



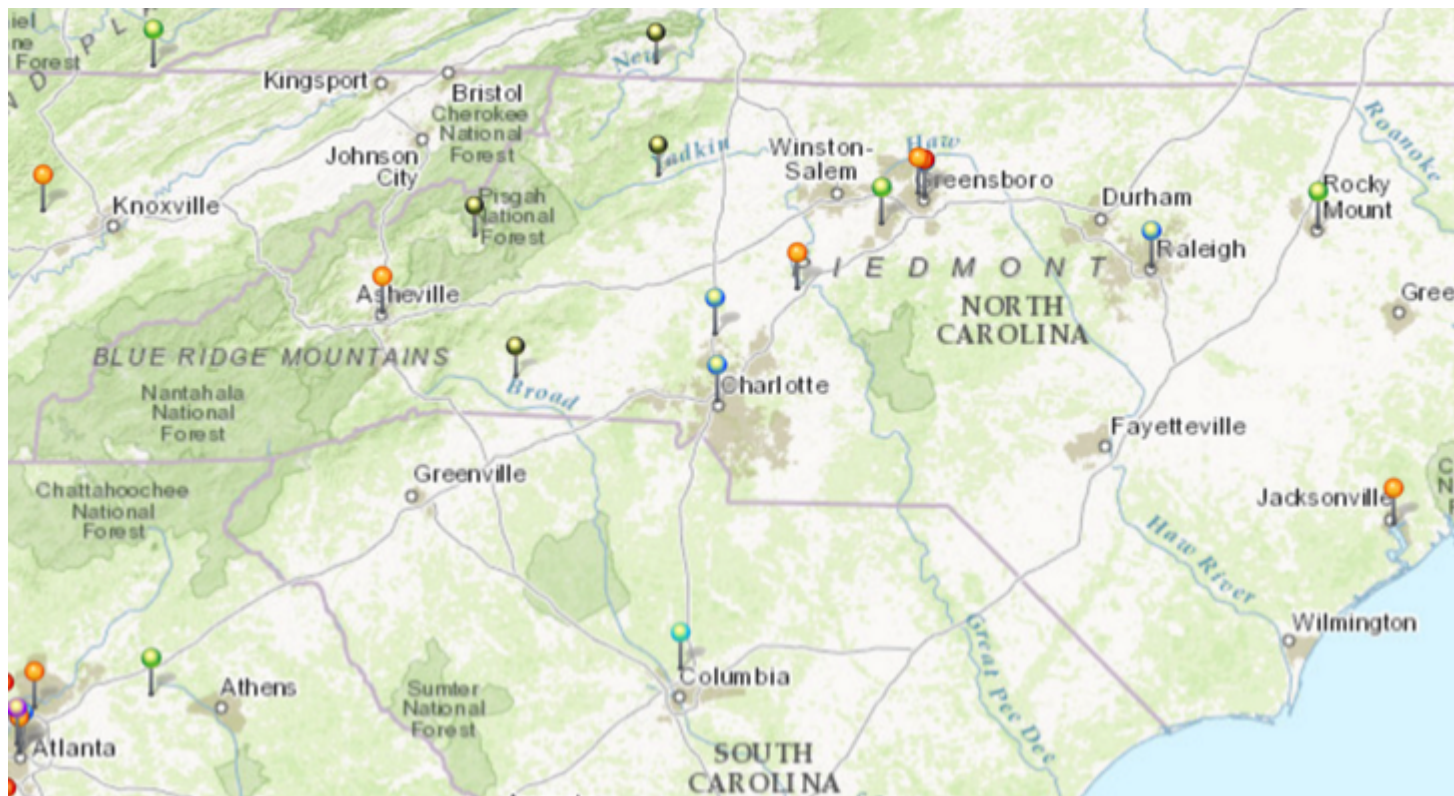
Community and Economic Development in North Carolina and Beyond Blog: The Smart Growth Program in North Carolina

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Article: <https://ced.sog.unc.edu/the-smart-growth-program-in-north-carolina/>

This entry was posted on November 23, 2016 and is filed under Community Development, Sustainable Development

In September, my colleague Glenn Barnes shared resources from EPA on “smart growth” economic development. This approach to economic develop helps protect human health and the natural environment, while making communities more attractive, economically stronger, and more socially diverse. Smart Growth can take many different forms, from planning and zoning ordinances, to green infrastructure plans, to farmland protection initiatives. While the Smart Growth Program has been successfully implemented in cities and towns throughout the country, it has also had an impact right here in North Carolina. What are our neighbors in NC doing to promote Smart Growth principles? Read on for two examples.



Map of projects receiving Smart Growth assistance in North Carolina. Source: <https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-growth-your-community>

Rocky Mount – Local Food, Local Places

Like many communities in North Carolina, the City of Rocky Mount is in transition. Once a hub for banking, textile and tobacco industries, the city has suffered high poverty and unemployment rates in recent years. In the face of these challenges, the community is focused on rejuvenating its economy by reconstructing its Main Street, revitalizing historic business districts, fostering arts and culture, and providing accesses to fresh and healthy food. In addition, by participating in the Local Foods, Local Places program, in 2015 Rocky Mount developed an action plan to create walkable, healthy, and



economically vibrant neighborhoods through the development of local food systems. The action plan is designed to help Rocky Mount take advantage of its strengths – such as its proximity to major metropolitan centers, dedicated local food advocates, and history of agriculture – to meet 4 major goals:

1. Increase coordination and ownership among organizations involved in growing the local food system in the Rocky Mount region.
2. Build community understanding of how institutional racism and other inequities affect the local food economy, and identify opportunities for systemic change to promote equity.
3. Identify a process for evaluating and selecting uses for city-owned sites and using vacant lands to support community-led efforts in neighborhood stabilization and individual empowerment.
4. Create opportunities for better health and economic opportunity through physical activity, healthy local foods, and new skills acquisition.

Learn more about Rocky Mount's Local Foods, Local Places program.

Camden County – Smart Growth Scorecard

Camden County is a small rural farming community in the northeast corner of the state. This rapidly growing county is home to bedroom communities for neighboring Hampton Roads, VA and Elizabeth City, NC, and much of its recent growth has been in the form of residential and small-scale commercial centers. The County is committed to managing future growth to preserve natural and cultural resources, maintain the rural character of the county, and to ensure the efficient provision of public services. The County partnered with the Smart Growth Leadership Institute to develop a Smart Growth Scorecard for proposed development projects and smart growth design parameters for proposed commercial areas. The scorecard and design parameters incorporate 10 principles of smart growth, including:

- Provide a variety of transportation options
- Mix land uses
- Create range of housing opportunities and choices
- Create walkable neighborhoods
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas
- Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities
- Take advantage of compact building design and efficient infrastructure design

Learn more about Camden County's approach to Smart Growth in its 2035 Comprehensive Plan, its Planning Influences and Opportunities Report, and this case study from the Smart Growth Leadership Institute.

Putting Smart Growth Principles Into Practice

If your community is ready to take the plunge into Smart Growth, but needs financial or technical assistance to do so, there are many awards and funding opportunities out there with due dates approaching. These include:

- National Conservation Innovation Grants: Applications due January 9, 2017
- Small-Scale Manufacturing and Placed-Based Economic Development Technical Assistance: Applications due January 6, 2017
- Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program: Proposals Due January 31, 2017
- WaterSMART: Water Recycling and Reuse Research: Proposals Due February 6, 2017
- See more opportunities on the Smart Growth Network website