



# Smart Growth

A Healthy Design for Madison County



1. Mix Land Uses
2. Take Advantage of Compact Design
3. Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices
4. Create Walkable Communities
5. Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place
6. Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty, and Critical Environmental Areas
7. Strengthen and Direct Development Toward Existing Communities
8. Provide a Variety of Transportation Options
9. Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective
10. Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration

## **10 Principles of Smart Growth**

"Americans spend nearly two-thirds of their income on combined costs of housing and transportation and are looking for affordable options to live closer to their jobs, school and amenities." – *Transportation for America* Director James Corless

**THIS**



**Here people live where they also shop, exercise, and work.**

**NOT THIS**



**When uses are separated it makes the automobile the only way to get around.**

**1. Mixed-use**

"One thing we don't necessarily give enough thought to is the extent to which increased density and small town living may be compatible. After all, it's not as if classic small town America was built during the era of the automobile." – *Atlantic Journalist, Matthew Yglesias*

**THIS**



**NOT THIS**



**These two neighborhood blocks look and feel very different, yet they have the exact same density of 11.7 units per acre.**

## **2. Compact Design**

"We need compact 'walking neighborhoods' that feature a mix of market-rate and affordable housing, convenient transportation choices and easy access to jobs, medical services and other daily needs."– *Smart Growth America Co-Chair and Former EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman*

**THIS**



**Apartments (left) and single family houses (right) signify a neighborhood with a range of housing choices which can create inter-generational places.**

**NOT THIS**



**Whole neighborhoods where the houses are all the same type and price create homogenous and uniform environments.**

### **3. Range of Housing Options**

"A city sidewalk by itself is nothing. It is an abstraction. It means something only in conjunction with the buildings and other uses that border it" – *Author of The Death and Life of Great American Cities, Jane Jacobs*

**THIS**



**Walkable places have a human scale defined by sidewalks, awnings, landscaping, and shops that “spill out” into the street.**

**NOT THIS**

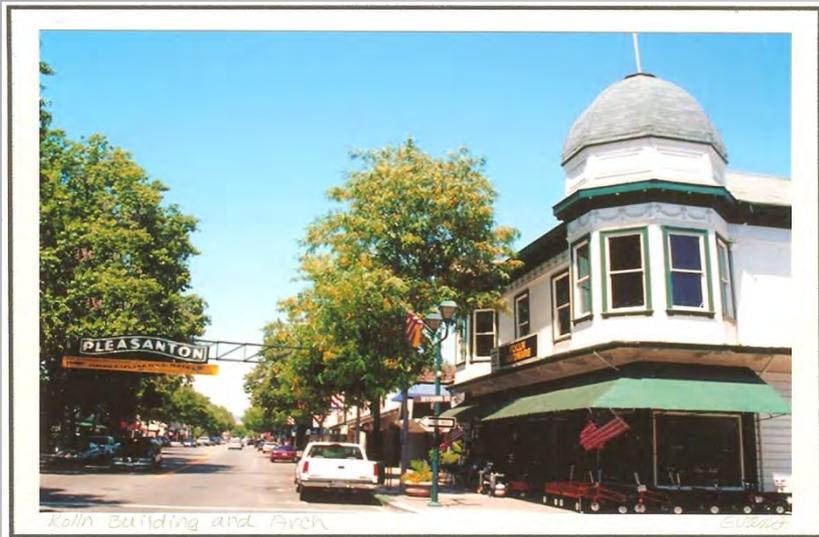


**Without the right infrastructure and mix of uses it can be difficult or even dangerous for pedestrians.**

## **4. Walkable Communities**

"We want to shape the future of our communities by building on the best of our past"  
– Maine Governor, John Baldacci

**THIS**



**A unique sense of place is more than aesthetics; it can impact the quality of life and help preserve historic, cultural, and environmental resources.**

**NOT THIS**



**Not only is this type of development unattractive, but too much generic development can strip a community of its unique sense of place.**

## **5. Sense of Place**

"It is vital that we find a way to accommodate more growth in our towns and cities or we are going to lose the rural character of our state" – *GrowSmart Maine President, Alan Caron*

**THIS**



**To preserve the rural landscape and farmland, agriculture must remain a desirable, viable business.**

**NOT THIS**



**Undeveloped land is hard to protect when development pressure outweighs the benefits of preservation.**

**6. Preserve Open Space**

"Simply put, there is no more efficient way to generate tax revenue than to develop the most valuable land in the city. That land is downtown." – *Bank of America CEO, Hugh McColl*

**THIS**



**To preserve existing community centers they have to be attractive places where people and businesses want to be.**

**NOT THIS**



**When growth and development continuously occurs on the periphery, community centers suffer.**

**7. Strengthen existing Centers**

"If you plan cities for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places" – *Project for Public Spaces* President, Fred Kent

**THIS**



**Mobility Options are key to making healthy, functional communities.**

**NOT THIS**



**People and places suffer when priority is given only to the automobile.**

## **8. Transportation Options**

"We deserve good, thoughtful developers who preserve our lifestyle and who work with our community instead of dividing it." – South Valley, Pat McCraw

**THIS**



**Developers will make what the community wants as long as the community is clear about what that is.**

**NOT THIS**



**There is a reason that development looks the way it does; there are no rules in place to make it look otherwise.**

**9. Make Development Predictable**

"Our big goal with all of this is education. That's how people can take control of growth in their own community." – Smart Growth Coalition, Marc Holt

**THIS**



**Collaboration can establish greater community understanding and help ensure that the needs of citizens are met.**

**NOT THIS**



**It is important that public involvement remain objective; development should never be dominated by a few.**

## **10. Community Involvement**

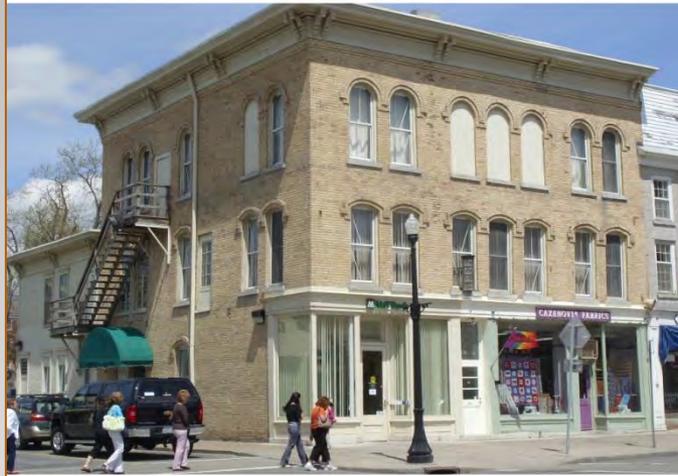


**“If you plan for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places.”**

- A Healthy Design for Madison County: Primer for Smart Growth
- Trainings and Workshops
- Smart Growth Awards



**Makes sense, but how do we implement?**



**SMART GROWTH SELF-ASSESSMENT  
FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES**

# Smart Growth Self-Assessment Tool for Rural Communities

- U.S. EPA Technical Assistance Grant 2012
  - Madison County 1 in 5 selected in the country!
  - Piloted in three communities
    - City of Oneida
    - Village of Chittenango
    - Town of Brookfield
  - Final Document released August 2015

Find the tool at [www2.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-growth-self-assessment-rural-communities-madison-county](http://www2.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-growth-self-assessment-rural-communities-madison-county) or [www.madisoncounty.ny.gov/planning/smart-growth](http://www.madisoncounty.ny.gov/planning/smart-growth)

**Background**

- Local governments can use this tool to
  - check whether their policies and regulations will get them the type of development they want,
  - identify gaps to fill,
  - and policies or practices to adopt, or
  - learn about practices they might want to include in their future plans.
- The self-assessment does not rate local **governments'** planning efforts

**The purpose**

- The self-assessment tool is broad and interdisciplinary
- Anyone with a community focus
- Whenever possible, coordinate across relevant boards, departments, and agencies to provide accurate responses

**Who should use the tool?**

- ***The Smart Growth Self-Assessment Tool for Rural Communities*** is divided into sections based on topics, or "goal areas," including:
  - Revitalize village and town centers.
  - Strengthen the local economy.
  - Engage and connect community members.
  - Improve health and promote active living.
  - Protect natural habitats and ecosystems.
  - Support productive agriculture for a variety of markets.
  - Meet housing needs for different ages and incomes.
  - Preserve historic and cultural resources.
  - Provide transportation choices.
  - Invest in efficient public infrastructure systems and operations.
  - Use energy efficiently and provide renewable energy.

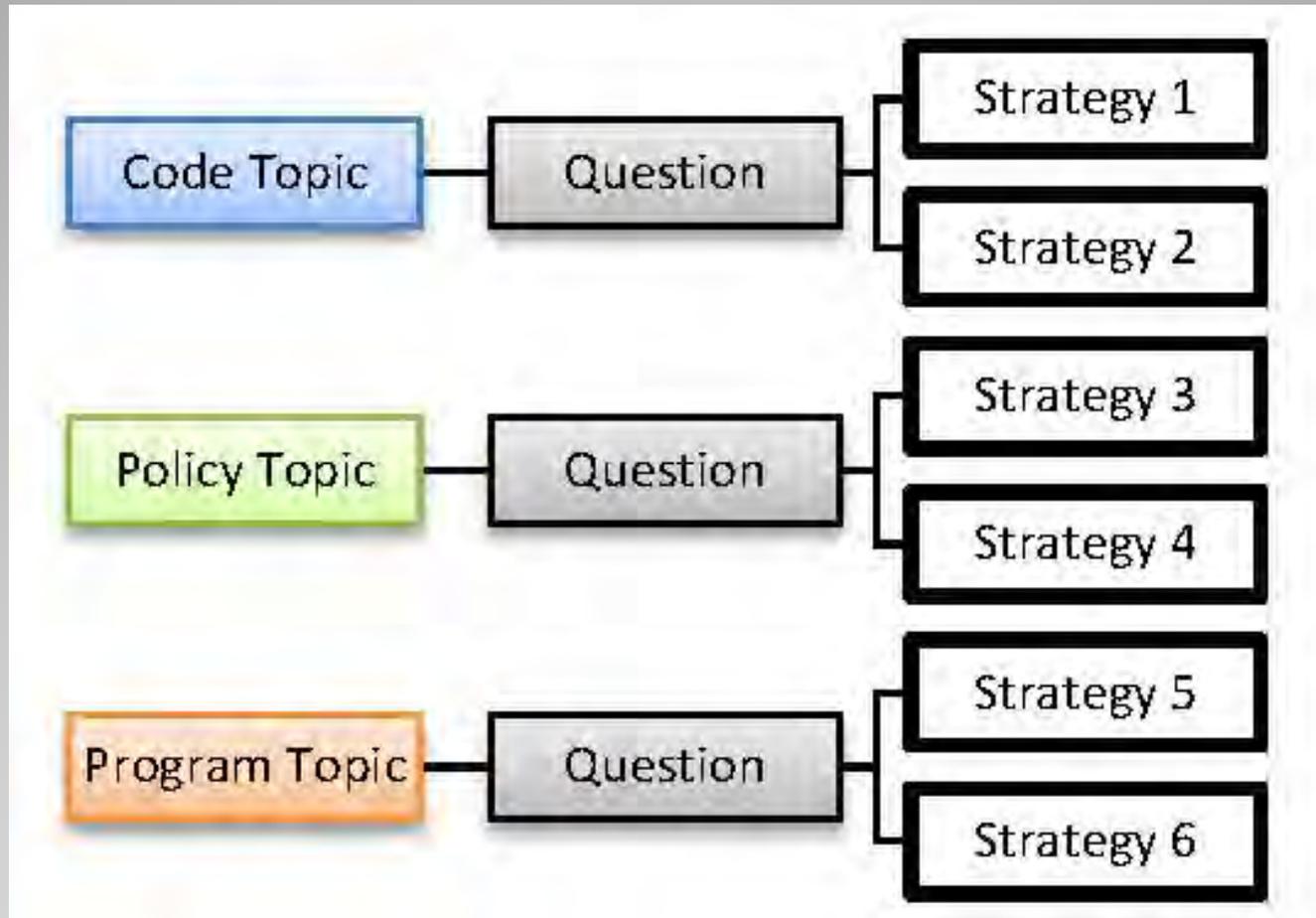
## **Tool Goal Areas**

- *Identify the plans or codes to assess*

*Examples:*

- Comprehensive Plan
- Area-wide growth strategy
- Sustainability plan or local energy action plan
- Public outreach plan
- Zoning ordinance
- Subdivision or land development ordinance
- Design Guidelines

**Preparing to use the tool**



# Structure

## Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities

### IX. Provide Transportation Choices

Compact and mixed-use town and village centers can encourage walking and bicycling, and they can support public transportation and **paratransit**. Making it safer and easier for people to walk and bike also helps their ability to stay within their homes and neighborhoods. Walkable, accessible downtown areas also help people easily reach their daily needs without having to leave town. Communities can provide more transportation options and development and by retrofitting existing transportation facilities.

The text shaded in blue is a **topic**. It is shaded blue because the strategies that fall beneath it address local codes. Green topics precede policy strategies and orange topics precede program strategies.

Goal: Provide Transportation Choices	Adopted? (Yes or No)	Need to Improve? (Yes or No)	Context <sup>1</sup>
<b>Making Areas Walkable, Bikeable, and Accessible to People with Disabilities and Mobility Challenges</b>			
<b>Is pedestrian-oriented site design required for new development and redevelopment?</b>			
Strategy 1: The installation of sidewalks is required when new development is constructed. <sup>5,7</sup>			1,2
Strategy 2: At least one entrance is required on the side of the building that faces the street, and public or private sidewalks must connect to that entrance. <sup>8</sup>			1,2
Strategy 3: Sidewalk paths are clear of obstructions such as utility poles or mailboxes, allowing minimum clearance in pedestrian-oriented areas in new developments. <sup>9,10</sup>			1,2

One or more **questions** accompany each topic. The questions can help users decide whether or not to focus on the set of strategies that follow it.

The two columns next to the questions and strategies are where the user can indicate if their community has already adopted the strategies and whether or not the strategy should be a focus for the community.

<sup>1</sup> Audit topics and recommendations apply to one or more of the following scales: 1 – large town/small city (approximately 10,000 or greater); 2 - village/small town (typically under 10,000) 3 – rural (very low density places, working lands and natural areas outside of towns, villages and cities).

<sup>2</sup> Georgia DOT Pedestrian & Streetscape Guide: Toolkit 10 – Site Design for Pedestrians (<http://www.dot.ga.gov/travelingineorgia/bikepedestrian/Pages/dot-guidelines.aspx>)

<sup>3</sup> Kirkland, WA Design Guidelines for Pedestrian-Oriented Business Districts ([http://search.cityofkirkland.net/search?q=Design%20Guidelines%20for%20Pedestrian-Oriented%20Business%20Districts%20&site=kirkland14\\_collection&client=kirkland14&output=xml\\_no\\_dtd&proxystylesheet=Kirkland14&ie=&oe=&lr=&domains=html%3A%2F%2Fwww.kirklandwa.gov&site=search=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.kirklandwa.gov](http://search.cityofkirkland.net/search?q=Design%20Guidelines%20for%20Pedestrian-Oriented%20Business%20Districts%20&site=kirkland14_collection&client=kirkland14&output=xml_no_dtd&proxystylesheet=Kirkland14&ie=&oe=&lr=&domains=html%3A%2F%2Fwww.kirklandwa.gov&site=search=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.kirklandwa.gov))

<sup>4</sup> Green Valley Institute. Design Guidelines: Village and Gateway Districts, Town of Coventry ([http://www.greenvalleyinstitute.org/planning\\_design.htm](http://www.greenvalleyinstitute.org/planning_design.htm))

<sup>5</sup> Westminster, CO Design Guidelines for Traditional Mixed Use Neighborhood Developments

(<http://www.ci.westminster.co.us/CityGovernment/CommunityDevelopment/PlanningDivision/RegulationsandDesignGuidelines.aspx>)

<sup>6</sup> Smart Growth America. Complete Streets: Local Policy Workbook (<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets/changing-policy/>)

<sup>7</sup> Change Lab Solutions. Model Local Ordinance on Complete Streets (<http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/laws-resolutions-cs/>)

<sup>8</sup> Fort Worth, TX Zoning Ordinance: Urban Design/Form Based Districts (<http://fortworthtexas.gov/zoning/>)

<sup>9</sup> In general, sidewalks need to be at least six feet wide for two people to comfortably pass.

<sup>10</sup> Carrboro, NC Town Code: Streets and Sidewalks (<http://www.ci.carrboro.nc.us/139/Carrboro-Town-Code>)



United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Sustainable Communities

Page | 1

Figure 4: This sample page from the "Provide Transportation Choices" goal area explains each element of the self-assessment.

- *Ultimately, the user should aim to create an action plan that for each high priority strategy identified:*
  - *Which official, staff person, or department of the local government will take the lead on advancing the strategy*
  - *Which documents (such as a comprehensive plan or zoning law) need to be amended to advance the strategy?*
  - *Which decision-making bodies (such as a planning board) will need to adopt the strategy?*
  - *What is a reasonable time frame to adopt the strategy?*

## **Applying the findings**

- *Village of Morrisville Comprehensive Planning Committee (volunteers)*
- *Used the tool July 2015*
- *Broke out into 3 groups*



**Example: Village of Morrisville**

- Comprehensive
- Get the conversation started/opens up communication
- **Identifies a community's strengths and areas for improvement**
- Helps prioritize strategies and low-hanging fruit
- Directs users to best practices
- **Provides a "check" to existing documents**

## **Benefits**