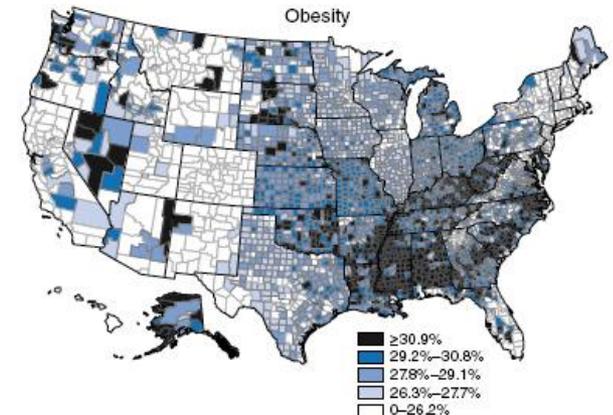
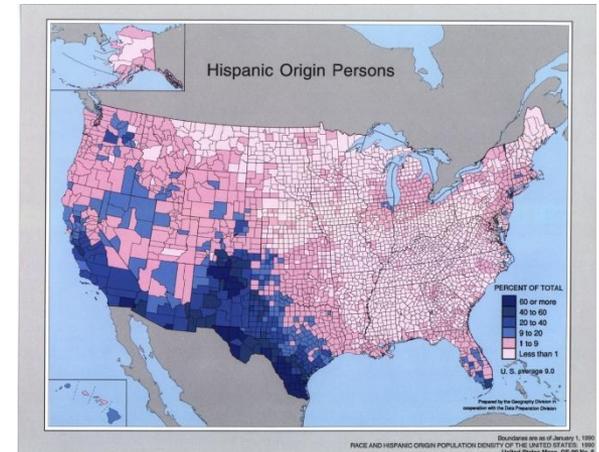


An aerial photograph of a rural residential development. A winding, light-colored road curves through a green landscape. Several houses with brown roofs are scattered along the road. The surrounding area is a mix of green fields and dense green trees. In the upper right corner, a small pond is visible. A teal banner is overlaid on the top left of the image, containing white text.

What are some of the challenges facing Rural and Small Town America?

The Changing Face of Rural & Small Town America

- **Changing demographics**
 - growing Hispanic population
 - aging population
 - outflow of young adults--inflow of older adults, birth rates declining
- **Health issues**
 - Obesity above national rates for all age groups
 - rural kids less likely to walk to school
 - Populace is very auto-reliant
 - High child poverty rates—for every racial and ethnic group
 - Lack of access to specialized medical care



The Changing Face of Rural & Small Town America

- **Housing “calamity” looming**—increased demand by down-sizing seniors, young professionals, trades people, and minorities for smaller homes and multi-family housing vs. oversupply of single-family homes
- **Rental share of housing market** will increase substantially nationwide and be particularly challenging in nonurban areas
- **Energy Issues**
 - Cost of fuel—population very reliant on autos
 - Climate change implications



Growth and Development Challenges in Small Cities and Rural Areas

- Declining downtowns and incompatible development in historic areas/loss of community character
- Loss of natural areas and open space
- Suburban-style large-lot growth at city edges
- Limited housing choices
- Lack of transportation options
- Limited planning capacity
- Opposition to regulations



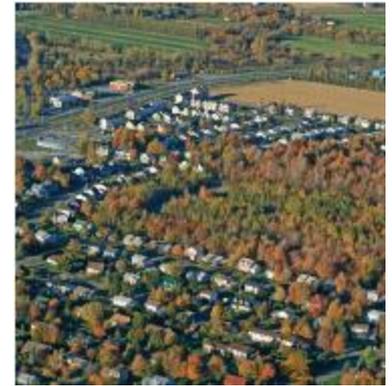
Rural Smart Growth

How do we define rural and how can smart growth be used to address challenges in small cities and rural communities?



What Is Rural Smart Growth? Rural Sustainable Development?

- Urban smart growth well-defined...not so much with rural
- Many different development types and pressures vs. urban areas...and politics
- Some urban smart growth tools (e.g., high-density mixed use, transit-oriented development) may not be appropriate
- Fewer financial, technical, staff resources in rural areas



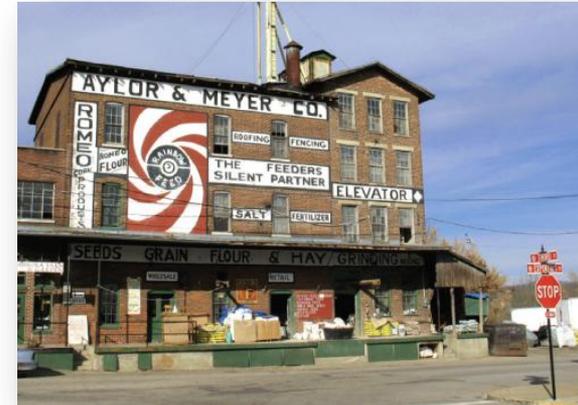
Smart Growth: A Response to Small Town and Rural Challenges

- Choices for where to live and how to get around
- A stronger, more resilient economy
- A healthier place to live
- Opportunities to protect the things people love about the place where they live (e.g., open space, natural beauty, historic character)



Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities: Three Key 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.



Support the Rural Landscape

Create an economic climate that enhances the viability of working lands and conserves natural lands

Strategies:

- Ensure the viability of the resource economy of the region
- Promote rural products in urban areas and support other urban-rural links
- Link rural land preservation strategies to great neighborhoods
- Cultivate economic development strategies that rely on traditional rural landscapes



Help Existing Places Thrive

Take care of assets and investments such as downtowns, Main Streets, existing infrastructure, and places that the community values

Strategies:

- Invest public and private funds in existing places
- Encourage private sector investment
- Build on past community investments
- Foster economic development in existing downtowns



Create Great New Places

Build vibrant, enduring neighborhoods and communities that people, especially young people, don't want to leave

Strategies:

- Update strategic and policy documents to accommodate new growth through compact and contiguous development
- Reform policies to make it easy for developers to build compact, walkable, mixed-use places
- Recognize and reward developers that build using smart growth and green building approaches

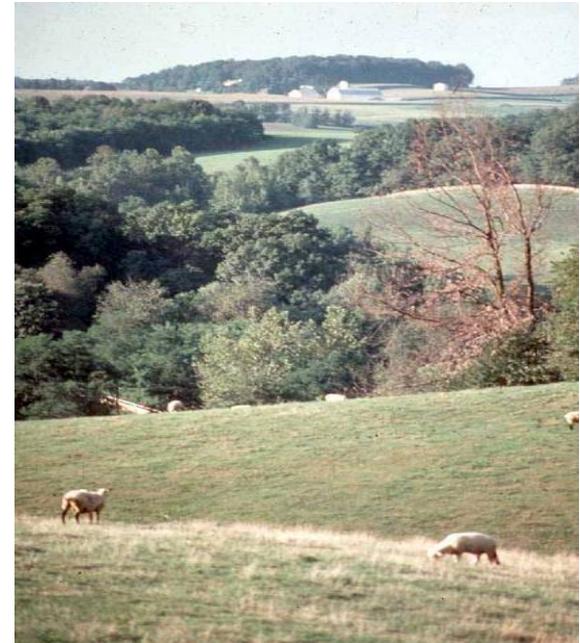


Top Priority Fixes – Possible Tools

1. **Determine Areas for Growth and for Preservation**
2. **Incorporate Fiscal Impact Analysis in Development Reviews**
3. **Reform Rural Planned Unit Developments**
4. **Use Wastewater Infrastructure Practices That Meet Development Goals**
5. **Right-Size Rural Roads**
6. **Encourage Appropriate Densities on the Periphery**
7. **Use Cluster Development to Transition From Town to Countryside**
8. **Create Annexation Policies and Development Standards That Preserve Rural Character**
9. **Protect Agricultural and Sensitive Natural Areas**
10. **Plan and Encourage Rural Commercial Development**
11. **Promote Housing Choices**
12. **Address Premature and Obsolete Subdivisions**

For Each Tool:

- Discussion of issue/challenge
- Overview of potential responses
- Expected community benefits
- Implementation steps
 - Minor adjustments
 - Major modifications
 - Wholesale changes
- Practice pointers
- Examples and references (plans, codes, etc.)



Example: Right-Size Rural Roads

Challenge:

Conventional roadway design standards fail to maintain character of rural roads and small town main streets. They can also make extension and maintenance very expensive.

Responses:

- Adopt standards to “right-size” rural streets according to their location

Benefits:

- Reduced road construction and maintenance costs
- More mobility choices, especially for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Safer roads



Right-Size Rural Roads

Implementation steps

- Develop new town street design standards and implement “road diet”—reduce widths, require sidewalks, bike lanes
- Convert one-way to two-way streets
- Adopt rural road standards that preserve landscapes and views, follow topography

Practice pointers

- Involve state highway department early in standards revision process

Plan and Encourage Rural Commercial Development

Challenge: Scattershot rural commercial development fragments landscape and undermines town business districts

Responses:

- Target most commercial to towns
- Adopt commercial design standards

Benefits:

- Avoid sprawl-inducing scattershot commercial
- Protection of rural character
- Increased town tax base
- Avoid strip commercial outside towns



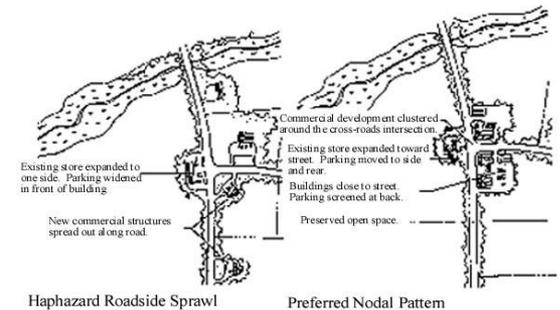
Plan and Encourage Rural Commercial Development

Implementation steps

- Adopt plan policies to target most commercial to towns or in designated nodes
- Prohibit rural commercial in most zone districts—allow if resource dependent only
- Sign IGA to share commercial tax revenues

Practice pointers

- Joint planning for rural commercial areas

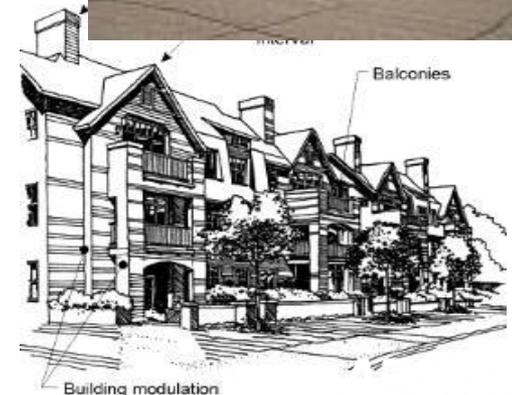


Promote Housing Choices

Challenge: Small cities and rural areas challenged to provide variety of housing options for all citizens—down-sizing seniors, young professionals, service workers.

Responses:

- Remove barriers to downtown housing
- Promote mix of housing types or units in new developments—MF as well as SF
- Encourage denser MF development with compatibility and design standards



Promote Housing Choices

Implementation steps

- Allow denser MF in selected zone districts, include downtown with design standards
- Require mix of housing types and units in new developments

Practice pointers

- Use incentives like density bonuses and parking reductions
- Keep design standards simple and have staff administer



Promote Housing Choices

Remove Barriers

- Permit accessory dwelling units in residential zone districts with compatibility standards
- Allow small lot development with compatibility standards

Create Incentives

- Grant parking reductions for affordable multi-family projects



Identifying Key Topics That Your Community Can Address:

1. **What are your community's key goals?**
2. **What have you accomplished to date that you can build on?**
3. **What shape are your plans, policies, codes in? Are there any specific shortcomings?**
4. **What are the potential hurdles to accomplishing your goals, and what can be done to address them?**

Three Paths to Sustainability and Smart Growth Through Zoning

THINK B-I-G!!

Barriers

e.g., revise zone districts to allow more housing choices...senior/multifamily housing

Incentives

e.g., allow residential in downtown

Gaps

e.g., fill regulatory gaps ~ historic preservation, natural resource protection

