



## Smart Growth Readiness Facilitated Assessment

Do you think you may be interested in having someone facilitate a Smart Growth Readiness Assessment for your community? The following information may help you decide. At the end is contact information to find out more information or to begin setting up a facilitated assessment should you choose to do so.

### Why a Facilitated Assessment?

The purpose of the facilitated Smart Growth Readiness Assessment is to help guide communities through an evaluation of growth in their community, an evaluation of the plans and implementation tools they currently use to guide growth, and an identification of tools that may better help communities produce a smart pattern of growth in the future.

### What to Expect from a Facilitator

A facilitator should provide the following services to the community or communities performing the assessment:

- An understanding of the Smart Growth Tenets, principles and examples of Smart Growth in practice.
- An understanding of or familiarity with local planning and zoning.
- An ability to guide a diverse group through the consensus-building process.
- Up to forty or more hours to devote to facilitating the assessment, likely over a one to three month period.

The role of a facilitator is to educate on Smart Growth Tenets, principles and practices, as well as to help shepherd the group through the scoring and analysis process. A facilitator will provide an overview of the ten Smart Growth Tenets, including a brief review of the recommendation of the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council that the Smart Growth tenets be implemented in Michigan.

The facilitator will then provide an overview of the SGRAT, including:

- How the assessment tool is structured
- How to gain access to the online assessment and associated resources.
- The recommended process by which communities should perform the self-assessment.
- How to best utilize the services of the facilitator.
- How to best utilize community documents and expertise.
- How to summarize the assessment results for communication within the community.

## When to Use a Facilitator

Communities need to decide whether they want to complete the assessment on their own, or with the help of a facilitator. A facilitator should be used:

- When those in the community wishing to do a Smart Growth assessment is not confident of their abilities to organize the task, are uncertain about the scope and processes involved in local planning, zoning and development decision making, or are unfamiliar with the terms related to those activities.
- When it may be politically helpful to have a land use professional guide the assessment process.
- When it may be politically helpful to have someone from outside the community, and presumably objective, guide the assessment process.

## Options for Facilitation

There are several options for how communities can structure a facilitated assessment. Communities will need to choose among the following:

- Who facilitates the assessment? The choices for facilitators includes:
  - Community staff or official, such as the staff Planner, Zoning Administrator, Clerk, Supervisor, Manager, or similar person with professional training or extensive local decision making experience.
  - University-related, trained facilitator, such as Michigan State University Extension Land Use Educators, MSU Land Use Area of Expertise Agents, staff of Planning & Zoning Center at MSU, or staff of Citizen Planner Program at MSU.
  - Planning staff person of the regional planning agency, such as the Planning and Development Region or Council of Governments.
  - Planning staff person of a nonprofit, such as a watershed council or regional land conservancy.
  - Private planning consultant or consulting firm.
- What type of communities will be involved in the assessment?
  - Individual community.
  - Two or three adjacent communities, such as one village or small city and one or two adjacent townships.
  - A county.
  - A metropolitan region that may cross county lines.

## Where to Go for Help

If a community needs help in selecting a facilitator, or a facilitator needs help with the process, go to one of the following:

- Planning & Zoning Center at MSU. (517) 432-2222 or [www.pzcenter.msu.edu](http://www.pzcenter.msu.edu)
- Citizen Planner Program. (517) 432-7600 or [www.citizenplanner.msu.edu](http://www.citizenplanner.msu.edu).