Published on Axiom News (https://axiomnews.com)

Canadian group aims to educate decision-makers about Smart Growth

The Smart Growth Canada Network has set out to educate decision-makers about the principles and viability of smart growth.

Gloria Venczel, executive director of the organization, says they are targeting a broad range of decision-makers with an interest in town and city building. These could include municipal politicians, municipal administrators, consulting professionals, and policy analysts at various levels of government, among others.

"The idea is to create a certain level of awareness of smart growth principles in the public realm, outside of the professions that already work with such principles," says Venczel.

The Smart Growth Canada Network is offering ten modules of on-line courses based on the ten principles of smart growth. The principles range from preserving and enhancing green spaces and farmland to providing varied transportation options and infrastructure for walking, bicycling, and so on. Venczel notes that the modules are illustrated with case studies and lessons learned.

"There is a perceived risk of departing from business-as-usual practices, and if it can be demonstrated that other jurisdictions have successfully smart growth approaches, then that perception of risk can be mitigated," says Venczel.

The Smart Growth Canada Network was founded in 2003 with the vision "to help advance the implementation of smart growth and sustainability principles across the country," as stated on the SGCN Web site.

Besides the e-courses, the SGCN is also working on developing programs to link those who have already implemented smart growth solutions with those who would

wish to implement them.

"There is the potential to problem-solve similar issues and obstacles to the implementation of smart growth principles peer-to-peer," says Venczel. "The biggest barrier, as it has "been identified many times, to implementing smart growth principles, is the perceived risks of the unknowns and the lack of easy access to build examples."