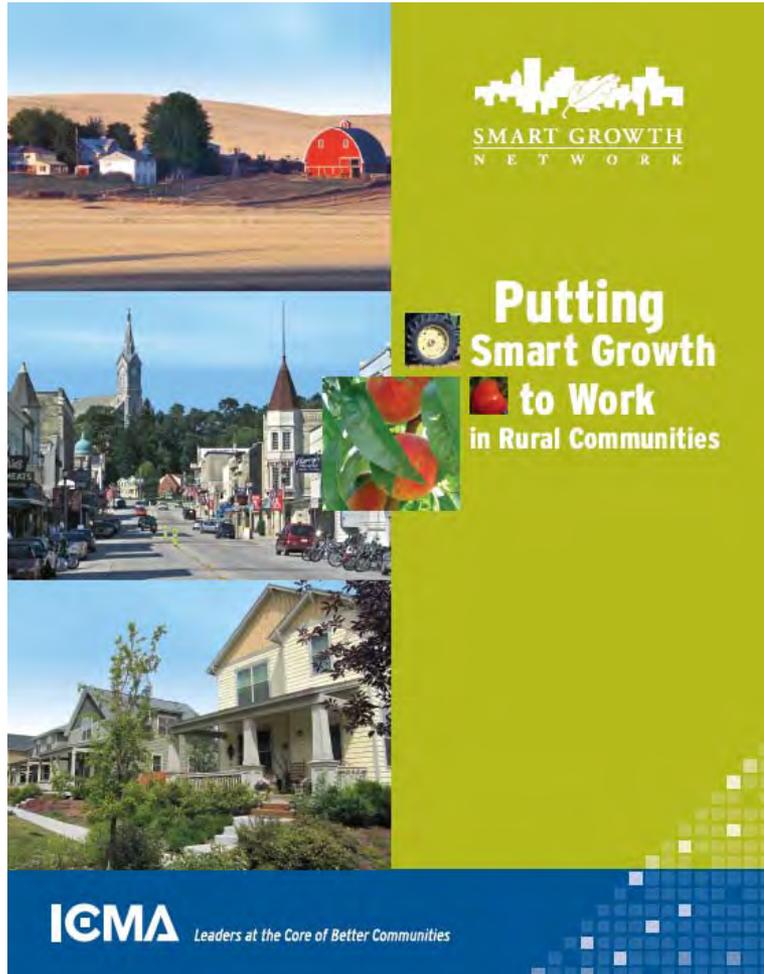


A New Publication:

Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities



- Partnership between the U.S. EPA and ICMA – a Smart Growth Network publication
- Lays out a framework for rural communities and small towns seeking to implement smart growth
- Set of tools, case studies, and resources

How to Grow and Maintain Rural Character: Three Broad Goals

- 1. Support the rural landscape** by creating an economic climate that enhances the viability of working lands and conserves natural lands.
- 2. Help existing places thrive** by taking care of assets and investments such as downtowns, Main Streets, existing infrastructure, and places that the community values.
- 3. Create great new places** by building vibrant, enduring neighborhoods and communities that people, especially young people, don't want to leave.





Smart growth in a rural community: How could it work in the landscape?

1. Support the Rural Landscape



- Creating an economic climate that enhances the viability of working lands and conserves natural lands is the first step
- Strategies, tools and policies that support this goal include:
 - Right to Farm policies
 - Agricultural zoning
 - Renewable energy development



Country Store in Vermont



Peach Farm in Delaware



Wind Turbines in Iowa

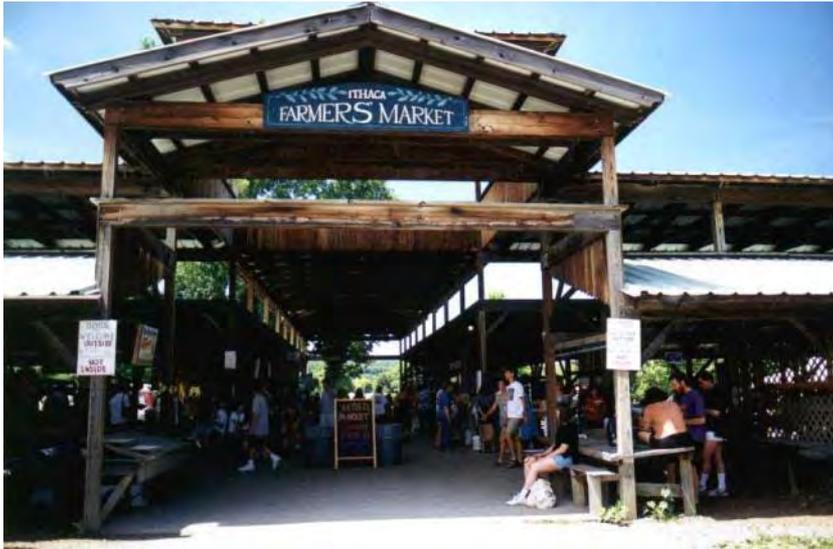
Strategies, Tools, and Policies



GOAL 1: SUPPORT THE RURAL LANDSCAPE

Strategy	Tools & Policies	
1.a. Ensure the viability of the resource economy in the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use value taxation• Tax credits for conservation• Right to farm policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Renewable energy development• Value-added farm and forest products processing• Ecosystem services markets
1.b. Cultivate economic development strategies that rely on traditional rural landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purchase of development rights• Conservation easements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fee simple acquisition• Agritourism and ecotourism
1.c. Promote rural products in urban areas and support other urban-rural links	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct marketing to consumers• Government purchase of local products	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Buy local” campaigns
1.d. Link rural land preservation strategies to great neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transfer of development rights• Priority funding areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agricultural, ranching, or forestry zoning• Rural home clustering

Supporting the Rural Landscape: Direct Marketing of Rural Products



- Communities can help support the rural economy by promoting rural products in urban areas, like this Farmers' Market in Ithaca, NY.
- Other strategies include:
 - Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
 - Agritourism
 - Value-added farm and forest products processing

Supporting the Rural Landscape: TDR and Priority Funding Areas



Farm in Montgomery County, Maryland



Silver Spring, Maryland

- **Transfer of development rights policies and priority funding areas can direct growth to desired locations while protecting important working and natural lands, like in Montgomery County, Maryland (pictured here).**

Supporting the Rural Landscape: Investing in the Farm Economy



- **Yolo County, California is a largely agricultural county on the edge of a major metro area, important for local and state agricultural economy.**
- **Pursued farmland preservation through:**
 - Marketing of locally grown and organic produce (“Capay Valley Grown”)
 - Right to farm ordinance
 - Land trust involvement in conservation efforts



2. Help Existing Places Thrive



- **Communities can help their downtowns, Main Streets, and other existing places to thrive through:**

- Fix-it first policies
- Rehabilitating existing structures, like schools
- Incentives to encourage infill and brownfield redevelopment
- Updated zoning ordinances and development codes that support compact, walkable development



Strategies, Tools, and Policies



GOAL 2: HELP EXISTING PLACES THRIVE

Strategy	Tools & Policies	
2.a. Invest public and private funds in existing places	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fix-it-first• Historic Preservation and the Main Street Approach• Parks and natural resource areas as destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Streets and streetscape improvements• Targeted new development
2.b. Encourage private sector investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Infill development incentives• Overcoming barriers to infill	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Redevelopment readiness certification• Split-rate tax
2.c. Build on past community investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adaptive reuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School rehabilitation
2.d. Foster economic development in existing downtowns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local business survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business recognition program

Helping Existing Places Thrive: Historic Preservation



- **Renovating existing buildings, like the James Dean House in Rosemont, New Jersey, can help preserve a community's historic assets.**

Helping Existing Places Thrive: Streetscape Improvements



Before



After



● **Future Scenario**

Victor, Idaho



3. Create Great New Places



- When building new neighborhoods, they should be vibrant, enduring places where people want to live.
- Strategies, tools, and policies that can help create great new places include:
 - Community visioning and policy alignment
 - Designating growth areas and areas for preservation
 - Recognizing developers that build great places



Keene, New Hampshire

Strategies, Tools, and Policies



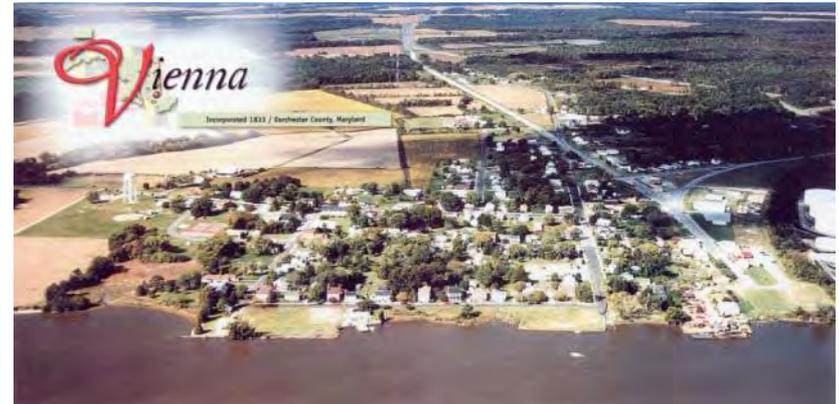
GOAL 3: CREATE GREAT NEW PLACES

Strategy	Tools & Policies	
3.a. Update strategic and policy documents to accommodate new growth through compact and contiguous development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visioning• Places worth preserving• Designated growth areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Infrastructure grid and transportation options• Distinctive local character
3.b. Reform policies to make it easy for developers to build compact, walkable, mixed-use places	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy alignment• Walkability• Parks and open space• Traditional neighborhood development• Form-Based Codes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Context-sensitive design• Green street design• Low-impact development
3.c. Recognize and reward developers that build great places using smart growth and green building approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smart growth recognition programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Green building

Creating Great New Places: Comprehensive Planning in Vienna, Maryland



- **New places – build places where people, especially young people, want to live.**
 - Compact, walkable, mixed-use
 - Historic connection
 - Form is part of the rural paradigm of places
 - Places where young people can stay (or return) and older residents can age in place
- **Vienna, Maryland created a community vision plan and got their codes in order to attract this type of development.**



A Model Chesapeake Community
Vienna Community Vision Plan

November, 2002

The Conservation Fund

Creating Great New Places: Fostering Transportation Options



- Bozeman, Montana has created a fixed-route bus system (Streamline) to serve students, faculty, commuters, enhancing the viability of downtown.
- Provides a great example of a fixed-route bus system that has thrived, even with small population.

Building an Audit Tool from Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities



Support the Rural Landscape

Comprehensive Plan

- Does your zoning ordinance align with the comp plan? Can you implement your vision?
- Does your zoning ordinance have separate zones or overlays for working lands (agricultural, ranching, forestry, etc.)?
- Does zoning include an option for residential clustering?

Tax Policy

- Are real estate taxes based on current use?
- Does the policy include credits for conservation easements?

Infrastructure investment prioritization

- Do you have designated priority funding areas that target infrastructure investments to areas where you want to grow?

An Audit Tool



Support the Rural Landscape (continued)

Comprehensive Plan

- Do you have a right to farm policy?
- Do you have a Transfer of Development Rights, Purchase of Development Rights, or other programs that are similar?
- Do you have a program for purchasing important conservation land and/or a partnership with a land trust that is coordinating such purchases?
- Do you provide incentives for landowners to develop renewable energy?
- Do you support value-added farm and forest products processing?
- Do you encourage landowners to participate in ecosystem services markets?
- Do you support agritourism and ecotourism opportunities?
- Do you promote direct marketing of rural products in nearby towns and urban areas?
- Do you have a policy that requires public facilities to purchase locally-made products?

An Audit Tool



Help Existing Places to Thrive

Comprehensive Plan and ordinances

- Does your plan integrate economic development, lands use, transportation, and other infrastructure planning?
- Does your zoning ordinance align with your comprehensive plan? Can you implement your vision?

Tax Policy

- Does the policy include split-rate taxes (land/buildings) to encourage historic preservation and building rehabilitation?

Infrastructure investment prioritization

- Do you operate on a fix-it-first policy
- Do public investments enhance and rehabilitate historic properties and main streets?
- Do you prioritize street retrofits and streetscape improvements in already-developed areas in order to enhance walking and biking?

An Audit Tool



Help Existing Places to Thrive (continued)

Infrastructure investment prioritization (continued)

- Do you invest in improving and expanding parks and natural resource areas in existing neighborhoods?
- Do you encourage adaptive reuse of existing structures?
- Do you invest in school in school rehabilitation rather than building new schools in replace older ones?

Other policies

- Do you provide incentives for infill development?
- Do you have a redevelopment readiness plan in place?
- Have you conducted a local business survey to assess the strengths and weaknesses of businesses located in the area?
- Have you implemented a business recognition program?

An Audit Tool



Create Great New Places

Comprehensive Plan and ordinances

- Have you conducted a comprehensive visioning process in your community to develop a shared vision for the future?
- Have you prioritized the places in your community worth preserving?
- Have you identified designated growth areas where new development will be targeted?
- Does your zoning ordinance align with the comprehensive plan? Can you implement your vision?
- Does your zoning ordinance allow for Traditional Neighborhood Development?
- Has your community developed a form-based code?

An Audit Tool



Create Great New Places (continued)

Infrastructure investment prioritization

- Are investments in housing, transportation, and water infrastructure based on priority funding areas or targeted growth area policies?
- Have you invested in your existing streets and developed a plan for building new roads and streets that would further connect your existing street network?
- Have you invested in walking, bicycling, and transit infrastructure?
- Have you planned for the creation of new parks and open space?

Other policies

- Do you have context-sensitive design standards for transportation infrastructure?
- Do you have green streets design elements in place?
- Have you implemented low-impact development strategies?
- Have you developed a smart growth recognition program for your community?

The Bottom Line for Rural Communities to Consider



- Assess current conditions (best assets, key challenges)
- Engage in a collaborative visioning process
- Develop and implement policies to achieve that vision



Berlin, Maryland



Sonoma County, California



Cumberland, Maryland

EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities: Working in Rural America



- Provide technical assistance to communities and states
- Governors' Institute workshops with rural focus: Montana, Wyoming, Arizona, New Mexico, Iowa, and North Carolina
- Rural guidebooks:
 - *Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities*
 - *Essential Smart Growth Fixes for Rural Planning, Development and Zoning Codes* (upcoming)
- Smart Growth Achievement Awards: Rural development category
- Work with NGOs (NADO, NACo, etc.) and other rural stakeholders
- Partnering with HUD, DOT, USDA, ARC



Partnership for Sustainable Communities



- **Began in June 2009: EPA, HUD, DOT**
- **Rural Work Group: Partnered with USDA to articulate how the Partnership's activities can better serve Rural America**
- **The Group's Report (to be released early November) includes:**
 - How the Livability Principles Support Rural Communities
 - HUD, DOT, EPA and USDA Programs Affecting Rural Communities
 - Case Studies of Sustainable Rural Communities
 - Rural Performance Measures
 - Next Steps for the Partnership



Coming in November 2011

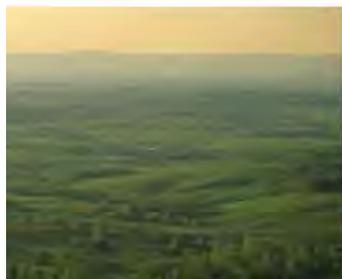


Building Federal Support for Sustainable Rural Communities

Partnership for Sustainable Communities



In collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture



The Livability Principles in the Rural Context



- **Enhance economic competitiveness.**
 - Leverage unique natural & land-based resources to raise rural standard of living.
- **Support existing communities.**
 - Direct investment to towns, villages and historic Main Streets and preserve the surrounding landscape.
- **Provide more transportation choices.**
 - Take advantage of towns' compact, mixed-use designs and locations along major corridors to renew intra- and inter-community transportation options.
- **Promote equitable, affordable housing.**
 - Revitalize & diversify aging housing stock to attract and retain residents at all stages of life.
- **Value communities and neighborhoods.**
 - Conserve and build upon unique and historic features like downtowns, Main Streets, barns, and iconic rural landscapes.
- **Coordinate policies and leverage investment.**
 - Federal investments are extremely influential, and must support community goals and be coordinated across agencies. Support communities' efforts to plan/codify goals.

Partnership Investments in Rural Communities



- **HUD Regional Planning Grants**
 - \$25.6 million split evenly between regions with populations of less than 500,000 and rural places with fewer than 200,000
- **DOT TIGER II Grants**
 - Capital grants: >\$140 million to rural projects
 - ✦ Examples: Moscow (ID) Intermodal Transit Center, MRC Railroad Reconstruction (SD)
 - Planning grants: >\$6 million to rural projects
 - ✦ Examples: Downtown Dahlonega (GA) Complete Streets, Owasco River (NY) Multi-modal Trail
- **EPA Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Grants**
 - 5 grants (out of 23) to rural communities with populations <20,000
- **EPA Sustainable Communities Building Blocks Assistance**
 - 15 projects (out of 31) to rural communities
- **USDA Great Regions (and other) Grants**

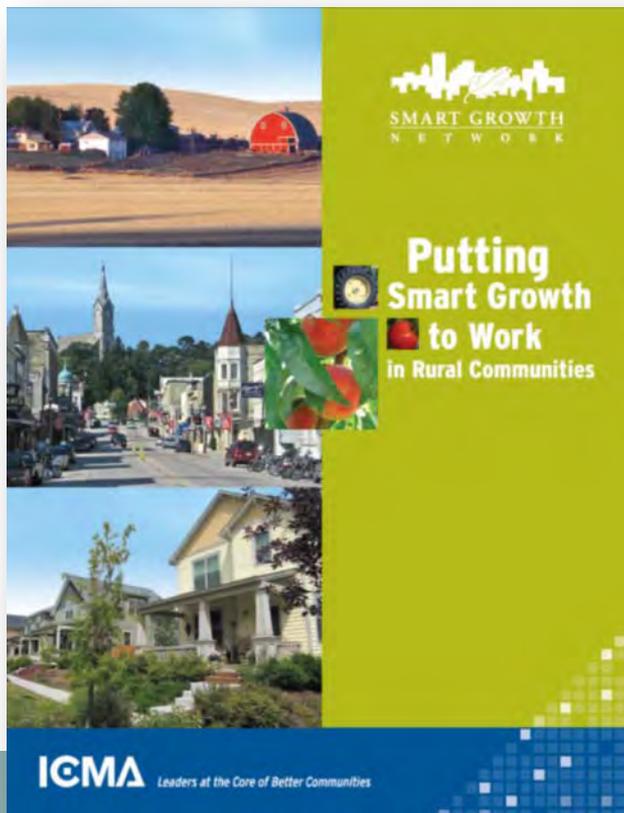
Next Steps for the Partnership



- **Through Rural Implementation Group:**
 - Coordinate grants/technical assistance in rural communities
 - *Leveraging the Partnership for Rural Communities* publication
 - Sustainable Rural Communities “Boot Camp” for grantees
 - Rural tour
 - Incorporate livability principles into programs and funding decisions



Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities



Matthew Dalbey, Ph.D.
U.S. EPA Office of Sustainable
Communities
dalbey.matthew@epa.gov

Full Report Available at:
http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/sg_rural.htm

**Info on the Partnership for
Sustainable Communities:**
www.sustainablecommunities.gov



EPA Voluntary School Siting Guidelines



- School locations are driven by local decisions – not federal agencies
- Guidelines are offered to help evaluate the environmental and public health risks and benefits
- Why is it important to consider environmental factors in choosing a location for a school?
 - Children particularly at risk from environmental hazards
 - Well-located school provides a safe and healthy community environment for kids, teachers and families – encouraging healthy habits like walking and biking

EPA Voluntary School Siting Guidelines



Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007

Sec. 502. Model Guidelines for Siting of School Facilities

The Administrator, in consultation with the Secretary of Education and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall issue voluntary school site selection guidelines that account for—

- (1) the special vulnerability of children to hazardous substances or pollution exposures in any case in which the potential for contamination at a potential school site exists;
- (2) modes of transportation available to students and staff;
- (3) the efficient use of energy; and
- (4) the potential use of a school at the site as an emergency shelter.

Overview of the Siting Guidelines



Meaningful Public Involvement*

Before the Siting Process Begins

- Develop a Long-range School Facilities Plan
- Consider Whether a New School is Needed
- Consider Whether a New School will be a High Performance/ Green School

Environmental Siting Criteria Considerations

Identify Desirable School Location Attributes

- Select Locations that Do Not Increase Environmental Health or Safety Risks
- Locate Schools Near Populations and Infrastructure
- Consider Implications of the School Location on Transportation Options
- Plan For and Develop Safe Routes to Schools Programs that can Support Alternative Modes of Transportation
- Consider the Potential Use of the School as an Emergency Shelter

Consider Environmental Hazards

- Potential Onsite Hazards
- Potential Nearby Hazards
- Screening Locations for Potential Environmental Hazards

Environmental Review Process

Recommended Environmental Review Process

- **Stage 1:** Project Scoping/ Initial Screen of Candidate Sites
- **Stage 2:** Preliminary Environmental Assessment
- **Stage 3:** Comprehensive Environmental Review
- **Stage 4:** Develop Site-specific Mitigation/ Remediation Measures
- **Stage 5:** Implement Remedial/Mitigation Measure
- **Stage 6:** Long-term Stewardship

Evaluating Impacts of Nearby Sources of Air Pollution

- Initial Assessment of Area Air Quality
- Inventory of Air Pollutant Sources and Emissions
- Screening Evaluation of Potential Air Quality
- Development of an Environmental Assessment Report

If potential concerns are identified in Stage 2, additional assessment may be warranted

* Meaningful public involvement is critical throughout the school siting decision-making process. The public involvement section includes a table with examples of points in the process where meaningful public engagement should be considered, as well as strategies for engagement and the types of information that may be presented to, or requested from, the public.

EPA Voluntary School Siting Guidelines



Main Sections of Guidelines

Meaningful Public Involvement

A meaningful public involvement process requires those administering the process to be familiar with and use good public involvement and risk communication practices.

Environmental Siting Criteria Considerations

School location plays an integral role in creating healthy, safe schools that support high quality education and promote sustainable and healthy communities.

Environmental Review Process

The example environmental review process presented in this section describes a process of evaluating candidate school sites.

Evaluating Impacts of Nearby Sources of Air Pollution

guidance on assessment of offsite environmental hazards during the environmental review process.

Recommendations for States and Tribes

Identifies important steps states and tribes can take to enhance the capacity of local communities.

Quick Guide to Environmental Issues

Common environmental issues often encountered during an environmental review

EPA Voluntary School Siting Guidelines



Positive school siting is an important part of a Sustainable Community

Provides a healthy and safe learning environment for children

Meets a number of community goals:

- **Environmental benefits – limits pollutants**
- **Minimizes transportation and infrastructure costs**
- **Encourages biking and walking – Better health!**
- **Influences growth and development patterns**

EPA Voluntary School Siting Guidelines



School Siting Guidelines Website

The guidelines are available at www.epa.gov/schools/siting

Ordering a Hard Copy

To request a hard copy of the School Siting Guidelines (EPA-100-K-11-004), contact EPA's National Service Center for Environmental Publications at

- Internet: www.epa.gov/nscep
- Phone: (800) 490-9198
- E-Mail: nscep@bpa-lmit.com
- Fax: (301) 604-3408
- US Mail: U.S. EPA/NSCEP
P.O. Box 42419
Cincinnati, Ohio 45242-0419

