



WASHINGTON SMART GROWTH ALLIANCE

Smart and Sustainable Growth Recognition Criteria

Various categories of recognition are available, at the jury's discretion, depending on the stage of the development proposal, the amount of detail available to the jury, the development's location and the extent to which the proposal addresses the housing needs of families with extremely low and low-to-moderate incomes.

- **Preliminary Recognition** recognizes proposals in their early stages and is based on the Preliminary Recognition Criteria set out below. Preliminary Recognition is intended to be used by the developer only to help obtain preliminary or concept approvals required by a local government when a project is at a planning and design stage where many specific details are largely unknown, have yet to be addressed, or are not yet specified, and only indicates that the Plan *conceptually* meets the Alliance's smart growth standards. If, as the project proceeds toward entitlement and approval, the developer elaborates upon the design and specifications in a manner consistent with smart growth principles and the Final Recognition Criteria, the development would likely be qualified for Final Recognition.
- **Final Recognition** must be based on detailed design and specification data and graphics, and indicates that the development meets the Alliance's criteria for Preliminary and Final Recognition and would, if built as planned, help the Washington region accommodate growth in a manner that achieves sustainable economic, environmental and quality-of-life objectives.
- **Exemplary Recognition** is granted to developments that meet the Exemplary as well as the Preliminary and Final Recognition Criteria. Exemplary developments will be those that surpass most or all local requirements. For developments located in local jurisdictions with the highest smart growth and sustainability requirements in the region, the jury may at its discretion accept only applications for Exemplary Recognition, in order to insure that the recognition program and its benefits (publicity, testimony, etc.) have the desired effect of enhancing the sustainability of development in the region.
- **Affordable Housing Distinction** is a special recognition of projects that go beyond local requirements for the provision of low income housing. Low wage working families earning less than 80%, but especially below 60% of area median income (AMI)

face the greatest housing cost burdens. The Washington Smart Growth Alliance will recognize those projects that distinguish themselves with providing for low income housing needs in our region, in addition to meeting our other criteria.

- **Workforce Housing Recognition** is a special category of recognition conferred jointly by the Washington Smart Growth Alliance and the ULI Terwilliger Center in Washington D.C. Recognized projects must have 10 percent of their residential units targeted for households with 60% to 120% of AMI (area median income). New construction and rehabilitation residential and mixed-use projects are eligible for consideration as long as they provide at least eight workforce housing units or the workforce housing units constitute more than 50 percent of the project. Special consideration is given to the proximity of the workforce housing to employment centers and/or transit nodes.

How to address the criteria

Each criterion below is accompanied by several questions. A preponderance of positive answers will be required to win recognition at a given level. However, a simple “yes” answer will not in most cases be a sufficient response. All positive answers should be accompanied by an explanation as to how the criteria will be met, with specific information and examples. Negative answers or issues of applicability may also be explained at the discretion of the applicant. If a question is clearly not applicable, a simple “N/A” will suffice.

Please note that the criteria for various categories of recognition may be cumulative or may overlap considerably.

Location

The development must be in an area designated and appropriate for growth or revitalization, most particularly for infill development or sites adjacent or close to developed residential or commercial areas. It should take advantage of existing or short-term planned public water and sewer service. It should, by its location (such as within walking, bicycle or transit accessibility for employees, residents, users or customers), reduce the number or length of trips required for developments of this nature.

Preliminary/Final Recognition/Workforce Housing

- Is the development in an area designated for growth, intensification, or revitalization by the local jurisdiction?
- Is the project a redevelopment or renovation on a site with previous development or significant disturbance?
- Is the site within or to be annexed to a city or town, or is it within a designated town center or village area, or will it effectively connect to a neighborhood, community, or town center?

- Is the development within a current or short-term planned public sewer and water service area, and when will it be serviced by public sewer and water?
- Does the development, based on location (such as within walking, bicycle or transit accessibility for employees, residents, users or customers), reduce the number or length of automobile trips required?
- Is the project on a designated brownfield? (EPA-designated means: Real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant, and also includes Brownfield Site as defined in Public Law 107-118 (H.R. 2869) - "Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act" signed into law January 11, 2002.)
- Does the project avoid greenfield sites (generally defined as previously undeveloped parcels in suburban or non-urban locations with limited existing infrastructure and development).
- Is the land disturbance on the site located at least 100 feet away from significant wetlands, outside of 100-year floodplains or sufficiently managed for flood potential, off of steep slopes, and not located within or adversely affecting the habitat for a threatened or endangered species?
- Does the project avoid prime farmland, or land previously used as public park land?

Exemplary Recognition

- Is the project located within ¼ mile radius of adequate existing or planned public transit service, or ½ mile radius from adequate existing or planned fixed rail? For this purpose public transit is adequate if it is fast, frequent, reliable, and comfortable, with a headway of 15 minutes or less.
- Is any residential component of the project located within ¼ mile of at least two, or ½ mile of at least four community and retail facilities? For this purpose, community facilities include such neighborhood-serving uses as: schools, libraries, childcare or daycare, health care facilities, assisted living facilities, community centers, houses of worship, family and human services, parks and recreation facilities, public safety, public buildings and transportation.
- Does the project have at least 50% percent of its perimeter bordering already existing development?

Density, Design, and Mix of Uses

These attributes of smart and sustainable growth development must be present, either within the proposed development or in the vicinity. That is, a development or an area must have sufficient density and scale to support a mix of uses and choices for mobility and access. The development should have overall moderate to high density. The design of the development should be of high quality, should respect the visual character of the surrounding area and be integrated into the existing community fabric. Although mixed-use developments are preferred, at a minimum, the project should add to the mix of interacting, highly-walkable uses in its surrounding area, for example, a mixed-income residential development located in close proximity to employment or retail centers.

Preliminary Recognition

- Will net density¹ exceed the density of the surrounding area?
- Is density sufficient to encourage mixed uses, walking, biking, use of civic spaces, increased public transportation, and the reduction of single-occupancy vehicle trips?
- Will the proposed land uses help to balance the jobs, housing, and services mix of the surrounding community, such as providing housing in a job-rich area?
- Will the development promote vertical integration of land uses, for example, housing above stores, or is there more than one use type in a single building?

Final Recognition/Workforce Housing Recognition

- Will a project located within ½ mile of a fixed-rail station be dense and varied enough (compared with existing uses in the adjacent area) to help the neighborhood support 12- to 18-hour activity?
- Will an infill development located farther than a half-mile from a fixed-rail station or town be dense and varied enough (compared with existing uses in the adjacent area) to enliven the area, support public transportation, and take advantage of existing public infrastructure?

¹ Net density represents the level of concentration (high or low) of buildings, including their total volume, within a given area, excluding land for streets, public playgrounds, and open space. Often expressed as a ratio, residential density is expressed as dwelling units/acre; nonresidential density is expressed as floor/area ratio (FAR).

- In suburban areas, will the residential density of the project or of expanding communities be high enough to support neighborhood-serving retail, employment, civic uses, and increased public transportation in the community, and does it allow for mixed uses?
- Will a project with a workforce housing component be located in close proximity to major employment or retail centers or to transit nodes accessible to residents? (Note this is similar to the previous item, but applies to any location, not just suburban, and also allows the applicant to specifically address this question more fully. DMW)
- In rural/village/small town areas, will density be sufficient to support and enhance existing development and use existing public infrastructure efficiently?
- The density guidelines in the table below are based on typical net densities for each development type shown in the table. These densities will guide the jury's evaluation.

Density Guidelines

Location	Residential Component	Employment Component
Urban areas; within ½ mile of fixed-rail station	Multifamily Exceeds 25 dwelling units per acre	2.5 FAR or greater Highest densities concentrated at rail station
Urban areas; farther than ½ mile from fixed-rail station	Single-family detached units: 6 single-family, detached units per acre if the project consists only of single-family homes; 7-8 single-family detached units per acre for a development with mixed housing types. 15 single-family, attached homes per acre 25 multifamily, attached units per acre	Exceed 1 FAR
Suburban areas	6-7 dwelling units per acre	Some exceed 0.5 FAR
Rural/village/small town area	4 or more dwelling units per acre	No density target

- Does the design demonstrate a competent response to the context of the immediate surroundings including pattern, massing, scale, materials, landscape elements and building arrangement among others?
- Are the architecture and landscape design responsive to local climate, topography, and building practice?
- Is the development organized as neighborhoods and districts, and integrated with the existing urban fabric?
- Does the design of public spaces provide pedestrian scale elements that improve the overall pedestrian access to and experience of the site, such as active spaces, signage, street furniture, lighting, plant materials, pathways, sidewalk scale and material, and sun and shade devices such as canopies and awnings, bus shelters, fountains and public art?
- Does the design discourage or avoid dead spaces and confusing or missing connectivity? Does the design avoid visible parking facilities, blank walls, monotonous materials or lack of variety? Does the design include windows, doorways, interaction between the interior and the sidewalk such as by indoor-outdoor restaurants, indoor-outdoor retail space, or porches at the street level frontage?
- Does the principal functional entry of each building have a front façade that faces public space such as a street, square, park, or plaza?
- Do civic buildings and public gathering places have distinctive form and important sites, due to their special role in establishing and enhancing community identity?
- Does the design use historic buildings in a manner that preserves their historic scale, materials and character?

Exemplary Recognition

- Do the streets, utilities, land use pattern and buildings anticipate future growth and changing nature of place, energy technology and environmental conditions?
- Does the design respond as appropriate to officially adopted development and design goals for the location?
- Do the buildings anticipate future adaptive re-use where appropriate? (For example, lobby could be designed for possible retail use in future; building's lighting or climate control systems could be replaced by more energy efficient technology in future.)

Transportation/Mobility/Accessibility

The development should be designed and programmed to offer alternatives to single occupancy vehicle trips, by offering or supporting transportation types and modes that do the most to enhance air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as providing safe and effective pedestrian and bicycle access to a full range of destinations, providing easy access to transit, and demonstrating that these modes will be encouraged.

Preliminary Recognition

- Will the project minimize street widths and off-street parking by using shared parking, on-street parking, and transportation demand management?
- Does the development, by its location and programming, encourage reverse commuting by transit?
- Do project streets fully connect with adjoining community streets?
- Will the development predominantly use structured, below-ground, interior surface or on-street parking?
- Is adequate existing or planned transit readily available? For this purpose, transit is adequate if it is fast, frequent, reliable, and comfortable, with a headway of 15 minutes or less.

Final Recognition/Workforce Housing Recognition

- Will the development use transportation demand management (TDM), on-site information services, and/or provide incentives for transit use?
- If the project is located within a half-mile of transit, will it reduce parking below normal local requirements or below market practices for these uses?
- Are there safe and direct pedestrian and bicycle access points, with wide sidewalks, bicycle lanes and well-marked crosswalks?
- Does the pedestrian/bicycle design include landscaped, lighted routes that connect to adjoining communities and neighborhoods and to other trail systems? Does bicycle parking exceed local standards? Describe.
- Will the development design support and encourage internal circulation and local pedestrian use (i.e., provide sidewalks between residences and other land uses, streetscaping, and traffic calming) and bike travel?

- Are the project's internal transportation connections linked (e.g., do they connect paths, sidewalks, or transit routes with each other?), and will its design and location enable the creation, extension, or improvement of additional public or private transit in the community?

Exemplary Recognition

- Is there preferred parking for low-emission vehicles, bicycles, and carpools?
- TDM Program: will the development provide an on-site manager to promote transit and alternative transportation for residents and workers? Will the project provide discounted transit passes to workers and residents, Smart Benefits, or pay any portion of transit use for building occupants? Will the development charge employees market rates or full cost for parking space use?
- Unbundling car parking: Are parking spaces rented or sold separately from residential units or commercial space?
- Are there dedicated rental car share locations? Are the car sharing vehicles also accessible to the public? Does the project provide free memberships and driving credits to the carsharing company?
- Is bicycle parking convenient, covered, attractive and secure which meet and exceed local standards? If project is commercial, are there shower and changing facilities? What is the ratio of bicycle parking to automobile parking provided?
- Are there attractive and safe stairways, ramps, and through-building accessways that are prominent public elements of the functionality of the buildings?
- Do buildings at Metro or other rail stations include prominent and easy internal connections to transit?
- Does the development provide at least three separate connections from the development to sidewalks or all-weather pathways in surrounding neighborhoods?

Environment

The development should reduce impacts on climate change, air quality, and water quality, and it should, as applicable, conserve or restore green infrastructure to support open space and ecosystem restoration goals. The project should be sensitive to existing environmental features and protect natural resources where feasible. Where possible, sustainable design features should be incorporated into the project's design.

Preliminary Recognition

- Will the development, by its location and design, help reduce air pollution, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and avoid disturbing or fragmenting important habitats or water resources?
- Will the development protect, or contribute to the protection of, wetlands, forests, agricultural lands, and aquifer recharge areas and sustain areas of unfragmented ecosystems?
- Will the project protect existing stream and river buffers or create new buffers?
- Will the development avoid disturbing steep (15 % or greater) slopes, highly erodible or unstable soils, and floodplains?
- Will the development's open-space areas be connected on and off-site to protect green infrastructure?
- Will the project protect or restore on-site habitat, particularly for threatened or endangered species?
- Will the project use low impact, environmentally sensitive site design, and infiltration and water re-use techniques to reduce stormwater runoff?

Final Recognition/Workforce Housing Recognition

- Does the project reduce stormwater runoff by providing for on-site water infiltration, retention and filtration, harvest and re-use, or staged release (in that order of preference)?
- Does the project employ a green (vegetated) roof?
- Does the development protect existing trees, sufficiently replace/reforest, or add trees to the urban tree canopy?
- Does the project incorporate sustainable site design techniques that will conserve water and energy, protect air quality, and protect open land?
- Has the owner registered this development or any of its phases under the USGBC LEED program?
 - If so, which rating system(s) and what level of certification is expected?
 - If not, is this development meeting or pursuing any additional green building certification programs?

Exemplary Recognition

- Will the development commit to achieving LEED Gold or Platinum certification?
- To what extent will the development reuse existing buildings or recycled materials?
- Will the development, through green building methods and materials, specify the use of green and healthy materials, finishes and energy and water conservation appliances and techniques?
- Will construction materials be sourced from countries or companies that meet climate, wood production and other sustainability goals?
- For a residential, school or community facility, does the development include gardens for local food production or a farmers' market?
- Does the development infiltrate, evapotranspire, or harvest and use the first inch of rainfall that falls in a 24-hour period?
- Does the development contribute to off-site stormwater retrofits or other stormwater reduction solutions within the same sub-watershed or watershed?
- Does the development minimize use of pesticides, fertilizers and potable water by planting indigenous, regionally adapted or drought-tolerant vegetation in natural areas and landscaping? Does the development avoid the use of invasive species?
- Will the development use construction practices that reduce erosion and sedimentation, preserve healthy soils, balance cut and fill, and minimize soil grading and transport?
- Will the development avoid disturbing or removing vegetation, except for the building footprint and for restoration activities?
- Does the development provide on-site or commit to purchase from renewable energy sources a total of at least 20% of the project's estimated electricity demand?
- Does the development use Energy Star-compliant and high-emissive roofing or a green (vegetated) roof for at least 35% of the roof area, or a combination of high-albedo and vegetated roof covering 50% of the roof area?

Affordable Housing / Affordable Housing Recognition Distinction

Affordable housing is generally defined as costing less than 30% of gross household income. For any residential component, a mix of homes affordable for people of all income levels should be encouraged. The following table shows estimates of annual income levels from Extremely Low to low based on current Area Median Income (AMI) limits for a family of four established by HUD for the Washington Metropolitan Area. For 2010, this AMI is \$103,500 (HUD).

Income Level	Definition	2010 Washington Metro
Extremely low income	Families/households earning at or below 30% AMI (for family of 4)	\$31,050
Very low income	Families/households earning at or below 50% AMI (family of 4)	\$51,750
Low income	Families/households earning at or below 80% AMI (family of 4)	\$64,400

Preliminary Recognition

- Will the development provide for-sale or rental homes targeting extremely low to moderate income households? If so, what income levels and/or price points will be targeted?

Final Recognition

- What percentage of housing affordable for the following (AMI) levels will be provided? What percent will be for-sale housing and what percent will be for rental? What are the respective price targets for each category?

Income Level	% affordable	% for sale	% rental	Price target
At or below 30% AMI				
At or below 50% AMI				
At or below 60% AMI				
At or below 80% AMI				
At or below 100% AMI				
At or below 120% AMI				

Exemplary Recognition

- Does the development provide 15% or more affordable housing, with the mix including at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of those units for income levels at 80% or below AMI?
- What proportion of new homes, if any, will be affordable to households earning:
 - 60% AMI or below?
 - 50% AMI or below?
 - 30% AMI or below?
- Based on projected jobs and employee income, will employees who work in the development be able to afford to live there?
- If this is a redevelopment project, will all existing affordable homes be replaced, serving the same or lower income households on site? Will the project displace households? Will relocation assistance provide displaced households with comparable housing costs and location?
- Are the affordable homes provided in excess of local inclusionary housing and affordable housing policies and practice for the jurisdiction in which this development is located? NOTE: The jury can recognize with distinction projects that exceed local policy and practice in providing housing affordable to low and extremely low income families.
- For any commercial portion of the development, will a local housing trust fund or comparable contribution be made that exceeds local requirements or practice?

Workforce Housing Recognition

Affordability

- Does the development provide 10% or more units targeting income levels associated with workforce housing (60% AMI -120% AMI)?

- What proportion of new homes, if any, will be affordable to households earning:
 - 120% - 100% AMI?
 - 100% - 80% AMI?
 - 80% - 60% AMI?

Innovation

Projects should demonstrate creativity and innovation such as the following, which represent examples, not an exhaustive list:

- Does the project employ creative initiatives to improve unit affordability to ensure long-term sustainability of workforce units?
- Does the proposal involve the resourceful use of land sites such as publicly owned land, brownfield sites, or conversion of land from other uses?
- Does the proposal demonstrate or implement employer/employee housing strategies?
- Does the development represent a partnership between public and private sectors?
- Does the proposal arrange for reduction of costs incurred by the residents, e.g., condo fees or homeowner association dues?
- Does the project incorporate energy-efficient materials and green building principles that help reduce long-term occupancy costs?
- Does the project integrate various income groups within the development? Does the project integrate the workforce units and market rate units into the same buildings without distinction?
- Does the development provide for innovating parking strategies such as space for car-sharing vehicles?

Community Benefits

The development should generate benefits for the surrounding area or the host community. These may include positive economic impacts, affordable homes, support for the school system, historic preservation and adaptive reuse, public access to parks or open

space, support for local efforts to encourage alternative transportation, contributions to the arts or community facilities, or other improvements to the quality of community life. A range of benefits should be considered.

Preliminary/Final Recognition/Workforce Housing Recognition

- Does the development offer the community a significant quality-of-life benefit such as a park, a school site or a civic structure?
- Does the development offer a significant benefit to the arts community by creating exhibition space, theaters, studios, or other usable arts features?
- Will the development help support or benefit existing schools?
- Will the development retain, restore, and incorporate existing historic structures and sites?
- Will the development retain or provide discounted space for local retailers?
- Will the project mitigate its impacts on surrounding less-dense neighborhoods? Explain.

Exemplary Recognition

- Will the development provide for retention or relocation of any displaced businesses or residents? What discounts or compensation will be offered?
- Based on its location, design and safe and convenient connectivity with the surrounding neighborhoods, would neighboring community residents feel welcome in the development, and would residents of the development feel welcome in the surrounding communities?
- Does the development offer safe walk and bicycle routes to schools?
- Does the development offer safe and convenient pedestrian access for seniors to taxi service, transit, nearby stores, community centers or other activities?
- Does the development provide major new public benefits identified by the local jurisdiction as a high priority for the area and site, e.g., a new Metro station entrance, new public park or parks, new street, new library, day care center?

Community Participation

The developer should encourage substantial community participation during the development process.

Preliminary Recognition

- Is the developer working responsibly with local groups to identify and resolve local concerns and needs? Please specify.
- Does the developer have a plan for ongoing community participation? Please specify.

Final Recognition/Workforce Housing Recognition

- Does the developer have written support, e.g., letters from community members and groups? If so, please provide copies.

Exemplary Recognition

- Has the developer engaged key stakeholders and the surrounding community in a planning charrette prior to design of the development?