



As we see it, **smart growth** like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder defying a definition upon which a majority can agree. The NSBRC suggests a word that better defines the challenge of extensive growth: **Sustainability**.

Sustaining human life at its most basic level requires clean air, potable water, food and shelter. Our humanity demands more of course: a positive sense of place, socialization opportunities, health care, waste removal, mobility, green space, cultural opportunities, recreation, and safety to name just a few of the elements that enrich our lives.

What can our community do, then, to ensure that our city can change but still be sustained not only with the basic needs for survival but also with a quality of life that brings contentment and nourishes the human spirit?

The answer lies in a heavily committed citizenry willing to seek and support intelligent leadership. We expect those whom we elect to develop land use regulations that balance sustaining the above listed needs of citizens with the rights of property owners.

For example, removing all trees on a property so that fill can be added, is not a sustaining action: trees clean the air; control flooding; recharge the aquifer; prevent soil erosion; ameliorate climate and thereby contribute to a city's sustainability. Land development regulations that forbid clear-cutting are protective of sustainability; property rights are protected by the city's facilitating the use of engineering and building designs that are both aesthetically appealing and protective of the environment.

Balance can be achieved. The good news is that other cities and indeed other countries have already figured out how to achieve this balance. We don't have to invent sustainable development; others already have provided us with great models. So how can we citizens assist in transitioning from old approaches to environmentally friendly ones?

- **Be informed:** Coalition volunteers report on all official meetings at City Hall. [Read these postings.](#) Know how your elected leaders are supporting sustainability.
- **Be engaged:**
  - ✓ Volunteer to serve on a City board or commission  
[Application for NSB City Board or Commission](#)
  - ✓ *become a Friend of the Coalition*  
<https://www.ournsb.org/join-us/>
  - ✓ become active in a civic organization.

**Act as though your quality of life depends upon involvement;  
In fact it does!**