

LESSON FIFTEEN

Core Learning Goal: 3

The student will demonstrate an understanding of geographic concepts and processes to examine the role of culture, technology, and the environment in the location and distribution of human activities throughout history.

Expectation: 1

The student will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship of cultural and physical geographic factors in the development of government policy.

Indicator 3.1.3

The student will analyze the roles and relationships of regions on the formation and implementation of government policy.

Assessment Limits:

? *International, national, **state, and/or regional interests** that may shape government policy.*

Overview:

This is a lesson on Maryland's Smart Growth Initiative and how different state regions (counties) might react to this policy.

Lesson Objectives:

Students will practice planning for the development of an area using the goals of Smart Growth as a guide.

Students will analyze how regions can affect government policies.

Materials:

Student Reading: ***Background Notes on Smart Growth***

Student Handout: ***Cooperative Group Assignment***

Recommended resources:

Maryland Department of Planning

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Maryland Dept. of Housing and Community Development

Maryland Department of Transportation

Maryland Dept. of Business and Economic Development

Useful website:

[Http://www.op.state.md.us/smartgrowth](http://www.op.state.md.us/smartgrowth)

Procedures:

1. Discuss a local situation (a new road, a new business, a new development, mass transit) that has affected the local community. Ask students to consider both the positive and negative impacts.
2. Introduce the goals of Smart Growth by distributing the student reading **Background Notes on Smart Growth**, or by reviewing these principles:
 - a. Mixed land uses;
 - b. Take advantage of existing community assets;
 - c. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices;
 - d. Foster “walkable”, close knit neighborhoods;
 - e. Promote distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place, including the rehabilitation and use of historic buildings;
 - f. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas;
 - g. Strengthen and encourage growth in existing communities;
 - h. Provide a variety of transportation choices;
 - i. Make cost-efficient development decisions predictable, fair, and cost-effective; and,
 - j. Encourage stakeholder and citizen participation in development decisions.
3. Divide students into groups and explain that they will be role-playing citizens who will recommend how an area should be developed following principles of Smart Growth. Distribute the handout **Cooperative Group Assignment** and review the directions for developing a recommendation.
4. Have each group present their plan. They should justify and support their choices. Conclude by discussing the pros/cons of Smart Growth.

Assessment of Indicator:

Have students answer this Brief Constructed Response item:

Maryland adopted anti-sprawl Smart Growth Initiatives in an attempt to save natural resources, to limit development to areas where infrastructure is already in place, and to save money. Some Maryland counties who do not have a sprawl problem might feel that the Smart Growth regulations are unfair to them.

- ? Do you agree or disagree with these counties? Explain.
- ? Should some regions be exempt from Maryland’s Smart Growth Initiatives? Why or why not?
- ? Include details and examples to support your answers.

Use the Social Studies Rubric to score student responses.

Background Notes on Smart Growth

In the past fifty years many regions in Maryland placed demands on state and local government to extend growth outward from areas already developed. This has involved building new and bigger roads, schools, sewage and water treatment plants, and providing for more fire and police protection. This sprawl has affected communication as well as transportation. The regions of Maryland have all been affected by this outward thrust, although the effects are as varied as the regions.

This growing migration from established neighborhoods in turn has left cities in decline while devouring Maryland's open space. To provide a better future for all the citizens, the State of Maryland (General Assembly and Governor) instituted Smart Growth initiatives in 1997. These initiatives build on previous efforts to promote growth while preserving and protecting valuable natural and cultural resources.

An additional factor affecting Maryland is that the population is projected to grow from five million to six million over this next twenty years.

Smart Growth has three straightforward goals:

- ? To save our most valuable remaining natural resources before they are forever lost
- ? To support existing communities and neighborhoods by targeting state resources to support development in areas where the infrastructure is already in place of planned to support it
- ? To save taxpayers millions of dollars in the unnecessary cost of building the infrastructure required to support sprawl.

Smart Growth is being carried out by local governments with assistance from the Maryland Office of Smart Growth and the Maryland Department of Planning. Development problems in different regions vary widely, but the goals of Smart Growth can help guide the different areas. For example, in Western Maryland or on the Eastern Shore, the issue might be realigning a highway segment. This action addresses concerns about safety, traffic, congestion and economic development in the area. In a suburban county, the issue may be a company wanting to build its headquarters in an area containing no commercial development and no infrastructure to support new development. In Baltimore City, the issue might be how to revive a brown area (one that may contain hazardous materials) and to encourage renewed development nearby.

This lesson was adapted from materials supplied by the State of Maryland and the Prince George's County Department of Planning.