

Smart Growth Strategy

What is Smart Growth?

Smart Growth refers to land use, development practices and the efficient use of tax dollars to enhance the quality of life, preservation of the natural environment, saving money over time by limiting costly urban sprawl, and creating more livable, vibrant neighbourhoods.

What is the City of Medicine Hat's Smart Growth Strategy?

The objective of the City's strategy is to build communities:

- that use [less energy](#),
- reduce the use of automobiles,
- consume less land and other natural resources,
- create a "walkable" environment, and
- provide a more vibrant place to live and work.

The strategy, which was adopted by City Council July 9, 2007, concentrates current planning efforts on three broad **Smart Growth principles**:

- **Encourage the design of compact, well-designed mixed-use neighbourhoods** - Residents can choose to live, work, shop and play in close proximity. People can easily access daily activities, walkability is encouraged, transit is viable, and local businesses are supported.
- **Support growth in existing residential communities while fostering unique neighbourhood identities** - Investments in infrastructure (such as roads and schools) are used more efficiently, and in-fill developments within these areas do not consume new land.
- **Foster alternative transportation options and infrastructure systems that are sustainable** - Green buildings, pedestrian and cyclist routes, as well as other ecologically-sensitive systems can save both money and the environment in the long run.

The [Planning, Building and Development Services department](#) will establish and implement appropriate development standards as well as an evaluation template for land development proposals that includes social, economic and environmental criteria for sustainability. As part of the implementation strategy, it is anticipated that the [Land and Properties department](#) will bring forward a development project that showcases Smart Growth principles.

A number of key Smart Growth opportunities for the City have been identified, including the "green infrastructure" of the river valley park system, the area redevelopment plans for the Downtown and surrounding inner city neighbourhoods, and the distinct advantage the City has as a major land developer to implement Smart Growth planning policies and develop sustainable communities.