Broward
Complete Streets
Initiative

POLICY SCAN
July 12, 2012

*Safer, Healthier Streets for **ALL** Users*

www.BrowardCompleteStreets.org

Broward Complete Streets Initiative Policy Scan:

In order to ensure Broward Complete Streets Guidelines are implemented throughout the County, it is critical to create a policy framework that helps cultivate an understanding and expedite the adoption of Complete Streets practices. Throughout the public engagement process for the Broward Complete Streets Initiative, residents articulated two steps as critical to realizing complete streets in their communities: 1) policies that enable and encourage a complete street approach to the design, construction and operation of local roads and 2) a shift in funding priorities that rewarded those projects that include complete streets elements.

Through a recently awarded Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) grant, the Transforming Our Community's Health (TOUCH) Initiative, the Broward Regional Health Planning Council (BRHPC) asked partners, including the Broward MPO, Urban Health Partnerships and Smart Growth Partnership, to create healthy and safe places in Broward County that support active lifestyles. As the regional transportation planning agency for Broward County, the Broward MPO developed Complete Streets Guidelines for use by all local governments.

As local jurisdictions begin the process of adopting the Broward Complete Streets Guidelines, they should remember that they have the power to create safer, healthier streets in their communities. National research indicates that by accommodating all transportation modes and all users in street design, construction and operations, local governments can significantly decrease traffic-related accidents, build social capital, increase economic development, improve environmental settings and dramatically increase quality of life. With a balanced infrastructure in place, pedestrians, bicyclists and public transportation users are given a higher priority and thus will grow their prominence on our public rights-of-way. A successful policy will help a local jurisdiction achieve these improvements, thus it is beneficial for all stakeholders to spend time developing a comprehensive framework in the beginning of the process to help drive effective practices in the long-term.

When researching model policies, dozens of models were available for review, but this scan pulls from several key resources, including:
- National Complete Street Coalition's (NCSC) Website www.completestreets.org,
- American Planning Association's "*Complete Streets Best Policy and Implementation Practices*" and "*From Pavement to Policy*" documents
- *National Policy* and the Legal Analysis Network (NPLAN) to Prevent Childhood Obesity's *"Model Local Ordinance on Complete Streets."*

While the research on Complete Streets policies is voluminous, the Broward Complete Streets Initiative team was fortunate to also receive preliminary guidance by two instructors at a recent Complete Streets Policy workshop in the City of Deerfield Beach.

At the Deerfield Beach training, the NCSC consultants distributed the attached "*Elements of an Ideal Complete Streets Policy*" as its guide. In an attempt to help local governments adopt successful policies, NCSC offered the following list of critical ingredients:

1. Sets a vision.
2. Includes all modes.
3. Applies to both new and retrofit projects.
4. Emphasizes connectivity.
5. Applies to all phases of all applicable projects.
6. Specifies and limits exceptions, with management approval required.
7. Uses latest design guidelines, is flexible.
8. Is context-sensitive. (Smart Growth policies can help achieve this objective)
9. Sets performance standards.
10. Includes implementation steps.

As this Policy Scan was conducted, it was clear that there are many parts of the country that have conducted their own "best practices" scan, facilitating the identification of which polices and approaches have withstood the test of time. Rather than re-inventing the wheel, this Policy Scan takes the lessons learned from other best practices assessments and combines it with primary research.

Depending on a local jurisdiction's Complete Streets Vision and the desires of its leadership, a spectrum of options to implement complete streets policies is available: 1) pass *a resolution* to indicate its support of complete streets (which serves as a precursor to policy change, but is not easily enforceable 2) *update the transportation element* in its comprehensive plan; 3) *update its street design manual* (which usually follows a resolution or an ordinance); 4) *pass an ordinance* directing changes within existing codes and standards and finally, 5) do all of the above *and* build in accountability measures that ensure a swift transition (by a multitude of local agencies) to complete streets practices. The San Diego Complete Streets Task Force developed the following matrix to show the pros and cons associated with the various approaches:

Table 1: Types of Complete Street Policies: Pros and Cons of Various Policy Options

Policy Type	Pros	Cons
City Council Resolution	• Quick and easy, sets the vision.	• Not comprehensive, may lack specificity and leave priorities, standards, and procedures and performance measures unchanged.
City Council Policy	• Can include most of the elements of an ideal policy.	• Possibly involves more steps, requiring longer preparation. • Not integrated with other policies with which it may conflict.
Ordinance	• Implements the vision and provides specific standards and procedures; has the force of law.	• More steps, requiring longer preparation. • May not have adequate policy support.

Internal Policy	• Quicker implementation. • Required buy-in from affected agencies provides education opportunity across departments and disciplines.	• Not necessarily anchored in official policy. • May lack accountability mechanism such as performance measures and regular reports.(Dependent upon key personnel for execution.)
General Plan Policy	• Ideal policy vehicle for creating a Complete Streets policy and exceptions to Level of Service. • The GP is the jurisdiction's "constitution". All other policies, zoning, and regulations must be consistent with the GP.	• General plan amendments can require a lengthy process. • Must be followed up with specific implementation steps.
Street Design Manual	• Provides specific design guidelines allowing flexible options for complete street features.	• May lack necessary policy underpinning, including priorities, design flexibility, maintenance and operation details, performance measures, and a reporting requirement.
Pedestrian/Bike Plans	• Provide specific improvements and/or a framework for additional improvements.	• Tend not to provide guidance for balancing pedestrian or bicycle accommodations with those for other modes.
Focused Plans (Specific Plans, Corridor Plans, etc.)	• Tailored to a particular geographic area and population. • Provide a pilot to test ideas. • Successful strategies can be adapted to other projects, but may require a design-exception approval process.	• Limits applicability to a small area. • May lack some key elements that apply to a citywide policy, such as flexibility and accountability.

Adapted from: Table 3-1 Pros and Cons of Various Policy Options, *From Policy to Pavement: Implementing Complete Streets in the San Diego Region*, San Diego Complete Streets Task Force, June 2012.

Regional Policies:

Representing 31 diverse jurisdictions, the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is required to consider the broad needs presented by a range of local government agencies. In an attempt to capture these varying needs, this Policy Scan will first feature agencies, similar in structure to the Broward MPO, to identify successful examples where an MPO or a regional planning agency has developed a model for its member jurisdictions. Two examples were identified that seemed applicable to the Broward MPO's efforts: the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), and the Mid-

Ohio Regional Planning Council (MORPC). While these agencies had similar outcomes, they each took a different path, as outlined below:

1) **Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG)** - In 2010, SACOG used the development of its 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan to express its support for Complete Streets. It "implemented a Community Design Funding Program that provides transportation dollars for Smart Growth developments that promote walking, bicycling and transit use. The plan also includes a Complete Streets strategy that provides technical guidance to local agencies and invests regional funds to build complete streets projects through designated and planned community activity centers. This ensured bicycles, pedestrians, and transit can share the road safely and compatibly with autos. Finally, the plan calls for equity funding for the maintenance of complete streets." (Analysis taken from the Maricopa Association of Governments Regional Council Complete Streets Guide, April 2011)

   To facilitate ongoing commitment and accountability, SACOG also established a "Complete Streets Coalition of Sacramento" that meets on a regular basis and offers guidance for walkability audits. By tying its federal funds to complete streets, SACOG employed an important incentive available to MPOs across the country. This approach could by adopted by the Broward MPO as it prepares to begin its 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). While Complete Streets is mentioned in the 2035 LRTP, the Broward MPO may want to take steps to specifically incorporate the Broward Complete Streets Guidelines into the 2040 LRTP. Furthermore, it may want to consider developing its own Complete Streets Coalition or Task Force, as several TAC members have indicated a desire to continue working on the Broward Complete Streets Initiative to ensure the implementation of the Guidelines.

2) **Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Council (MORPC)** - Using a more incremental approach, MORPC first adopted a Complete Streets Policy in April 2010. As a result, two member municipalities have adopted the Complete Streets policy and two other cities are in the process of adopting a similar policy. To support its regional policy it developed a "Complete Streets Checklist" as a way of encouraging its members to pursue Complete Streets elements when applying for federal transportation dollars. While this checklist is comprehensive in its review of candidate projects, it is so detailed that technical assistance may be required to answer some of the questions. As follow up, it developed a Complete Streets Toolkit this month, which is comparable to the Broward Complete Streets Guidelines.

   Should the Broward MPO want to take a similar path, it could develop a Complete Streets Checklist to reinforce the importance of Complete Streets with its members. The checklist is a type of performance measure which clearly outlines ways a local jurisdiction could incorporate Complete Streets elements into its transportation priorities. The toolkit is a more in-depth resource that, like the Broward Complete Street Guidelines, helps transportation professionals understand how to incorporate these new standards into their existing codes and regulations.

Municipal Policies:

The intent of the Broward Complete Streets Guidelines is to help facilitate the implementation of Complete Streets in Broward's 31 municipalities. Thus, this analysis also provides an overview of the broad range of implementation strategies other cities have used across the country.

Seattle, WA provides an example of an ordinance that includes broad directives and relies on the appropriate agencies for the specifics. Passed in 2007, the ordinance "directs the city's transportation department to implement Complete Streets in construction of all new streets and the retrofitting of existing streets." With this general direction, the Seattle Department of Transportation and the Department of Planning and Design were given the latitude to develop their own design guidelines. The Seattle Department of Transportation ultimately updated its Right of Way Improvements Manual to reflect the changes. This manual sends a strong message to all users of the street and instructs both private developers and public agencies how to design future corridors to accommodate all users.

Because the updating of the *Right Of Way Improvements Manual* was intensive lengthy process, management developed an internal policy to immediately seek Complete Streets elements wherever practicable and that it must have a written explanation of where it would be unable to produce a Complete Street on a resurfacing or construction project.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, the City of Charlotte started first with its Urban Street Design Guidelines (USDG) and included policy elements within the guidelines, stating, "By adopting the document entitled the USDG, the City Council declares that the Guidelines are the policy of the City of Charlotte." The document then lists the 12 steps the City of Charlotte is taking to adopt and implement Complete Streets. While this appears to be an efficient form of implementing the guidelines, behind-the-scenes work will be necessary to help staff understand the shift away from existing policies and into the new guidelines.

In an attempt to change the culture of an entire city, New York City released the "Sustainable Streets" Strategic Plan in Spring 2008. In this bold plan, it outlined very specific goals to achieve a more sustainable transportation system, with the overall mission of "Making the Nation's Safest Big City Even Safer." By including a comprehensive listing of its existing traffic statistics and audacious goals of changing not only the department's behaviors, but those of the traveling public, the NY Department of Transportation executed a targeted approach to a broad problem. In the end, the Sustainable Streets Strategic Plan probably increased buy-in dramatically by creating a readable document with the promise of measuring progress. Demonstrating their commitment to accountability, the Mayor and the Director of the New York Department of Transportation reported the Department's success to the public one year after the adoption of Sustainable Streets. While this method of introducing Complete Streets may be time intensive and heavily dependent upon the city's administration, it is a transparent method of bringing the public with you every step of the way.

In Florida, jurisdictions have taken a range of approaches to introduce the concept of Complete Streets to its public officials and residents. In 2010, West Palm Beach updated the Transportation Element of its Comprehensive Plan. It first identified Complete Streets in the principles of its vision:

> **"Develop Complete Streets:** The City shall promote the development of "Complete Streets" that are designed, built, and maintained in a manner that accommodates not only automobiles, but transit vehicles and non-motorized modes of travel such as pedestrians and bicyclists. "Complete Streets" shall seek to be aesthetically pleasing and provide for a comfortable environment for its different users."

The Comprehensive Plan subsequently identified supportive policies that could help advance the implementation of Complete Streets.   The update also includes some right-of-way set back standards, for specific streets and other mandates that will help advance Complete Street elements.

By inserting Complete Streets in a municipality's Comprehensive Plan, a municipality empowers staff to reference that "it's in the Comp Plan" when new projects are brought before the Planning and Zoning commissions or other agencies for review. Unfortunately, this broader approach sometimes leaves room for interpretation and thus can be challenging to enforce.

Despite this diverse array of implementing Complete Streets, the first step every local jurisdiction can begin with is adopting a resolution. Last year, Winter Park, Florida adopted a 4 page resolution not only stating why it was supportive of Complete Streets, but also outlining impacted policies and practices. Resolutions are an effective way of establishing a Vision with leaders and constituents and sending a message that a City intends to change its policies and practices. Because resolutions are non-binding, they can serve as a tool that can be used when a local jurisdiction isn't sure how others might receive a newer concept like Complete Streets. On the other hand, ordinances, because they are enforceable, carry more weight, but also can require more work to get passed.

In Broward, municipalities have a great opportunity through the Transforming Our Community's Health (TOUCH) grant focused on the adoption of Smart Growth policies. The Smart Growth Partnership is currently providing technical assistance to numerous cities in Broward County to help them realize "Smart Codes." These policies support walkable, livable communities with mixed-use development and Complete Streets Guidelines. Municipalities pursuing Smart Growth policies should consider using this effort as a way of incorporating Complete Streets policies into their codes.

By way of example, the City of Deerfield Beach and the City of North Lauderdale have taken this route by coupling the Smart Growth and Complete Street initiatives. Recently both cities passed resolutions (City of Deerfield Resolution 2011/184 and North Lauderdale Resolution March 2012) that stated their intent to pursue both Smart Growth and Complete Street policies. West Park and Pompano Beach also have adopted resolutions in support of smart growth policies that include developing Complete Streets. By September 2012, the Smart Growth Partnership will have worked with more than one third of

Broward's municipalities to make a commitment, by resolution, to support smart growth principles, which will further the next steps needed in implementing the Complete Street Guidelines. Furthermore, the City of Deerfield Beach has taken the next step in advancing Complete Street Guidelines by developing an interdepartmental team that meets monthly to plan for the adoption of the Complete Street Guidelines into its Comprehensive Plan and Engineering Standards.

County Policies:

Similarly, Martin County, FL also updated its [Comprehensive Plan in 2010](#) to reflect its desire to have Complete Streets:

"Policy 5.2A.14. Promote 'Complete Streets' to the extent feasible, the County shall promote and implement the concept of 'Complete Streets' that accommodate all users, including motorized vehicles, bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and riders, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities."

Since Martin County's Comprehensive Plan was updated to include Complete Streets, it has recently issued several promotional videos to encourage Complete Streets concepts to its residents. Counties contemplating this first step may want to consider a follow-up ordinance or update in the County's street design manual to help provide more guidance to those developing near or designing; constructing; and operating in county corridors.

Locally, Broward County adopted the: [Alternative Roadway Design Plan in 2008](#) which encouraged a shift from autocentric design to one that is more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. While the document does not specifically mention Complete Streets, it references numerous related concepts. If Broward County has received significant buy-in to these new design guidelines, it may want to consider trying to merge the new Broward Complete Streets Guidelines with the existing Alternative Roadway Design Plan. By building on the foundation established by the Alternative Guidelines, staff and consultants can incrementally incorporate the Complete Streets Guidelines into their policies and practices.

Another relevant County document, the 2007 [Countywide Community Design Guidebook,](#) states:

"The greatest potential for realizing the community goal of improving the overall quality of life in Broward County lies in connecting transportation with actual land use, and acknowledging that the key functions of the transportation corridor should include:"
- providing public space for wayfinding and exchange
- providing access to properties and land
- providing a route for multiple modes of transportation
- providing infrastructure for supporting services and utilities

From both documents, it is evident the County is placing a greater emphasis on alternative modes of transportation. The emphasis on Smart Growth concepts as they relate to the public right of way is

encouraging: complementary land use is critical to the success of any Complete Street. However, the County will want to reconcile the Guidelines with these previous efforts.

One approach that Broward County may consider was used by Lee County, FL, who formed a Complete Streets Interdepartmental team in 2010 and tasked it with updating its Comp Plan and preparing for the adoption of Complete Streets Guidelines. Citing the US Complete Streets Act of 2009, this interdepartmental team was responsible for saving the County $58.5 million by reprogramming five road-widening projects approved in the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan. Each was slated for four lanes, but was scaled back to two lanes with median and turn lanes, and cycling and walking facilities. (National Complete Streets Coalition, *Costs of Complete Streets: What We are Learning from State and Local Governments*). It should be noted that Lee County is in the process of adopting Complete Streets and is looking to the Broward Complete Street Guidelines as a potential tool for its municipalities.

At the regional level, the Broward MPO can provide a catalyst for local jurisdictions to begin considering Complete Streets guidelines by changing its current review process for competitive grants to include a priority ranking for projects that include Complete Streets Initiative. It is through this financial incentive that local jurisdictions will see the merits of quickly incorporating Complete Streets elements.

A Proposed Road Map to Adopting Complete Streets in Your Community

While several approaches were reviewed in this analysis, there is no silver bullet to implementation; rather, success lies in a multi-step, incremental approach. As mentioned above, any Complete Streets policy will be bolstered by incorporating land use considerations into its vision. The path below outlines steps, not content, to consider when implementing Complete Streets. Many resources cited in this Policy Scan provide model language for consideration when drafting a policy.
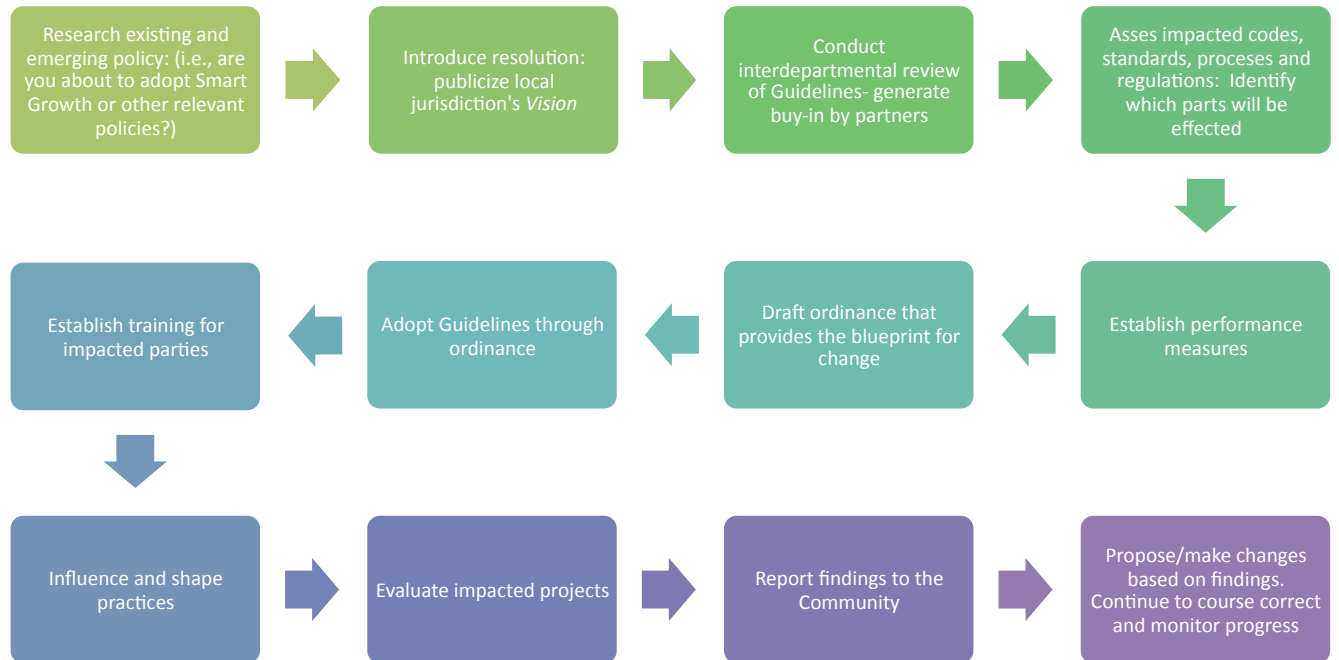
While this flow chart exemplifies the ideal path to achieving Complete Streets in one's community, it is understood that various jurisdictions may choose a different route due to mitigating circumstances. In this instance, it is recommended to anchor back to the *Vision* or resolution in each step that the local jurisdiction takes. The step of continually reminding your stakeholders of the *Vision* will help them understand why changes are necessary. Painting a *Vision* reminds partners and constituents that the short-term inconvenience of changing standards, code or regulations will have a long-term payoff for the entire community. Equally important to the Vision is a local jurisdiction's willingness to evaluate and report its findings to the community. A county or a municipality will want to be armed with data about the impact of the Complete Streets improvements rather than relying on anecdotes. Data should include safety and health measurements that include physical activity and crash statistics. To find sample language for a municipal Complete Streets ordinance, readers are encouraged to read National Policy & Legal Analysis Network's (NPLAN) "Model Local Ordinance on Complete Streets."

In conclusion, it is clear that depending on a jurisdiction's goals and objectives, the path to achieving Complete Streets will vary. The Broward MPO has the ability to provide the foundation for Complete Streets policies and the incentives to warrant the implementation of Complete Streets. However, it will be up to the local government to take the appropriate steps to change its current and future practices to accommodate all modes of transportation for users of all ages and abilities. If local jurisdictions want to expedite the implementation of Complete Streets, they will want to choose a path that is enforceable, but also that includes incentives for buy-in. Establishing a Vision is a great start, but may not be realized if it is left as a standalone document.

Interested parties are encouraged to review the highlighted sources in this document, which can be accessed by clicking on the blue links within the report; a list of resources is also available at the end of this document.

Resources:

- National Complete Streets Coalition. *National Complete Street Coalition Website*. Available at: www.completestreets.org

- National Complete Streets Coalition. *Complete Streets Atlas*. Available at: http://www.completestreets.org/complete-streets-fundamentals/complete-streets-atlas/

- American Planning Association. *Complete Streets Best Policy and Implementation Practices.* Available at: *http://urbanhs.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Best-CS-Policy-and-Implementation-Practices.pdf*

- American Planning Association California Chapter. *From Pavement to Policy.* Available at: *http://sdapa.org/go/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Policy_to_Pavement_low_res.pdf*

- American Planning Association. *National Policy.* Available at: *www.planning.org*

- Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN). *Model Local Ordinance on Complete Streets.* Available at: *https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ny5x8AGZQ3bAmWX_N490kH-LJxlJiF5EnDQP5UCQ0Bw/preview?pli=1*

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- San Diego Complete Streets Task Force. (2012, June). *From Policy to Pavement: Implementing Complete Streets in the San Diego Region. http://sdapa.org/go/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Policy_to_Pavement_low_res.pdf*

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- Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Council (MORPC). (2011). *Complete Streets Checklist.* Available at: http://www.morpc.org/trans/CompleteStreets_MORPC_CS_ChecklistFINAL2010-03-31WithAppendices.pdf

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- City of Seattle, Legislative Department. *Ordinance 122386.* Available at: http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~archives/Ordinances/Ord_122386.pdf

- Seattle Department of Transportation. *Right of Way Improvements Manual.* Available at: http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/rowmanual/

- City of Charlotte. *Urban Street Design Guidelines*. Available at: http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/Transportation/PlansProjects/Documents/USDG Full Document small.pdf

- New York City. (2008). *"Sustainable Streets" strategic plan.* Available at: http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/stratplan_compplan.pdf

- West Palm Beach. (2010). *Transportation Element.* Available at: http://www.cityofwpb.com/plan/CompPlan/3 Transportation Element Final.pdf

- Winter Park, Florida. *Resolution 2083-11.* Available at: https://www.cityofwinterpark.org/Docs/Government/ordinances/2083-11.pdf

- City of Deerfield Beach. (2011, October). *Resolution No. 2011/184.* Available at: http://urbanhs.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Smart-Growth-Assistance-Resolution.pdf

- City of North Lauderdale. (2012, March). *Resolution Supporting Smart Growth and Complete Street Principles.* Available at: http://urbanhs.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/northlauderdaleRESO___Smart_Growth.pdf

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