



1000 FRIENDS of Connecticut

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PRESERVING, CONSERVING AND GROWING SMART

TESTIMONY TO THE THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
FEBRAURY 9, 2009

Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian, members of the Appropriations Committee, good evening. My name is Heidi Green. I am president of the smart growth education and advocacy organization 1000 FRIENDS of Connecticut. It was my pleasure to serve as one of the three co-chairs of the economic development subgroup of the Smart Growth Working Group. The economic development subgroup met through much of 2008 to prioritize policies and compile recommendations to the General Assembly and the Governor on the economic development side of the smart growth agenda, including transportation and transit oriented development.

The extent of the economy's decline was becoming clear through the course of the subgroup's meetings and its recommendations are intended to aid the Appropriations Committee while you prioritize programs and investments for this biennium and into the future.

State resources are scarce and must be deployed rationally and with an eye toward keeping down costs in the short run and maximizing benefits over the long run. Toward that goal, I share the following transportation recommendations with you today.

First, the group recommended that the state adopt a definition of smart growth and revise state grant and bonding criteria to require smart growth principles for ranking projects, programs and investments.

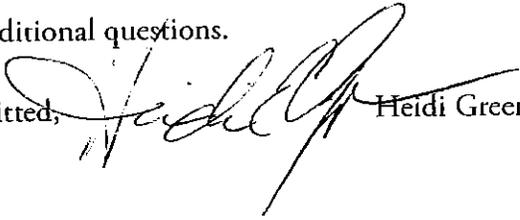
Accompanying this testimony, please find a recommended definition of *responsible growth* and a set of principles adopted unanimously by the Responsible Growth Task Force in early 2008. It is our recommendation that the programs that best comport with smart growth principles should be considered first for funding.

In addition, the group made the following recommendations specific to transportation:

- The state should prepare a capital plan for investment, including transportation investment. (The capital plan used in the State of Massachusetts provides a good model.)
- Mass transit and transit oriented development should receive the highest priority for state transportation capital and operating dollars.
- The Department of Transportation should provide adequate staff to expedite transit and transit oriented development projects.

1000 FRIENDS of Connecticut participated in drafting the CT Blueprint for Prosperity. Its report is available online at ctblueprint.org. Its transportation recommendations include adopting clear priorities for mass transit, improving rail service (frequency, speed, and reliability), upgrading our bus systems' quality and service, and increasing transit oriented development and affordable housing near transit.

Today, more than ever, Connecticut needs clear rankings for its programs and investments. And more than ever, we must have the plans, staff, and support for investments that help make Connecticut competitive, enhance our quality of life and our economic and environmental well-being. Transit and transit oriented development should get top-billing for the state's limited resources. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you. I am happy to address additional questions.

Respectfully Submitted,  Heidi Green, President, February 9, 2009.

Responsible Growth

Responsible growth is economic, social, and environmental development that uses land and resources in ways that enhance the long-term quality of life for Connecticut's current and future generations. Responsible growth supports a vibrant and resilient economy and preserves the natural resources upon both of which that quality of life depends. Responsible growth maximizes previous investments in existing infrastructure while preserving distinctive landscapes, historic structures, landmarks, and villages.

Responsible growth requires leadership and governance of the highest caliber to prioritize public decisions in a manner that maximizes the long-term benefits to the state's residents and communities. It demands a collaborative approach to analysis, decision-making, and evaluation between and among all levels of government to ensure consistency with integrated local, regional, and state-wide vision, plans, and strategies.

- Focus on Redevelopment
 - Redevelop First -- Encourage reuse and rehabilitation of existing infrastructure rather than the construction of new infrastructure in undeveloped areas.
 - Revitalize Connecticut's central cities to take advantage of existing infrastructure and their locations as centers of economic and cultural importance.
 - Give preference to redevelopment of brownfields, preservation, and reuse of historic structures and rehabilitation of existing housing and schools.
- Be Fair
 - Encourage interlocal cooperation.
 - Promote equitable sharing of the benefits and burdens of development and diminish the competition for revenue that biases land use decisions.
 - Provide technical and strategic support for inclusive community planning to ensure social, economic, and environmental justice.
 - Make regulatory and permitting processes for development clear, transparent, cost-effective, and oriented to encourage responsible growth and regional equity.
- Expand Housing Opportunities
 - Support the rehabilitation and construction of housing to meet the needs of all people regardless of abilities, income levels, and household types.
 - Coordinate the provision of housing with the location of jobs, transit, and services.
 - Promote a range of attainable housing choices that provides housing for people who work in the area and that leads to diverse communities.
- Concentrate Development

- Support development that is compact, conserves land, integrates uses, and fosters a sense of place.
- Revitalize and protect existing village centers.
- Create walkable districts in or adjacent to existing centers, making full use of existing buildings and infrastructure, and mixing commercial, civic, cultural, educational and recreational activities with open space and housing for diverse communities.
- **Provide Transportation Choice**
 - Concentrate development around transportation nodes and along major transportation corridors.
 - Increase access to transportation alternatives, in all communities, including public transit (with flexible schedules), bicycling, and walking.
 - Invest strategically in transportation infrastructure that decreases annual lane miles while increasing transit passenger miles traveled, and increases rail freight while decreasing road freight.
- **Conserve Natural Resources**
 - Reduce waste of water, energy, greenhouse gases, and materials, and increase our supply of renewable energy.
 - Expand land conservation efforts in appropriate areas.
 - Protect water resources.
 - Protect and restore biodiversity, environmentally sensitive lands, natural resources, food security, wildlife habitats, and cultural and historic landscapes.
 - Increase the quantity, quality, and accessibility of open space.
 - Lead by example and support conservation strategies, clean power, and innovative industries.
 - Construct and promote buildings and infrastructure that use land, energy, water, and materials efficiently.
- **Plan Regionally**
 - Support the development and implementation of local and regional plans that have broad public support and are consistent with statewide plans and with these principles.
 - Encourage development projects, land and water conservation, transportation and housing that have a regional or multi-community benefit.
 - Consider the long-term costs and benefits to the commonwealth of the state.

- **Increase Job Opportunities in Appropriate Locations**
 - Attract new and support the growth of existing businesses with meaningful, well-paying jobs in appropriate locations, preferably near housing, infrastructure, water, and transportation options.
 - Expand access to educational and entrepreneurial opportunities.
 - Strengthen sustainable production of goods and services.
 - Support economic development in industry clusters consistent with statewide, regional, and local plans.

