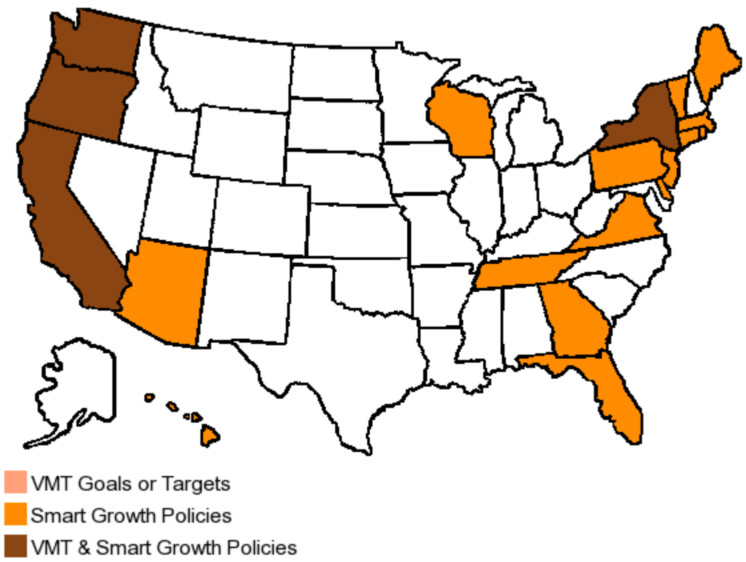
VMT-Related Policies and Incentives



Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) refers to the number of miles traveled by motor vehicles, usually measured per capita and per annum. Combined with initiatives to reduce the carbon content of fuels and to increase vehicle efficiency (see Climate TechBook: Transportation Overview), reducing the overall amount of driving (through carpooling, shifting to other transportation modes, or reducing the need for travel through more compact land development) is a crucial element to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the transportation sector. A number of states have enacted policies to curb the upward climb of VMT, which increased at an average rate of two percent per year from 1990 to 2007, and has only recently plateaued due to the impacts from the economic recession. Several of these policies address GHG emission reductions directly, while other ?Smart Growth? plans are designed to incentivize higher-density, compact, and mixed-use development. This type of development reduces the need for travel by putting housing, shopping and businesses within reasonable distances of each other. In many cases of Smart Growth planning, GHG emission reductions are a co-benefit to several other?often primary?goals, such as more convenient and accessible living or reducing sprawl into open spaces and agricultural lands. More recently, Smart Growth plans have designated GHG emission reductions as a primary goal.

Arizona

The Growing Smarter Act of 1998 and the Growing Smarter Plus Act of 2000 included comprehensive reforms of municipal, county and state land use planning and zoning laws and also provided for the acquisition and preservation of open spaces.

In 2007, Governor Janet Napolitano issued Executive Order 2007-05 Promoting Smarter Growth. EO 2007-05 created a Governor's Growth Cabinet to more effectively coordinate interagency spending and planning according to the principles outlined in the Growing Smarter Act. The state also has an Office of Smart Growth within the Department of Commerce and a Growth Cabinet Advisory Board.

California

On September 30, 2008, Governor Schwarzenegger signed SB 375, which directs the state Air Resources Board (ARB) to set regional caps reducing greenhouse gas emissions from automobiles and light trucks. The bill sets forth a ?Sustainable Communities Strategy,? which directs metropolitan planning organizations, in conjunction with the ARB, to examine land-use patterns and create long-term housing and transportation plans that can be used to achieve the regional caps.

The bill also provides incentives for initiatives under the Sustainable Communities Strategy. Projects in high-density areas with easy access to public transportation will be exempt from certain administrative requirements under the California Environmental Quality Act and will get priority for transportation funding. Similarly, traffic mitigation initiatives in accordance with the sustainable communities strategy will not be required to file certain traffic impact reports. Streamlining these processes is expected to encourage adherence to the Sustainable Communities Strategy.

Connecticut

Connecticut's Conservation and Development Plan outlines six growth management policies, including a strategy to concentrate development around existing transportation corridors and redevelop and revitalize areas with existing infrastructure. The state's Office of Policy and Management must prepare a plan of conservation and development on a recurring five-year cycle.

In 2008, the state Senate passed SB 39, establishing a Responsible Growth Cabinet to review ?regionally significant projects? and to ensure that all future development follows the six growth management principles in the Conservation and Development Plan.   SB 371 followed in 2009 mandating that regional planning organizations develop inter-municipal programs and work together in the planning process for transportation and land-use projects.

Delaware

Delaware began to update its comprehensive planning laws for local communities in 1995 with the Shaping Delaware's Future Act. In 2001, Governor Ruth Minner issued Executive Order 14, which created the ?Livable Delaware? initiative. The initiative includes legislation that provides funding and planning resources to municipalities for the development of comprehensive growth plans. As a part of Livable Delaware, a Governor's Advisory Council on Planning Coordination was established in 2001 and, through later legislation, allowed to develop a set of graduated impact fees to discourage sprawl.   Additionally, the Realty Transfer Tax for Conservation Trust Fund finances the stewardship of undeveloped lands in the state.

More Information

Florida

Florida first addressed growth management through two land use programs in 1972: the Environmental Land and Water Management Act and the Areas of Critical State Concern Statute. In 1985, Florida's legislature adopted the Growth Management Act, which requires all municipalities and counties to create local comprehensive plans. In 1986 a statewide Comprehensive Plan was adopted to outline goals for local action plans.

In 2008, Florida passed HB 7135, which directs metropolitan planning organizations to consider strategies that minimize greenhouse gas emissions in transportation and land use planning. Additionally, HB 697, which also passed in 2008, required that Local Government Comprehensive Plans must now include land use and traffic-related strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Florida Growth Planning and Comprehensive Management

Georgia

The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 required municipalities to submit comprehensive growth plans. In 2005, the Act was updated to include four planning levels: minimal, basic, intermediate, and advanced. Urban communities are held to the highest planning standard (advanced), while the standard for all other communities is determined by population size and growth rate

Hawaii

The State Land Use Law (1961) established ?land use districts,? as urban, rural, agricultural, and conservation. The Land Use Commission oversees the administration of the growth management legislation by determining district boundaries and approving new development projects.

Maine

Maine's 1987 Growth Management Act encourages growth in certain areas of the state and finances a system of public facilities to accommodate new development.   The Growth Management Act also encourages municipalities to develop comprehensive local growth plans that account for regional impacts.

The disbursement system for state funds gives preference to multi-municipal planning efforts that promote coordinated development planning among municipalities, counties, and regions.

The Community Preservation Act has goals that include natural resource management, economic well-being, and efficient public services.

Maine's State Planning Office

Massachusetts

In 1996, Governor William Weld issued Executive Order 385 ?Planning for Growth,? which spurred a number of new smart growth initiatives. In 2000, the Community Preservation Act was passed to support the preservation of open space. The state subsequently adopted Chapter 40R, the Smart Growth Zoning Law, which provides financial incentives for municipalities to increase density and build affordable housing in areas with good access to transit.

The Commonwealth Capital program, initiated in 2005, uses state funding as an incentive for municipalities to plan and regulate development in a manner that is consistent with the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles. The Sustainable Development Principles were established by the Office for Commonwealth Development created during Governor Mitt Romney's tenure. In 2009, new criteria for regional planning, environmental equity, and innovative transportation were added to the Commonwealth Capital Policy.

New Jersey

In early 2001 New Jersey adopted a broad "Development and Redevelopment Plan.? The Plan is projected to save as much as $2.3 billion in capital costs through the creation of smart growth policies, including restoring systems in distressed areas, maintaining existing infrastructure investments, and creating more compact settlement patterns.

The New Jersey Future in Transportation (FIT) program, run by the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) in partnership with the Office of Smart Growth (OSG) and other state agencies, is designed to integrate land use and transportation planning to limit sprawl and provide affordable transportation solutions. The NJDOT also runs the Transit Village program, which encourages growth in areas where infrastructure and public transit already exist. Additionally, the Mobility and Community Form Project offers a Mobility and Community Form Element that helps communities incorporate circulation and land use considerations into their development plans.

The 2008 Urban Transit Hub Tax Credit Act creates incentives for investment and job growth around urban transit hubs by offering a tax credit to businesses that are located within a half-mile of rail stations.

New York

VMT: Governor David Paterson signed Executive Order No. 2, on April 9, 2008. EO2 calls for a State Energy Plan that includes an assessment of traditional and alternative transportation measures, including reduced vehicle miles traveled, that will address energy, environmental, and health impacts of GHG emissions. Additionally, a 2008 report released by Governor Paterson's Renewable Energy Taskforce calls for 10% VMT reduction target in 10 years as a means of encouraging more energy-efficient transportation usage.

SMART GROWTH: A 2007 Executive Order from Governor Elliot Spitzer created a Smart Growth Cabinet within the State of New York. The Cabinet is composed of representatives from state agencies that cover growth and development, and has two central goals: 1) to ensure that state agency practices conform to Smart Growth principles; and 2) to develop a set of state policy initiatives that will help communities achieve Smart Growth on the local level. Governor Paterson also created a position of Director of Smart Growth within the Department of State.

Additionally, New York requires each municipality to create a comprehensive plan for local development. The plans are intended to address local considerations while also coordinating with surrounding municipalities and state agricultural districts.

Smart Growth Cabinent 2009 Policy Recommendations

Oregon

In 1973, Oregon established a strong statewide program for land use planning, which is maintained by the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development. The program was founded on 19 Statewide Planning Goals, each accompanied by suggested guidelines on how a community might achieve that goal.

The Oregon Transportation and Growth Management Program (TGM) is a joint program run by the Oregon Department of Transportation and Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development. TGM helps local governments provide more transportation choices and better integrate transportation and land use planning.

TGM 2007-2009 Biennial Report

On March 18, 2010 Oregon Governor Ted Kuglonoski signed Senate Bill 1059, legislation that lays the groundwork for smart, sustainable, and cost-effective transportation systems. Specifically, the new law directs the Oregon Transportation Commission, in consultation with metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), other state agencies, local governments and stakeholders, to develop a state-level strategy to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from transportation sources.

Pennsylvania

Under Governor Tom Ridge, Pennsylvania enacted a set of environmental initiatives in 1999 and 2000. The first, ?Growing Greener,? invested nearly $650 million for state environmental priorities. ?Growing Greener? was reauthorized in 2002, and ?Growing Greener II? passed in 2005 providing another $625 million of funding over six years. Of the $625 million, $50 million is allotted for investments in housing and mixed-use development projects, and another $217.5 million will go towards preserving natural areas and open spaces, improving state parks, and enhancing local recreational needs.

?Growing Smarter? followed the first ?Growing Greener? investment in 2000 and spurred an effort by Ridge's administration to control sprawl and encourage development in core communities. Through this initiative, the Governor also amended the Municipal Planning Code, and together these laws provide counties and municipalities with the tools to plan for economic growth and development while conserving urban and rural resources.

More Information on Pennsylvania's Smart Growth Policies

Rhode Island

In 1988, Rhode Island passed the Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act, which makes comprehensive planning mandatory for all cities and towns. The Impact Fee Act was passed in 2000 to ensure that existing tax payers are not financially burdened by new growth and that new development is accompanied by adequate facilities to support growth. In addition, Rhode Island updated its State Land Use Plan in 2006 to include policies discouraging urban sprawl.

Tennessee

Growth Management policy in Tennessee is governed by Public Charter 1101, the Growth Policy Act. PC 1101 provides a framework for growth policy by requiring that local governments develop and coordinate 20-year growth plans. Tennessee's approach provides resources and guidelines for community leaders to plan according to the needs of their area without imposing a statewide solution.

Vermont

Smart growth policy in Vermont was first enacted in 1970 with Act 250. The Act included a land capability and development plan along with a state land planning law. More robust measures followed in 1987 when Governor Madeline Kunin created a 12 member Commission on Vermont's Future to develop ?a new stimulus to plan for desirable and orderly growth.? The Commission held a series of public hearings to discuss the state's most pressing environmental and development issues, including the lack of effective growth management to protect natural resources and inflationary house prices with a lack of affordable housing.

In 1988, Vermont passed the Growth Management Act, which defined goals for the state, state agencies, regional planning commissions, and towns. A system of financial incentives encourages communities to adopt comprehensive plans that are consistent with statewide goals.

Vermont Department of Housing and Community Affairs, Planning Division

Virginia

Virginia's Planning, Subdivision of Land and Zoning Code (Title 15.2, Chapter 22) requires urban areas to create a ?comprehensive plan? that incorporates certain principles, including pedestrian-friendly road design, interconnection of new local streets with existing local streets and roads, connectivity of road and pedestrian networks, and mixed-use neighborhoods.

In 2008, Governor Tim Kaine through Executive Order 69 established the Sub-Cabinet on Community Investment to ensure that investment of state discretionary funds promote economically and environmentally sustainable communities. The Committee is chaired by the Secretary of Natural Resources and has three primary responsibilities: 1) promote the Governor's Principles of Sustainable Community Investment; 2) Ensure that state investments are directed to projects that are consistent with the principles and recommend new criteria for discretionary spending programs that affect development patterns; 3) Collaborate on initiatives that continue to better link land use with transportation and to conserve open space.

Washington

VMT: On March 13, 2008, Governor Christine Gregoire signed HB 2815, which directs the state's Department of Ecology to adopt statewide goals to reduce annual per capita vehicle miles traveled 18 percent by 2020, 30 percent by 2035, and 50 percent by 2050 relative to 1990 levels

Additionally, in November 2008, Washington's Department of Ecology released ?Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Increasing Transportation Choices for the Future,? which recommends several strategies for reducing vehicle miles traveled. Recommendations include expanded transit options; transportation pricing based on vehicle miles traveled; and toll policies that create incentives for purchasing lower-emission vehicles and alternatives to driving.

SMART GROWTH: Washington passed the Growth Management Act (GMA) in 1990, requiring that state and local governments identify and protect critical areas and natural resource lands, designate urban growth areas, and develop comprehensive plans to be implemented through investment and regulation. While the GMA establishes state goals, sets deadlines for compliance, and offers guidance for local comprehensive plans, the Act allows local government to have authority over the details of the actual plan. In 1991, the GMA was amended creating the Growth Management Hearings Boards, which oversee any allegations of non-compliance

Wisconsin

Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law, passed in 2000, facilitates communication that ?may lead to more informed decisions that result in smart growth.? The law requires public participation in a planning process and cohesion between city zoning and community comprehensive plans, and establishes criteria for comprehensive plans. The state provides municipalities with the necessary tools to create land use plans and also awards dividends to communities that adopt plans aligned with state standards.