



The Montana Smart Growth Coalition has created a quantitative checklist of criteria to determine if a development project is truly smart growth and deserves MSGC's support during permitting and marketing. A developer may use an MSGC endorsement for marketing purposes after the development is half built out. The checklist is available at www.mtsmartgrowth.org. For more information, contact Tim Davis at smartgrowth@mcn.net.

Montana Smart Growth Coalition's Urban and Suburban Neighborhood Development Endorsement Criteria

Below is the checklist MSGC uses to determine whether to endorse a development by rating each item from zero to five – zero if it does not meet the criteria in any way and five if it meets the criteria perfectly (more points can be awarded as noted). A project will not be rated for criteria that do not apply because the project is too small – MSGC will make the determination of which criteria do not apply to the project.

	Criteria	Score
1	The project is inside city limits (20 pts.), or will be served at an urban level of service (10 pts.) or in a designated county urban growth area (5 pts.).	
2	The project includes deed restricted or otherwise controlled affordable housing - 100% of units (15 pts.), 50% (10 pts.), 30% (5 pts.).	
3	Streets are organized in a connected network internally and are connected to existing or planned adjacent streets. Blocks are short (<400 feet). 15 pts. maximum	
4	There is a variety of housing density with higher density closer to the neighborhood center. The average net density is 8 units per acre or greater (10 pts.), or the average net density is between 8 units per acre and the average net density of the nearest city (5 pts.).	
5	Streets integrate all modes of transportation, with safe and comfortable sidewalks and pathways throughout. The project has transit access (or access is planned). 10 pts. Maximum	
6	There are a variety of housing types and sizes, which at least two distinct income levels can afford.	
7	There is a neighborhood center in the development or within 1/2 mile of all residents (may or may not be part of the project) with retail, office, public meeting space, and/or a park or other green space.	
8	Commercial buildings front directly on the sidewalk with parking to the side or rear,	
9	On-street parking is encouraged as a way to buffer pedestrians from traffic. Parking lots are generally located on the side of buildings or behind buildings and are screened from the street.	
10	The buildings use sustainable, energy-efficient materials, appliances, design, and/or orientation.	
11	Building setbacks are as shallow as possible, generally not more than one quarter of the lot width, with a maximum of 15 feet.	
12	Street trees, sidewalks, front porches, and front doors dominate the streetscape, not garage doors and driveways.	
13	Cul-de-sacs are avoided except where absolutely necessary due to natural conditions.	
14	Traffic-calming measures such as curb bulb-outs are incorporated.	
15	Roadways are relatively narrow (e.g., 29 feet from curb to curb for local residential streets) and parking is allowed on both sides of streets.	
16	Sidewalks are 4-5 feet wide and with a planting strip or >10 feet at the neighborhood center.	
17	Buildings front on to collectors. Street intersection design of collectors and arterials is sensitive to the surrounding land use and usable for all modes of transportation.	
18	Developers have attempted to meet with the neighborhood and have made a good faith effort to address reasonable concerns of neighbors.	
	TOTAL SCORE	

Additional points

MSGC staff is responsible for deciding if additional points shall be awarded to projects and the number of points to be awarded.

Additional points may be awarded for:

- 1-20 additional points may be awarded for projects that protect in perpetuity sensitive environmental lands, waters and other natural features that might be important to the community.
- 1-10 additional points may be awarded for unique or historic design of the development and its structure. In order to receive additional points for design, the design of the development shall enhance the community's character and may include traditional neighborhood design and/or innovative or historic features.

Total possible points - 135

Points needed to get an endorsement - 100

MSGC's Smart Growth Endorsement Process

Endorsement is a two-stage process involving a preliminary and a final endorsement. Developers who meet with MSGC staff earlier in the process are more likely to receive endorsement. By applying for endorsement, the developer agrees to meet with MSGC staff at a time and location that is convenient for both parties. MSGC reserves the right to withhold, withdraw or deny an endorsement for any reason including, but not limited to, changes made to the project during the public process that would have resulted in the project not being endorsed in the first place.

Conditions of Preliminary Endorsement:

- Preliminary endorsement may be made by MSGC staff before the development proposal is submitted for consideration by the governing body or its designated agent.
- MSGC shall consult with its member groups in the locale where the proposed development is located. MSGC shall not endorse a project if any of those member groups are opposed to the project or to the endorsement.
- If a proposal receives enough points and meets the conditions of this endorsement process, then the project may receive a preliminary endorsement. If a proposal receives a preliminary endorsement, MSGC will write a letter to the governing body or its designated agent stating MSGC's endorsement of the project and explaining the endorsement process.
- The developer shall sign an agreement as part of the preliminary endorsement process stating that he/she will not and may not use MSGC's preliminary endorsement as part of any marketing of the project.

Conditions of Final Endorsement

- MSGC may make a final endorsement of the project after the governing body has given final approval of the project, after infrastructure has been built, and after at least 1/3 of the project has been built out.
- Final endorsement must be approved by MSGC's board.
- Upon receiving final endorsement of a project, the developer may use MSGC's endorsement for marketing purposes.
- MSGC may award final endorsement for projects that had not previously received preliminary endorsement.

Montana Smart Growth Coalition is a project of the Sonoran Institute.

