are stealing parental time (and supervision) from children. The combination of unwalkable neighborhoods, sedentary lifestyle, and drive-through diet means one in four of today's kids will suffer from diabetes as an adult if trends continue. Auto-oriented sprawl is causing people to drive more, reversing gains in controls on air pollution at a time when asthma rates among children are soaring; smog is known to trigger potentially life-threatening attacks, and to exacerbate other ailments. In fast-developing areas on the metro fringe, kids must be driven to huge, anonymous schools that often are overcrowded when they open (*Translation Paper No. 9*).

**Public Health** As work and home move farther apart, a car is increasingly necessary to reach stores, school, and other day-to-day activities. Automobile dependency is increasing the sedentary nature of our lives, respiratory ailments, environmental pollution, and accompanying health impacts and trauma associated with automobile accidents. A growing number of public health practitioners and researchers understand these connections and the importance of incorporating community design into public health strategies (*Translation Paper No. 11*).

**Arts** The arts have become a focal point for community building, while the smart growth movement has become a focal point for creating better places. In some communities, the overlap of these two movements is a key community-building strategy. In other communities, these two movements proceed along separate tracks. This paper explores the role each movement plays in building communities and the potential they have to work together to this end (*Translation Paper No. 12*).

In addition to these topics, the Funders' Network has published translation papers on air quality, energy, water, community development, biodiversity, aging, transportation, parks and open space, workforce development, and **regional equity**. For a more detailed discussion of how each of these issues and others relate to community decisions about growth and development, visit the Network's website at [www.fundersnetwork.org](http://www.fundersnetwork.org) to download copies of all of the translation papers (readers may also request printed copies of the papers in the series—at no charge—by completing a publications order form, available online).

The series of Translation Papers published by the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities describes the links between smart growth land-use frameworks and many other issues of importance to community foundations. Examples (referenced in the preceding pages) include:

### Civic Participation

*Civic Participation and Smart Growth:*

*Transforming Sprawl into a Broader Sense of Citizenship*

Translation Paper No. 4, November 2000

### Agriculture

*Agricultural Sustainability and Smart Growth:*

*Saving Urban-Influenced Farmland*

Translation Paper No. 5, April 2001

### Education

*Education and Smart Growth:*

*Reversing School Sprawl for Better Schools and Communities*

Translation Paper No. 8, March 2002

### Children and Families

*Children, Youth and Families and Smart Growth:*

*Building Family Friendly Communities*

Translation Paper No. 9, August 2002

### Public Health

*Health and Smart Growth: Building Health, Promoting Active Communities*

Translation Paper No. 11, February 2003

### Arts

*The Arts and Smart Growth: The Role of Arts in Placemaking*

Translation Paper No. 12, April 2003

## Building More Livable Communities

**M**aking a connection regarding the relationship between growth and development patterns and other issues that community foundations care about is a critical first step toward influencing patterns of growth. As important, though, is understanding the elements that make neighborhoods, towns, cities, and regions more livable. The solutions are part community design—the physical layout of buildings, streets, parks, and other parts of the built environment—and part governmental intervention—how public sector decisions and programs can induce the private sector to build in a particular way. These elements may be considered the “rules of the game,” which determine where, how, and what gets built. Decoding the rules and reforming them so that they give a community the desired results is a big part of the challenge of this work.

The *Taking Action* section of this resource guide describes how some community foundations have helped their communities become more livable through grantmaking and/or direct participation in influencing community design and governmental intervention, while this section defines the specific elements associated with community design and governmental intervention.

**Community Design** What constitutes progress toward a more livable community varies, of course, from one place to another. In some places it is encouraging market rate and **affordable housing** development to breathe life back into downtown districts. Elsewhere, it is providing opportunities for compact, **transit-oriented development** on underused parcels adjacent to rail and bus stations. In some suburban areas, it is encouraging new retail, office, and residential development to be in shared structures or at least adjacent, thereby creating places that foster plenty of opportunities for walking and informal social interaction. The following characteristics are common to livable communities:

- ***Downtown and Older Area Revitalization:*** Bringing housing, retail, and jobs back to urban centers—without displacing existing residents—can create vibrant 24-hour downtown and neighborhood centers while reducing public expenditure on new infrastructure.

- *Parks and Farmland Protection:* Providing parks in urban neighborhoods helps relieve the stress of urban life while better planning for growth along cities' edges allows local farms to continue producing, provides recreational opportunities and wildlife habitat, and helps to preserve the character of rural communities.
- *Places for Multiple Generations:* Providing a variety of development types offers housing choices that are affordable to residents of all ages and income levels. This strategy allows teachers, firefighters, and service industry employees to live in the communities in which they work and senior citizens to live near family and friends.
- *More Choices among Housing and Neighborhoods:* Development that includes a variety of land uses—housing, shops, offices, parks, public buildings—and the people that work in each creates vibrant communities that are as enjoyable to visit as they are to live in.
- *Meaningful Transportation Choices:* Constructing housing and jobs close to public transit and providing safe, reliable service reduces regional traffic congestion, improves air quality, and offers residents and workers transportation options.
- *Reusing Vacant Properties:* Supporting efforts that allow abandoned shopping centers, empty homes, and industrial sites, which are sometimes contaminated, to be reused for new walkable neighborhoods and other productive uses maximizes resources.
- *Walkable Neighborhoods:* Building communities where children and other residents can walk to school and other destinations can help provide more social interaction and reduce obesity rates linked to sedentary lifestyles.

**Governmental Intervention** Local and state governments throughout North America are increasingly offering financial incentives and/or regulatory relief for development that enhances and revitalizes existing communities. While sometimes misused, these programs are designed to stimulate the private sector to provide a mix of housing types, revitalize inner cities, offer

transportation options, protect open space, and the like. For the most part, elected officials weigh-in only on very large or perhaps controversial development decisions. Most day-to-day business regarding **zoning**, codes, and other design regulations is managed by local departments, often called the planning and zoning department or the community development department, while permits are issued by the building department. Collectively, their responsibilities include dealing with the public on what, where, and how things are built and leading public processes to update citywide and neighborhood plans. There may also be regional or multi-jurisdictional planning agencies that deal with planning, open space, or transportation issues. For example, every urban area has a metropolitan planning organization (MPO), which is responsible for regional transportation plans that guide the use of federal (and usually state and local) transportation funding. Staff and representatives of planning/community development departments and/or regional or multi-jurisdictional planning agencies will be both resources and audiences for a community foundation's work on land-use, transportation, and related quality of life issues.

Throughout the United States, there is a general framework for how a community grows. The overarching document is each city's general or comprehensive plan—updated every decade or so—that defines the type of land uses that can take place in certain areas and lays-out plans for new transportation facilities, parks, and the like. Other documents, such as area specific plans or zoning ordinances, guide future growth in a more fine-grained manner, identifying building types and heights, public facilities, and transportation patterns in a particular neighborhood or several block area. Community foundations working on growth and development issues should clearly identify the impact they wish to have at the different levels in the planning process decision-making chain. Community foundations that have a good understanding of the forces that shape local community design and have identified effective leverage points to influence decision-makers are well-positioned to help build better communities (and thereby impact their other issues of concern, from poverty to the environment to the arts).

- ***Building Design:*** In the context of community livability, building design determines a project’s relationship to the street and to what degree it enhances its surroundings. Examples include pedestrian amenities—benches, light posts, and wide sidewalks—and features that allow development near a transit station to capitalize on its location.

- ***Planning for Infill Development:*** Many developers describe the ease with which they can build on **greenfields**, relative to the challenges of building in existing neighborhoods, as a primary incentive for building on the edges of town. There are many ways to level the playing field between greenfield and **infill** development, including developing neighborhood consensus on desirable development and providing an expedited building permit process for developers who build consistent with these consensus visions (as has been done in the city of Milwaukee, Wis., for example). These arrangements provide developers with an enhanced level of certainty, thus making infill development more appealing.

- ***Local Ordinances:*** A community’s zoning regulations dictate the type and intensity of land use allowable in each neighborhood. Building codes prescribe key features that determine the feel of structures from the street and the ease with which older buildings can be refurbished and reused. Street design standards—usually based on state statute—impact a community’s **walkability**. The development of local codes and ordinances that clearly establish the parameters of future development is another potential leverage point for influencing community growth patterns. In such an environment, permits are issued quickly to builders proposing to develop consistent with these regulations. In addition, by addressing increasingly prescriptive fire codes<sup>2</sup>, many communities are showing that neighborhoods can be designed to protect public safety while allowing for walking as a viable transportation option.

- ***Working at the Regional Level:*** A very large share of new growth and development is occurring at the edge of metropolitan regions. Therefore, making sure these new communities are as well designed as possible is as important as working to improve existing

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<sup>2</sup> Examples include extremely wide streets and turning tadii (the tightness of a turn) designed to allow two fire trucks to pass between parked cars. In contrast, narrower streets can encourage walking by calming or slowing traffic and easing pedestrian street crossings.

neighborhoods. As the nation's suburbs grow and as commutes lengthen, one community's growth decisions increasingly impact quality of life in neighboring cities and beyond. Working at the regional level is becoming more imperative as people increasingly live in one community, work in another, and shop in a third. Activities can range from hosting and/or coordinating convenings to discuss the region-wide impacts of a particular development proposal to engaging in efforts to develop a region-wide vision. Dozens of regions throughout North America have created or are in the process of creating a vision of how they would like to grow in the coming decades, such as Salt Lake City, Utah, and the Twin Cities in Minnesota. These processes, usually assisted by planning consultants, bring together all segments of a region's population to learn about the repercussions of and alternatives to current growth patterns. These parties then work together with maps, often aided by computers, to illustrate their visions for the future of their communities.

- *Working with State Government:* In many states, development is largely driven by state policies that unintentionally encourage sprawl development. For instance, where local governments receive a much greater proportion of their revenue from sales tax than from property tax, there is an incentive to approve retail development—particularly “big box”—over housing. Similarly, state transportation funding criteria often embody a preference for reducing traffic congestion over helping people reach their destinations. This results in wider, longer freeways rather than improved public transit, bikeways, and sidewalks. Working to shift state law to improve local conditions is more difficult for community foundations and will likely require a stronger focus on partnerships and collaboration.

## Communication

Research shows that people throughout the United States and Canada share many basic values. Most want to live in a place where there is a sense of community, with a variety of housing and transportation options, and where historic structures are valued and preserved<sup>3</sup>. And they want community input to be considered in all public development decisions.

Not everyone uses a common vocabulary when it comes to growth and development. Researchers have found that many of the words used by planners and developers to describe the concepts outlined in this guide do not effectively communicate key aspects of their work to the public. This research shows that the words “smart growth” can be the most misinterpreted of all. If infill, mixed-use development with a sense of place is smart, then is edge development dumb? What about the leaders who approved it? The residents who live there? This is not the type of sentiment that the smart growth and livable communities movement intends to convey.

In written materials prepared by grantees and by community foundations themselves, good communicators are striving to use language that is more descriptive to lay people and planners alike. For instance, rather than relying on such terms as “mixed-use,” “mixed-income,” “walkable communities,” and “smart growth,” these concepts are increasingly being conveyed in terms that emphasize the housing and transportation choices available to residents of communities that offer a variety of housing types, sidewalks, and nearby shopping districts.

Similarly, lumping apartments, duplexes, townhouses, and small lot single-family homes under the name “affordable housing,” evokes (right or wrong) images of drugs and crime. Rather than labeling housing by how much it costs, community foundations should instead talk about members of the community such housing is designed to serve (e.g., “**workforce housing**” is a term used to describe the ability for teachers, police officers, firefighters, emergency responders, hotel and other service employees to live in or near where they work) or to use alternative descriptions to describe cost (i.e., “modest” or “moderately priced” housing). Some foundations have found that increasing awareness of statistics that compare average local home prices to local salaries can provide one of the most convincing arguments for building a greater variety of housing types.

Many community foundations have found that the most perfectly chosen words are no match for local examples of community-enhancing projects. Showing the challenges these developments overcame, the sense of neighborhood and community they helped create, and their legacy for future generations help to show how far smarter growth development strategies can go toward building better communities that appeal to people across North America.

<sup>3</sup> ActionMedia, “Communicating Smart Growth,” for the Funders’ Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities. August 2004

## Taking Action

**S**ometimes the most compelling information is from other community foundations that have grappled with the very issues another organization is facing. How have other community foundations throughout North America succeeded in helping to shape their communities? What sorts of issues have they taken on and with what results?

In 2001, the Funders' Network published *Leading the Field: Community Foundation Leadership in Smart Growth and Livable Communities*, an anthology describing over two dozen pioneering North American community foundations involved with improving the quality of life in the communities they serve. An updated sequel to *Leading the Field* highlights how these and other community foundations continue to work in this arena (fall 2004).

The community foundations interviewed for and profiled in this report became engaged in smart growth and livable communities work in a variety of ways. For some, it was a gradual process, while for others it was more sudden, precipitated by a specific event or development proposal. Activities can range from simple, short-term efforts, to multi-year, comprehensive initiatives that engage all facets of a foundation. As a result, this guide outlines examples of roles ranging from grantmaker, convener, educator, engaged participant, and initiator.

Community foundations across North America have taken a number of different paths in pursuit of smarter growth principles. Some use their grantmaking to directly impact the rules of the game, by making grants, for example, in support of land-use and transportation advocacy, research on the potential impacts of development proposals, and reports assessing water and air quality. At other foundations, staff convene key stakeholders in local planning processes, providing a venue or process in which the community can reach its own consensus. Some foundations focus their resources on educating decision-makers and other community members. Some community foundations assign staff or trustees to be engaged and at the table regarding local, regional, and state policymaking related to growth and development. Finally, some

community foundations have gone even further towards participating in shaping their community's future by creating staffed initiatives that undertake multiple tasks. While there is significant overlap among these roles and activities, following are specific descriptions and examples pertaining to each.

### **Taking the Next Steps at the Foundation**

First, a community foundation leader must understand the growth-related issues facing her or his community, become familiar with its local planning process, and find out the ways in which other community foundations are working in this area to improve community quality of life. The next step is to increase the number of allies she or he has at the community foundation. For example, CEOs need the support of trustees. Trustees need the support of program staff. Program staff members need the support of their CEO and colleagues.

Sometimes research efforts uncover a local expert who understands the issues that resonate with the community foundation and can communicate them effectively. If so, she or he could be invited to present at an upcoming board meeting or to brief foundation staff. In addition, national experts from the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities are ready to help. The Network maintains a roster of community foundation trustees, CEOs, and program officers that are willing to help or to serve as resources to other community foundations.

## Foundation as Grantmaker

**M**aking **strategic grants** is one way that foundations can help their communities grow smarter. Strategic grants in this arena may support research and technical assistance, public education and media work, consensus building efforts, and **community assessments**. Often this type of work provides the data needed by decision-makers to make informed assessments of community needs (and sometimes, overcome local opposition to change—frequently, data provided by developers are the only types of information available). The focus of such research efforts may include increasing **density** without decreasing livability, revitalization without **gentrification**, and understanding the availability of and need for housing that is affordable to all in a region.

While most community foundations make these types of grants independently, others have joined together to form a funding collaborative for an even bigger impact. Some foundations also have been involved with creating land trusts—using a revolving loan or grant funding to protect irreplaceable land—administered either by the foundation or externally. As with a community foundation’s work on any type of important community issue, the possible approaches are only limited by imagination and resources.

### **A Funders’ Collaborative: Making a Bigger Impact by Working with Other Funders**

#### ***The Greater Cincinnati Foundation***

The Greater Cincinnati Foundation has created a “funders’ collaborative”—multiple grantmakers working toward a shared goal—for the region’s Better Together Cincinnati efforts. The collaborative supports initiatives intended to achieve greater equity, opportunity, and economic inclusion for the African American community. It is a model for other foundations, particularly in communities with corporations that may be willing to back efforts to improve their regions, but that do not have time to engage as fully on local issues as a community foundation. When a community foundation facilitates the process of working together with other funders by organizing a funding collaborative, it is giving itself and other funders in the community the opportunity to make a bigger impact than they could by working alone.

## **The Long Island Sound Initiative: Developing a Partnership of Community Foundations Using Grantmaking**

### ***New York Community Trust***

Long Island Sound, sandwiched between New York and Connecticut, is recognized as one of the nation's premier estuaries. The New York Community Trust (NYCT) sponsored the Long Island Sound Initiative with twin aims of protecting remaining open space around the Sound, and increasing public access to it. At the same time the Trust saw the initiative as a vehicle for engaging community foundations in neighboring Connecticut in this regional environmental issue. Responding to recommendations from a 1994 comprehensive plan for the Sound, three nonprofit organizations—Regional Plan Association, Save the Sound, and Audubon New York—came together in 1999 to identify ways to preserve, restore, and increase public access to the Sound's coastal areas and open space. The goal of these three groups (known collectively as Long Island Sound Partners) is to set up a network of protected sites—including natural areas and developed parks—by claiming the few parcels of land that have not been developed and by reclaiming other key sites.

Apart from the obvious environmental benefits of NYCT's Long Island Sound Initiative, the Foundation supports Long Island Sound Partners in an attempt to encourage Connecticut community foundations to join in the effort. Toward that end, in 2003, the Foundation convened a meeting of half-a-dozen Connecticut community foundations to discuss ways to get them involved in addressing the challenges facing the estuary, possibly using a portion of the money NYCT has allocated to the Long Island Sound Initiative. New York Community Trust's strategy is to give their neighboring community foundations the resources they need to gain the experience working on environmental issues that will let them go on to initiate and sponsor other environmental efforts of regional significance.

**[www.nycommunitytrust.org](http://www.nycommunitytrust.org)**

## **Foundation as Grantmaker**

### **Affordable Housing Land Trust**

#### ***California Community Foundation (Los Angeles)***

In response to Los Angeles' acute shortage of affordable housing, the California Community Foundation has developed a unique urban land trust, formed by a December 2002 vote of the Foundation's board of governors that formed a supporting organization—The Community Foundation Land Trust (CFLT)—and funded its initial operations with a \$3.8 million grant. The CFLT acquires residential property in low-income communities, removes it from the marketplace, and places it in trust for affordable homeownership without raising the cost of the land for 99 years. The Land Trust has many partners and has received additional operating support from the Fannie Mae Foundation and Washington Mutual Foundation.

The Trust provides low-income families an opportunity to own their own home without having to acquire the expensive land upon which it sits. Each family will own its Trust Home with only two restrictions: 1) the family must occupy the home; and 2) when they are ready to move, the family must sell the home to a like kind income buyer.

Because CFLT purchases the land, which in Southern California can account for over 40 percent of the total cost of a home, the homeowner does not need to finance the land component, and therefore has a smaller mortgage to service. A Land Trust home can therefore be financed on a 15-year self-amortizing mortgage rather than a 30-year mortgage. Instead of the tax deduction write-off of interest payments, CFLT homeowners accumulate principal. Furthermore, after 15 years they will no longer have a mortgage payment. Stabilized communities and long-term stakeholders with economic security are among the key benefits built into the Land Trust model.

**[www.calfund.org](http://www.calfund.org)**

## Foundation as Convener

Due to the respected position community foundations hold in their communities, and the breadth of contacts foundation staff have with grantees and other civic leaders, one of the most common roles community foundations play after grantmaking is that of convener. Often, meetings initiated by foundations offer the first opportunity for funders, decision-makers, and other community leaders to sit down face-to-face in pursuit of mutual goals. These convenings can take the form of a meeting, a series of meetings or larger, almost conference-like, processes.

Where smart growth and livable communities issues are concerned, community foundations often have a unique opportunity to be the first to bring important constituencies together in a community for conversation about how and in what way a community wants to grow. Due to the fact that livable communities concerns cross not only regions, but also issue areas, community foundations represent a wealth of expertise and often have connections to representatives from all sectors affected by development decisions. In some areas, this convening role can help fill the vacuum of region-wide leadership, particularly where county government is weak or where no effective regional association of governments exists.

It is important to understand that community foundations that do this work typically are not “neutral” in the classic sense of the word. They do have a point of view, which is that the community needs to make better decisions regarding how it grows. But because the community foundation is perceived as fair and even handed, it can provide a valuable forum for the community to come to consensus around these sometimes contentious issues.

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*Where smart growth and livable communities issues are concerned, community foundations often have a unique opportunity to be the first to bring important constituencies together in a community for conversation about how and in what way a community wants to grow.*

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## ***Foundation as Convener***

### **First Suburbs Consortium: Helping Cleveland's Inner Suburbs Work Together**

#### ***The Cleveland Foundation***

Since 1996, The Cleveland Foundation has supported the First Suburbs Consortium, a collaborative effort of the mayors of ten of Cleveland's inner suburbs. In the context of the Consortium, these neighboring municipalities sit down together to talk about their common issues—including how to work with the city of Cleveland, diversify their housing stock, and make their retail areas more competitive.

[www.clevelandfoundation.org](http://www.clevelandfoundation.org)

### ***Prosperity! The North Coast Strategy***

#### ***Humboldt Area Foundation (California)***

The Humboldt Area Foundation serves the northernmost counties of California, a region whose economy has historically relied on seasonal industries such as forestry, fishing, and agriculture. In the early 1990s, law enforcement officials and social service providers showed the Foundation's board that rates of substance abuse and domestic violence were rising during seasonal layoffs.

The Foundation was not satisfied that its efforts were stemming the need for social services. It decided to expand its efforts toward diversifying the economy in an attempt to even-out the swings in employment and unemployment. The Foundation convened business and civic leaders, developers, educators, and others to discuss what various sectors could do to strengthen the region's economy.

Together, the group eventually created *Prosperity! The North Coast Strategy*, a plan that identifies steps that businesses, the public sector, and others can take to strengthen the region's economy by integrating sustainable development concepts.

[www.hafoundation.org](http://www.hafoundation.org)

## **Creating a Bay Area Region-Wide Community Foundation Collaborative**

***The San Francisco Foundation  
East Bay Community Foundation  
Marin Community Foundation  
Peninsula Community Foundation***

The San Francisco Bay Area is home to several large community foundations with significant resources. Although there is some overlap between their service areas and instances when two or more have co-funded an effort, these community foundations to date have never worked together on a project of region-wide significance.

Since 2003, the foundations have been meeting to identify opportunities for collaboration to improve quality of life in neighborhoods and at transit hubs throughout the Bay Area. Because of the belief that the region's community foundations together can accomplish more than they can working alone, in the summer of 2004 this collaborative committed to drafting a proposed business plan for a "Bay Area Livable Communities Initiative." Pooling and leveraging grant dollars and capitalizing on each foundation's local contacts and reputation could provide an effective and powerful partnership.

While still in the formative stages, this collaboration of community foundations will assuredly lead to joint endeavors that are worthwhile and relevant for each. Yet, even absent a common undertaking, the meetings are improving the ability of each to engage in local planning decisions by virtue of participants' better understanding of the regional context in which they all are working.

**[www.sff.org](http://www.sff.org)**

## Foundation as Educator

While the convener role is primarily targeted—in the initial stages—to constituencies that already have some familiarity with and connection to growth and development issues, some foundations also try to educate those who are less familiar with the relationships between development patterns and traffic, poverty, commerce, and the environment. Whether these foundations are working with government officials, community groups, or the general public, their roles can include fostering one-on-one dialogue, arranging a lecture series, or being part of a larger broad-based effort. Local newspapers or television stations often are interested in partnering in this type of work. Some community foundations that engage in education take on a public relations role by building awareness of the linkages between quality of life and better community design.

### **Influencing Policy through Education**

#### ***The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven (Connecticut)***

In the early 2000s, the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven (CFGNH) invited nationally respected political economist Myron Orfield to study the greater New Haven region. Orfield concluded that, as in other metropolitan areas across the United States, greater New Haven's urban problems are no longer limited to urban areas. In order to solve them, urban, suburban, and rural areas need to work together to find solutions that work for everyone.

Supported with funding from CFGNH, the Archdiocese of Hartford is using these findings in a gradual grassroots campaign—called CenterEdge—to educate the general public about the need for regional cooperation and, eventually, for statewide solutions to economic development, transportation, and other quality of life challenges in the greater New Haven region.

The Foundation's president and board overcame their trepidation of supporting a grassroots effort for the first time and were willing to fund the project because they understood that CenterEdge is important to the success of other Foundation efforts to improve quality of life in the region.

## **HousingMinnesota: Education with an Edge**

### ***The Minneapolis Foundation***

In 1998, The Minneapolis Foundation issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to spur a new approach to affordable housing advocacy: professional advertising and public relations—never before used in Minnesota to sway public opinion and influence legislators on the issue. The RFP called for nonprofits to partner with a public relations firm to distill a clear, cohesive message and bring the issue to public attention and onto the radar screen of state legislators.

HousingMinnesota—the statewide collaborative that formed as a result—created billboards, bus signs, radio and print ads, a website, and a brochure rooted in messages of self-interest—making connections between affordable housing and healthy economic development, children’s academic success, and other issues that enjoy broad public support. Examples of the provocative nature of the campaign include a teacher at a blackboard with the caption, *“Meet another member of your community who needs an affordable place to live,”* and *“If he can’t afford a place to live, he can’t afford to keep you running,”* next to a picture of a car mechanic.

As one observer noted, “As a result of these advocacy efforts, affordable housing catapulted from relative obscurity to the top of the public policy agenda in a very short period of time. There is now widespread public acceptance of the primacy of this policy issue, as witnessed by the willingness of virtually every local political candidate and official to embrace this goal.”

[www.minneapolisfoundation.org](http://www.minneapolisfoundation.org)

## **Improving the Livability of the Vancouver Region Community Dialogue Series**

### ***Vancouver Foundation (British Columbia)***

In order to engage members of their grantmaking advisory committees and board, inform their grantmaking, and raise the Foundation’s profile, the Vancouver Foundation recently hosted a Community Dialogue Series. Each day of this four-day series was organized around trends that were identified earlier by a Foundation-sponsored demographer: Canada’s aging population; immigration vis-à-vis the country’s negative birth rate; the dichotomy between Canada’s urban and rural economies; and issues related to aboriginal (or “First Nation”) rights. The Simon Fraser University-Wosk Centre for Dialogue provided space and facilitation and the Vancouver Foundation, using unrestricted funds, paid for the series’ expenses.

[www.vancouverfoundation.bc.ca](http://www.vancouverfoundation.bc.ca)

## Foundation as Advocate— Engaged and at the Table

Increasingly, community foundations are investing staff time in direct engagement with decision-makers, neighborhood and business groups, and other parties interested in collaborating on ways to improve an area's quality of life. These foundations are making use of their positions in their respective communities as even-handed leaders that have the best interests of the entire community at heart when they engage in community planning processes initiated by local governments, residents, developers, or other parties.

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*Being engaged and at the table can range from speaking at public meetings where key decisions are scheduled to be made, to participating in the evolution of such decisions from inception to research, to debate at multiple boards or commissions and at the decision-making body.*

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Being engaged and at the table can range from speaking at public meetings where key decisions are scheduled to be made, to participating in the evolution of such decisions from inception to research, to debate at multiple boards or commissions and at the decision-making body. The staff resources that a community foundation invests in such endeavors can similarly range from a portion of existing foundation employee time to dedicating one or more staff members to engaging in policy discussions about local and regional growth. This staff investment is often—but not

always—accompanied by a budget to develop supplementary information and studies to assist decision-makers. Examples of this work include traffic studies that reveal the local and regional impacts of transit-oriented development, economic analyses to estimate the market for various types of development, and planning assistance to develop alternative codes and ordinances.

Initially, community foundations may be concerned about staff taking a position where important decisions regarding use of land and transportation investments are being made. Yet many have found that, due to the urgency of these issues and the effectiveness of participating in efforts to influence growth, these leadership activities have actually attracted donors and helped to fulfill the foundation's mission.

## **The Livable Communities Initiative: Advocating for Community Change**

### ***East Bay Community Foundation (San Francisco Bay Area)***

Since 1998, the East Bay Community Foundation's Livable Communities Initiative (LCI) has worked in six diverse communities throughout the Foundation's two-county service area. From neglected inner-city neighborhoods to sprawling outer-ring suburban cities to rural communities on the metropolitan fringe, LCI is committed to creating more equitable and sustainable growth patterns in all parts of the East Bay.

One of the hallmarks of LCI is its adaptability to the context in which it is working. In the city of Oakland's Uptown district, LCI plays one of the key roles of a community foundation—that of convener—by bringing together stakeholders groups. The movement is also working in Pleasanton—an outer-ring suburban community—to convert the largest office park in Northern California into a mixed-use, transit-oriented development. In Brentwood—a rapidly growing agricultural area—LCI is working with city staff, farmers, and residents to create mechanisms to preserve farmland while providing affordable farm worker housing.

Through these diverse efforts, LCI staff has discovered that they add the most value to East Bay growth challenges in the roles of convener, broker of technical assistance, educator, grantmaker and—most notably—advocate for the policies and projects that the Foundation believes will improve the quality of life for residents of the East Bay region. Outside foundations have provided 90 percent of LCI's initial funding. Staff members believe that building an internal donor base that supports this work is critical to the sustainability of the LCI, given the long-term commitment required to affect real change in land-use issues.

[www.eastbaycf.org](http://www.eastbaycf.org)

## **Foundation as Advocate**

### **Livable New Hampshire: Leading a New Statewide Movement**

#### ***New Hampshire Charitable Foundation***

The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation (NHCF) has become a key player in smart growth discussions throughout the state through its in-house Livable New Hampshire program. Livable New Hampshire coordinates and consolidates the Foundation's smart growth-related grantmaking and convening.

Through its convening work, NHCF has emerged as a key smart growth connector in the state. As a result, the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (DOT) has asked NHCF to play important roles on two major transportation projects. One involves convening and facilitating an advisory group of state opinion leaders to help the DOT use the state's first comprehensive long-range transportation plan to inspire better land-use planning. The Foundation also is working closely with DOT to develop a unique technical assistance program to help communities that will be impacted by a major highway widening project deal with increased growth from the project and to work better as a region to preserve quality of life.

**[www.nhcf.org](http://www.nhcf.org)**

### **Concerned About the Legal and Tax Implications of Influencing Public Policy?**

Community foundations, as leaders in a region, have powerful voices that can be used to articulate community needs and emphasize required public policy changes that can be more effective than any one grant or program. Public policy engagement is both a legal and ethical activity for community foundations. Organizations and resources are available to help navigate the types of advocacy and lobbying activities in which foundations can be legally involved:

- Council on Foundation's Community Foundation Program: [www.cof.org](http://www.cof.org)
- Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest (CLPI): [www.clpi.org](http://www.clpi.org)
- Alliance for Justice: [www.allianceforjustice.org](http://www.allianceforjustice.org)

## Foundation as Initiator

While the convener role is primarily targeted—in the initial stages—to constituencies that already have some familiarity with and connection to growth and development issues, some foundations also try to educate those who are less familiar with the relationships between development patterns and traffic, poverty, commerce, and Community foundations that are engaged and at the table participating in local planning processes are influencing how their communities grow. Many of these foundations are finding now that creating new issue-specific initiatives on aspects of the smart growth and livable communities agenda can accomplish much more than can the intermittent engagement of program staff in a number of ways.

By dedicating one or more foundation employees to such efforts, initiative staff can be fully engaged in local planning issues, leaving program staff to focus on grantmaking. Such personnel are sometimes former program officers, but many times have experience in the local planning realm and are well positioned to bring a higher profile to their new employer by working visibly in the community on development issues of importance. Community foundations that have made the decision to form an initiative often begin by developing an overall vision of what they want to accomplish so that they can allocate their time and financial resources more strategically. Such foundations can initiate needed planning activities, rather than being limited to participating in already established processes. Finally, staffed foundation initiatives have the time and vocabulary to seek and attract resources from private foundations, corporate donors, and grantmakers that specialize in growth and development issues. Many discover that these (sometimes high-profile) initiatives appeal to existing donors—or even bring in new ones—who favor a proactive approach.

Some community foundation initiatives advocate for issues that are important to their local neighborhoods and regions. In addition to funding advocacy work, these foundations speak publicly on behalf of particular projects, organize and encourage individuals to do the same, and engage directly in the development of public policy. Foundations involved in advocacy work have found that it often attracts donors who might not have otherwise supported the foundation's traditional efforts.

## ***Foundation as Initiator***

### **Using Indicators to Measure and Drive Change**

#### ***The Boston Foundation***

From input at a series of meetings with grantees in 1997, Boston Foundation staff began to see the connections between the disparate grants it was making to improve housing, health, transportation, and the environment. One of the common elements of the funded efforts was difficulty in measuring their impact. This was of interest to the Foundation, which had earlier taken on the challenge of developing neighborhood level data for planning and advocacy purposes and for tracking demographic changes between U.S. census cycles. Thus was born the Boston Indicators Project.

The data developed by the Indicators Project—which is managed and funded by The Boston Foundation—helps communities in the greater Boston area organize themselves strategically, especially around issues related to education. The Boston Foundation feels that educational equality is a key to smart growth, particularly to the extent that poor urban schools drive white flight, which, in turn, fuels suburban sprawl and urban disinvestment, thus reducing the resources available to inner-city schools.

A number of community foundations across the country are now adapting and adopting the Boston Indicators Project framework for thinking about citywide and regional change.

**[www.tbf.org](http://www.tbf.org)**

## **A Smart Growth Circuit Rider: Bringing Tools to Planners**

### ***Essex County Community Foundation (Massachusetts)***

Despite Essex County Community Foundation's youth (it was founded in 1998) and its relatively small endowment (\$5 million), the Foundation has proven that any community foundation—regardless of age or size—can serve as a catalyst for smart growth activity in its community.

The Foundation's Environmental Stewardship Initiative provides leadership in promoting smart growth in Essex County, which has no other organizations focusing on such issues. An example of the Initiative's proactive approach is their 2004 hiring of a "Smart Growth Circuit Rider"—a professional planner available to all 34 cities and towns in Essex County to offer hands-on technical assistance to planners, zoning boards, and town administrators. The Circuit Rider provides information, maps, model bylaws, and any other materials communities need to learn the principles and processes of making smart growth a reality in Essex County. Local communities have been so responsive that, in addition to one-on-one appointments, the Circuit Rider is now offering sub-regional meetings on common topics.

[www.eccf.org](http://www.eccf.org)

## **Helping Create a New Urbanist Downtown**

### ***Baton Rouge Area Foundation (Louisiana)***

In response to a decades-long trend of affluent residents abandoning their city for outlying suburbs, Baton Rouge Area Foundation brought in a lecturer from the Congress for the New Urbanism to make public presentations and meet with key civic leaders about the benefits of a vibrant, diverse, walkable downtown.

When the community embraced these concepts, the Foundation convened an advisory committee and hired the renowned architecture and town planning firm, Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company to lead a weeklong design **charrette**. The eventual outcome of the Foundation's education and convening efforts was Plan Baton Rouge: a downtown master plan—including follow-up work needed for implementation—funded by the Foundation and the state and local governments. To facilitate and monitor the implementation of the master plan, the Foundation also funded and houses the staff of Plan Baton Rouge. The Foundation first renovated an older building downtown for its own offices and now has built a 20,000 square foot "green" building for its permanent home in downtown. Widespread support for the plan has resulted in over \$500 million in new public, private and philanthropic investment in a broad spectrum of retail ventures, cultural amenities, and infrastructure improvements.

[www.braf.org](http://www.braf.org)

## ***Foundation as Initiator***

### **The GreenWays Initiative: Using Trails to Promote Green Ways of Living *Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan (Detroit)***

Using the publication, *A Vision for Southeast Michigan Greenways*—published by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy in 1998 and funded in part by the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan (CFSEM)—to help define the potential for what could be done on the ground in southeast Michigan, CFSEM announced a five-year, \$25 million GreenWays Initiative in 2001.

The GreenWays Initiative supports the planning, design, and construction of greenways, which are landscaped paths for walking and biking, technical assistance, and training for organizations and agencies responsible for greenways, and an improved understanding of the benefits of greenways. It encourages communities to plan and work together, thus ensuring the connectivity of the regional greenways network, shared benefits across jurisdictional lines, and the stimulation of a number of multi-jurisdictional partnerships that expand beyond joint grant applications to tackle common challenges.

Although the GreenWays Initiative is an initiative of the community foundation, all administrative costs of and grants made by the program come from funds raised expressly for the GreenWays Initiative.

[www.cfsem.org](http://www.cfsem.org)

## Bringing In Financial Resources

**C**ommunity foundations may not initially think that they have the financial resources required to independently bankroll either direct staff work or a long-term foundation initiative. As with other complex social problems, the effects of ill-planned development and sprawl require long-term investment in order to achieve desired outcomes, change, and results. Therefore, in addition to new knowledge, attracting new money may be instrumental as a community foundation proceeds to work on these issues.

Attracting grants from larger foundations and public agencies requires the investment of staff time and skill in using small grants to leverage larger ones. To be successful, rather than limit themselves to the livability issues that motivated them to enter this arena in the first place, community foundations should think broadly and strategically about connections to other issues that may make them eligible for a much wider range of outside grants. For instance, a foundation's efforts to have more housing affordable to area workers built may be appealing to corporate interests whose employees must commute long distances to find an affordable place to live. Public health grantors battling childhood obesity may be interested in partnering with a community foundation's efforts to make community design changes that encourage walking and/or bicycling. Funders that support the work of land trusts and conservation groups sometimes support projects that facilitate infill development.

Creating a foundation initiative can attract the attention of potential donors interested in enhancing community livability. Some foundations have found that such donors would not otherwise have considered contributing to their organizations. Others have found that working on environmental issues has brought a suite of new, younger donors to their door.

Bringing in requisite financial resources can be one of the most challenging aspects of engaging in livable communities work (due to the long-term perspective needed to garner the outcomes the movement seeks to achieve). Yet as foundations and others increase the visibility of community design, transportation choices, and other issues related to livability, new financial resources are emerging:

- ***Donor-Directed Funds:*** Increasingly, community foundations that dedicate unrestricted funds to growth and development issues are encouraging donors to do the same with donor-directed funds. By creating “philanthropic engagement officers,” foundations such as Peninsula Community Foundation (in the San Francisco Bay Area), The Minneapolis Foundation, The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, and others are cultivating and educating an active and informed donor base that understands the relationship between smarter growth patterns and the societal and environmental challenges in which they seek to invest, as well as other complex public policy issues.

- ***Other Prospective Donors in the Community:*** Individual philanthropists who may not be current donors to their local community foundation are likely to be familiar with the issues facing their community and may be more willing to support a specific growth-related effort or initiative than to give more generally to the foundation.

- ***National and International Philanthropic Resources:*** It is common for a community foundation to go beyond its region in search of financial support. For instance, a number of national and international foundations have funded community foundation initiatives throughout North America. If a foundation chooses to pursue such resources, it is important not to compete with nonprofit partners for the same funds (but rather, to complement one another’s efforts).

- ***Public Sector:*** Some municipalities and counties, most regions, and all state governments offer grants to address a variety of objectives. Community foundations also have been partners in projects funded with federal grants from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Energy, and other federal agencies. To find and apply for competitive grant opportunities from all federal grantmaking agencies, go to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Please note that it is important to be well-informed about both the rules and restrictions associated with being a grantee of the federal government (particularly regarding lobbying and financial and auditing rules).

- *Other Resources:* In addition to grants aimed at growth and development issues and challenges such as public health and housing affordability, there are many other resources available to entrepreneurial community foundations. For instance, the endowment for the South Florida National Parks Foundation was capitalized by a judge looking for an effective place to direct settlement funds from litigation over water pollution cases. Other foundations reduce costs by performing “back office” functions for nonprofit organizations with similar goals.

### **Models of Attracting Outside Financial Support**

*Berks County Community Foundation* (Pennsylvania) uses the \$5 million settlement from a local utility’s rate case to make grants that support energy conservation and environmental projects.

*Rochester Area Community Foundation* (New York) funds the Common Good Planning Center—a region-wide resource for information on sprawl—through an interested family supporting foundation.

*Santa Barbara Foundation* (California) has invested a portion of its corpus in a loan for a local affordable housing development, simultaneously achieving an adequate return on the financial investment and directly achieving a key goal for the Foundation.

*The Coastal Community Foundation of South Carolina* is the recipient of a Ford Foundation grant that it is using to improve property rights for the rural poor.

*The Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan’s* GreenWays Initiative secures private foundation grants and public sector funding to administer the program and to make grants for trail planning, design, construction, and the like. These funds, in turn, leverage federal and state funding to further support the project.

## Conclusion

There are many direct linkages between community growth and development patterns and the quality of life issues about which community foundations care most. Learning more about the smart growth and livable communities movement is but one way to address community concerns such as equity, jobs, open space, civic engagement, farmland preservation, transportation, education, aging, health, and children, youth and

families. This resource guide is designed to outline such linkages as well as offer resources available for community foundations to access tools and actions that can help them expand their understanding of how they can help assure their communities grow in ways that benefit everyone. For more information, please contact the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities.



Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities

[www.fundersnetwork.org](http://www.fundersnetwork.org)

1500 San Remo Avenue, Suite 249

Coral Gables, FL 33146

(305) 667-6350 phone

(305) 667-6355 fax

[info@fundersnetwork.org](mailto:info@fundersnetwork.org)

## Resources

### Resources to Help Build Better Communities

*American Planning Association (APA).* A nonprofit membership-based public interest and research organization committed to urban, suburban, regional, and rural planning ([www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org)). The Growing Smart Legislative Guidebook is a project of the APA that provides model statutes and guidance for smart growth planning ([www.planning.org/growingsmart](http://www.planning.org/growingsmart)).

*Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU).* A nationwide nonprofit organization that works with architects, developers, planners, and others involved in the creation of cities and towns, teaching them how to implement the principles of the New Urbanism ([www.cnu.org](http://www.cnu.org)).

*Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities.* A coalition of community and private foundations and other funders that provides resources to inform and strengthen philanthropic funders' efforts to advance social equity, create better economies, build livable communities, and protect and preserve natural resources ([www.fundersnetwork.org](http://www.fundersnetwork.org)).

*Smart Growth America (SGA).* A nationwide coalition of nearly 100 advocacy organizations that promotes farmland and open space protection, neighborhood revitalization, housing affordability, and more transportation choices ([www.smartgrowthamerica.com](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.com)). It is also developing a Smart Growth Leadership Institute that will offer training courses for elected and public officials and serve as a clearinghouse for best practices, case studies, and proven strategies ([www.smartgrowthamerica.com/SGLI.html](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.com/SGLI.html)).

*Urban Land Institute (ULI).* A nonprofit research and education organization of land-use and real estate professionals who are dedicated to creating better places and to providing responsible leadership in the use of land to enhance the total environment ([www.uli.org](http://www.uli.org)). It sponsors a separate website that consolidates its smart growth-related work and services ([www.smartgrowth.net](http://www.smartgrowth.net)).

## Resources

### Resources with Current News about Smart Growth and Livable Communities

*New Urban News.* A professional newsletter for planners, developers, architects, builders, public officials, and others interested in New Urbanism and smart growth ([www.newurbannews.com](http://www.newurbannews.com)).

*PLANetizen: The Planning and Development Network.* A web-based source of smart growth news taking place throughout the United States and Canada ([www.planetizen.com](http://www.planetizen.com)). PLANetizen offers a free electronic newsletter ([www.planetizen.com/forms/enewsletter.php](http://www.planetizen.com/forms/enewsletter.php)).

*Sustainable Communities Network.* A web-based organization that provides information on how to make communities more livable. Topics include living sustainably, creating community, growing a sustainable economy, protecting natural resources, smart growth, and governing community ([www.sustainable.org](http://www.sustainable.org)).

*U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Smart Growth Network.* A coalition of environmental groups, historic preservation organizations, professional organizations, developers, real estate interests, and government entities that, among other services, manages Smart Growth Online, a web-based catalogue of related news, events, information and resources to advance public understanding of smart growth and how growth can improve community livability ([www.smartgrowth.org](http://www.smartgrowth.org)). The Network offers a free weekly electronic newsletter ([www.smartgrowth.org/news/signup.asp](http://www.smartgrowth.org/news/signup.asp)).

## National Issue-Specific Organizations

*Enterprise Foundation.* The Enterprise Foundation and its 2,400 members work together to provide low-income people with affordable housing, safer streets, and access to jobs and child care ([www.enterprisefoundation.org](http://www.enterprisefoundation.org)).

*Growth Management Leadership Alliance (GMLA).* A network of leaders from state, provincial, and regional organizations in the United States and Canada that carry out programs to directly shape and implement smart growth policies and actions ([www.gmla.org](http://www.gmla.org)).

*Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC).* A national nonprofit intermediary that works with nonprofit community development corporations (CDCs) and their governmental and private sector partners to revitalize distressed communities ([www.liscnet.org](http://www.liscnet.org)).

*PolicyLink.* A national nonprofit research, communications, capacity building, and advocacy organization that works to advance a new generation of policies to achieve economic and social equity using the wisdom, voice, and experience of local constituencies ([www.policylink.org](http://www.policylink.org)).

*Reconnecting America.* Reconnecting America is a new national organization formed to link transportation networks and the communities they serve. It supports three major initiatives: Reconnecting America's Transportation Networks, the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, and Reconnecting Rural America ([www.reconnectingamerica.org](http://www.reconnectingamerica.org)).

*Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP).* A nationwide nonprofit coalition working to ensure safer communities and smarter transportation choices that enhance the economy, improve public health, promote social equity, and protect the environment ([www.stpp.org](http://www.stpp.org)).

## Resources

### Resources that Provide Tools that Help Illustrate Smart Growth Concepts

*The Orton Family Foundation.* A private foundation that provides communities struggling with rapid economic, social, and environmental change with the tools—primarily software-based—they need to engage residents in better land-use planning ([www.orton.org](http://www.orton.org)).

*PlaceMatters.com.* A national organization working to engage communities in planning their future using a combination of unique computer-aided visualization and modeling tools ([www.placematterstools.com](http://www.placematterstools.com)).

*U.S. Department of Energy's Smart Communities Network.* An annotated and linked menu of information and services on how communities can adopt sustainable development as a strategy for well-being ([www.sustainable.doe.gov](http://www.sustainable.doe.gov)). Features a sustainability toolkit that links users to tools for land use planning such as visual simulation and visual preference surveys ([www.sustainable.doe.gov/toolkit/landuse.shtml](http://www.sustainable.doe.gov/toolkit/landuse.shtml)).

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### Resources about Advocacy and Lobbying by Community Foundations

*Alliance for Justice (AFJ).* A national association of advocacy organizations working to advance the cause of justice, strengthen the public interest community's ability to influence public policy, and foster the next generation of advocates ([www.allianceforjustice.org](http://www.allianceforjustice.org)). The Alliance manages a Foundation Advocacy Initiative which educates grantmakers on their legal rights to support advocacy work ([www.allianceforjustice.org/foundation/index.html](http://www.allianceforjustice.org/foundation/index.html)).

*Charity Lobbying in the Public Interest (CLPI).* An organization that educates charities—including community foundations—about the important role lobbying can play in achieving their missions ([www.clpi.org](http://www.clpi.org)). For community foundations, visit [www.clpi.org/community\\_foundations.pdf](http://www.clpi.org/community_foundations.pdf).

*Council on Foundations (COF).* A worldwide membership organization of more than 2,000 grantmaking foundations and giving programs that provides leadership expertise, legal services, and networking opportunities to members and to the general public ([www.cof.org](http://www.cof.org)).

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### **Resources to Find Private Sources of Funding**

*Foundation Center.* A service that collects, organizes, and shares information on U.S. philanthropy and provides education and training on the grant-seeking process ([www.fdncenter.org](http://www.fdncenter.org)).

*Regional Associations of Grantmakers.* Nonprofit membership associations of private and community foundations, corporations, individuals and others committed to strengthening philanthropy in the geographic areas in which they operate, within the United States ([www.givingforum.org](http://www.givingforum.org)).

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### **Resources to Find Public Sources of Funding**

*Grants.gov.* A website that allows organizations to electronically find and apply for competitive grant opportunities from all federal grantmaking agencies ([www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)).

## Glossary of Terms

**Affordable housing.** Safe and sanitary shelter whose monthly rent or mortgage payment, including taxes, insurance, and utilities, does not exceed 30 percent of a household's gross annual income.

**Big box retail.** Retail development that typically occupies more than 50,000 square feet, with typical ranges between 90,000-200,000 square feet, that derives profits from high sales volumes rather than price mark up. Characterized by large windowless, single-story buildings with standardized facades, acres of parking, and site development lacking community or pedestrian amenities. Relies on auto-borne shoppers.

**Brownfield.** An industrial or commercial parcel that is abandoned or underused and often environmentally contaminated, especially one considered as a potential site for redevelopment.

**Charrette.** An intensive process involving a series of collaborative design and public input cycles for multiple, consecutive days. A central element of the charrette is the "design team," a multidisciplinary group of professionals that provide the necessary expertise to create a feasible plan that considers all relevant input.

**Community assessment.** Process whereby a neighborhood, town, or region is evaluated using an agreed-upon set of indicators.

**Density.** The average number of people, housing units, or structures per unit of land.

**Gentrification.** The impact of steadily rising housing prices as a result of neighborhood improvements, which can result in displacement of lower-income households.

**Greenbelt.** A ring of connected parks, farmland, and/or uncultivated land surrounding a community.

**Greenfield.** Undeveloped property, sometimes in agricultural use, located on the edges of or outside of existing urban areas that can be used for real estate development.

**Greyfield.** An obsolete or abandoned retail or commercial site, usually a shopping mall.

**Indicators.** A series of easily measured community attributes—such as school dropout rates, air quality, acres of urbanized land, and health insurance coverage—that are used to identify and monitor progress on various aspects of the health of a community.

**Infill.** The use of vacant land and property within a built-up area for new construction or redevelopment.

**Livability.** Quality of an area as perceived by residents, employers, and visitors, including safety and health, environmental conditions, quality of social interactions, opportunities for recreation and entertainment, aesthetics, and existence of cultural and environmental resources.

**Mixed-use.** Multiple land uses, such as residential, retail, and office, combined in a structure, on a single parcel of land, or built adjacent to one another on multiple parcels.

**New Urbanism.** International movement to restore existing urban centers and towns, reconfigure sprawling suburbs into communities of real neighborhoods and diverse districts, conserve natural environments, preserve historic structures, and create compact new towns and villages.

**NIMBY.** An acronym for “Not In My Backyard,” a term that describes people who oppose change in their neighborhood, sometimes regardless of the public good.

**Open space.** Undeveloped land or land that is used for recreation, including farmland and natural habitats (e.g., forests, fields, wetlands).

**Regional and neighborhood equity.** A learning and action framework designed to: a) reduce social and economic disparities among individuals, social groups, neighborhoods, and local jurisdictions within a metropolitan area; b) connect neighborhoods to regional and state public policy decision-making; and c) harness private markets opportunities for community benefits.

## Glossary

**Social capital.** The collective value of all “social networks” (who people know) and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other (“norms of reciprocity”).

**Smart growth.** A series of policies and practices that result in well-planned development that protects open space and farmland, revitalizes communities, keeps housing affordable, and provides transportation choices.

**Sprawl.** The unplanned spread of urban development into areas beyond the edges of a city. Sprawl defines patterns of urban growth that include large acreage of low-density residential development, rigid separation between residential and commercial uses, development in rural areas away from urban centers, strip commercial development along highways, and minimal support for non-motorized or alternative transportation.

**Sustainable development.** Development with the goal of preserving environmental quality, natural resources and livability for present and future generations. Sustainable initiatives work to ensure efficient use of resources.

**Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs).** A system that gives owners of undeveloped parcels in non-urbanized areas—usually working farmland or ranchland—the option of transferring their development rights to urban lands in exchange for financial payments. In return, the property owners accept deed restrictions protecting their land from development in perpetuity. When these rights are purchased, not transferred, these programs are known as PDRs.

**Transit-oriented development.** The development of housing, commercial space, services, and job opportunities in close proximity to public transportation.

**Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)/Urban limit line.** A politically-determined boundary beyond which a jurisdiction prohibits development.

**Walkability.** Ability of an area's residents, workers, and visitors to reach common destinations on foot in a short amount of time. Walkable communities mix land uses, build compactly, and provide safe and inviting pedestrian corridors.

**Workforce housing.** Single-family and multi-family housing that is decent and affordable to all of a community's local workers.

**Zoning.** Classification of land by a community into different areas and districts, each with stipulated restrictions pertaining to such attributes as allowable land uses, building placement and density.

