

# Osceola

## smart growth

### Definition: What is Smart Growth?

Smart Growth is a method of design and planning, as well as a general way of thinking about cities that is based upon traditional planning and design that most cities were based upon prior to the 1940s.

### What are the main principles?

The primary smart growth principles are:

1. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
2. Create walkable neighborhoods.
3. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration.
4. Foster distinctive, attractive communities, with a strong sense of place.
5. Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective.
6. Mix land uses.
7. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas.
8. Provide a variety of transportation choices.
9. Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities.
10. Take advantage of compact building design.

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

### Range of Housing Choices

With Smart Growth, residents get a wide variety of choices for living arrangements, even more so than current systems of design/planning. In multi-story buildings you also have the ability to allow people of various incomes to live next to one another. Historically, higher income levels would live in the same building as lower income levels. This allows for integration and diversity, which is vital for a community. People of all ages live within the same area and interact with one another regularly.

### Attractive Communities & Sense of Place

Another goal of smart growth is creating attractive communities. This seems like something every community strives for, but smart growth tries to focus in on making the community much more desirable. It also is intended to create a "Sense of Place", which simply means that people have an attachment to the place. These communities have a special relationship to everything around them, and also seem to have something special about them. These places make the people feel special. These places are highly desirable and easily identifiable.

### Mixed Land Uses

Mixed land uses is where buildings are typically multi-story. In smaller cities, they may only reach a maximum height of 3-5 stories. Mixed use also typically means that you will have multiple uses occurring within the same structure. You might have shops and restaurants at street-level, with residences and offices on the upper floors. This allows for the concentration needed for a vibrant community. Shops can be sustained, jobs localized and residents are close to where they can participate in community events and interact with one another.

### Variety of Transportation Choices

A variety of transportation choices is also important. Currently, most of the U.S. is based on one form of transportation, the automobile. This limitation means that in order to get almost anywhere, you must drive your car there. A good community is designed and planned such that one can use a variety of methods to get to their destination, these could be by walking, biking, riding a bus, driving etc..

### Development Concentrated

When you concentrate any development, you allow yourself the ability to grow even more. The combination of the smart growth principles not only allows a community to grow into a vibrant, thriving community, but it also allows it to keep growing. A community can keep it's land well utilized by controlling and directing development. A sprawling town quickly begins to lose its sense of community. Concentrating development keeps this sense of community and allows a community to remain self-sufficient and vibrant.

### Walkability

Walkability is usually based on a 5 walking distance (about a 1/4 mile). Based on smart growth, communities should be designed so that one can walk from their home to an active, vibrant center within 5 minutes. This is to help discourage the use of the automobile for short-distance travel. Sidewalks are wider and well kept, streets are narrower, traffic is slowed, street activity is encouraged, streetscaping is used to enhance the space.



### Preserve Open Space

Smart growth also allows the preservation of open space, often by hundreds of acres depending on the size of growth and development. In a typical modern planning situation, 10 acres could be lost to just 40 detached housing units. With smart growth, and by varying the type of housing, that would be greatly decreased, and you could have the same 40 units take up only 2-4 out of the 10 acres you would have taken up. In addition you would have the opportunity to make that extra land into community spaces... You would also have the advantage of being able to have retail nearby.



### Compact Building Design

Compact building design in Smart Growth is not about high density development. It is, rather, a focus on development that uses higher densities to make smart, planned decisions to benefit the community. A community can retain it's small-town, or even rural village feel while having some "higher density" buildings. Most towns and villages built before the 1940s were based upon this type of model. Focusing on a more compact design also allows the community to become as self-sustaining as possible, as communities that are sprawled out tend to be very unsustainable and not self-sufficient.



### Key Points

- Osceola and cities like it were once built upon Smart Growth-like principles.
- Osceola also is a city which desires to improve itself as a community.
- Osceola also desires to become more vibrant and active, which Smart Growth promotes.

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