

## **THE STATE OF SMART GROWTH**

Growth Management Initiatives in the U.S. in 2005

### ABSTRACT

The turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century seemed a promising time for smart growth, from coast to coast – in Oregon with its urban growth boundary, regional governance structure and light rail system, and in Maryland under Governor Paris Glendening, who channeled state infrastructure funding primarily to already developed areas in that fast-growing state. Growth management was at the top of the legislative agenda in Colorado. Citizens were participating in a process in Utah to chart future growth. In New Jersey, an ambitious – and controversial – map identified areas where development was to be encouraged, and areas where it would be prohibited. Democrats, including Michigan’s Jennifer Granholm, and Republicans, such as Governor Mitt Romney of Massachusetts, were both talking about the need to control sprawl.

By 2005, however, growth management programs across the country have come under fire, been dismantled or effectively abandoned. In Oregon, voters passed Measure 37 in the November, 2004 election, which required government to pay compensation to any landowner who could show a drop in property value associated with land use regulation. In Colorado, state budget woes overshadowed concerns about rapid growth, although voters in the Denver area recently passed a transit initiative. In North Carolina, the work of a high-profile study commission on growth and infrastructure sat on a shelf, and in Arizona, a coalition of environmental, business and real estate interests failed to pass consensus legislation after a growth-management ballot measure was defeated in 2000. Connecticut failed to act despite widespread civic support for better planning. A new Republican governor in Maryland dismantled the office of smart growth that Glendening established, and set out to sell state-owned land to developers. Even before New Jersey Governor James McGreevey resigned amid controversy, his anti-sprawl initiative was greeted coolly in the state Legislature, and developers immediately threatened lawsuits.

Washington, Michigan, Utah and Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Massachusetts, meanwhile, have stayed the course and taken action such as establishing “fix it first” policies, creating new formulas for funding infrastructure, or encouraging transit-oriented development. California, under Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, is considering sweeping smart growth legislation, while other states such as South Carolina have more targeted initiatives, such as changing school construction guidelines.

This research will provide a comprehensive and up-to-date report on growth management policies and programs, state by state, with special attention to the political and cultural contexts that lead to success or failure. Additional detail will include a state-by-state survey of zoning reform and the adoption of new zoning codes. The analysis will provide context for the efforts by the Office of Commonwealth Development, the Massachusetts Smart Growth Coalition, the Boston Society of Architects, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and The Boston Foundation to establish new policies on growth in Massachusetts.