# Balancing tradition and tomorrow: smart growth strategies for the sustainability of rural communities

by

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A REPORT

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# Abstract

In the post-World War II era, the globalization of U.S. cities has triggered population decline in many rural communities, prompting a quest for solutions to sustain their prosperity. However, concerns have arisen regarding the impact of standardized development regulations on these communities, affecting their ambiance and distinctive, place-specific character. This research delves into the intricate balance required to foster growth while preserving the unique character of rural communities. Central to this investigation is exploring the Smart Growth concept as a potential solution to enhance local development regulations and safeguard the essence of small towns by taking Dodge City and Garden City, as case studies. The study aims to determine how integrating Smart Growth principles can contribute to addressing challenges related to rural community character. Doing so establishes a foundational understanding for future researchers to delve into applying Smart Growth principles in the rural context, with considerations for broader implications in sustainable planning.

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# Chapter 1 - Introduction

## Background and Rationale

After World War II, the United States entered a period of renewed economic optimism. In pursuit of the 'American Dream,' many individuals left their rural communities for larger urban centers (*Daniels et al., 2017*). Consequently, many communities introduced zoning and subdivision codes to regulate growth and prevent disorderly and conflicting development. However, this effort resulted in extensive development in critical areas to meet the demand for available and affordable housing (*Chen, 2000*). Consequently, public concerns about the ambiance, character, and vitality of communities grew louder as residents witnessed the transformation of their surroundings (*Arendt, 2015*).

Many concerns about adverse effects revolve around land-use issues that jeopardize the quality of life in communities. The fear is that the natural development cycle, changing over the years, may also alter the fabric of communities (*Daniels, 2001; Pollard III, 2000*). While these concerns may hold some truth, modern development is viewed by many as a necessary step to accommodate innovation, unlock new economic opportunities through job growth, reach new markets, and initiate fresh development (*Chen, 2000*).

Among such innovations were the interstate highway system and improved telecommunications, which ushered the U.S. into the modern age through improved connectivity between cities and people (*Daniels et al., 2017*). While these innovations brought new opportunities for many communities, many scholars are concerned that public administration has shifted towards a market model where community development is efficient and effective but not as equitable as it should be (*Nickels, 2018*).



**Figure 1.1** Depicts suburban neighborhoods after World War II (left) and two supplementary illustrations of the ‘American Dream’ (middle and right).

Significant population decline has challenged numerous communities, especially rural ones. Rural farming communities accounted for roughly a third of the American population in the 1900s; by 2000, the number of Americans who lived on farms was as low as 2 percent. Rural communities are a fraction of what they used to be, making it difficult to distinguish themselves as a marketable location, prompting many of them to find it necessary to transform themselves to remain relevant nationally (*Daniels et al., 2017*). A primary example is when a rural community on a metropolitan fringe allows itself to become enveloped in suburbia. However, this is not a luxury every rural community has. Some more remotely situated communities must rely more on themselves to foster growth, prioritizing economic development as a crucial survival aspect (*Daniels et al., 2017*).

Moreover, as society strongly focuses on increasing development to meet the population's demand, it may prioritize other matters over preserving the environment and historical sites (*Daniels et al., 2017*). Long-standing literature on communities indicates that a shared identity among individuals in an area is inherently connected to a physical location. While technological innovations have led to discoveries in communities with shared interests, communities based on a specific place are generally more recognized (*Flora et al., 2018*).

Recognizing this is important because people who continue living in rural areas may do so due to the traditional character typical in those locations, including human-scale architecture, minimal traffic congestion, and a tightly-knit social fabric, among other factors (*Daniels et al., 2017*). In “The Small Town Planning Handbook,” an interesting question is posed:

*“How do we accommodate and even encourage growth without losing the unique character that is the essence of small towns (Daniels et al., 2017, p. 300)?”*

This poses a dilemma for rural planning because, as some rural areas strive for growth, they may unintentionally welcome development that fundamentally disregards components that people find attractive in rural areas. In response to this discourse, numerous land-use strategies have emerged over the years that help preserve specific character.

Among those strategies was the Smart Growth concept, which has deep roots in national land use efforts and state growth management acts. It emerged in the public arena in the late 90s by introducing the "Neighborhood Conservation Act" in Maryland (*Daniels, 2001; Edwards & Haines, 2007*).

While initially used to address development expanding from cities into undeveloped or historically rich lands, this act has also been touted as a framework for communities to achieve a more equitable built environment in line with community preferences (*Edwards & Haines, 2007*).

While the Maryland example represents a statewide solution for managing growth, Smart Growth appeals to local government because it often suggests principles within officials' scope and authority (*Pollard III, 2000*). This presents a unique opportunity for rural officials to help initiate strategic decision-making that helps determine which types of development will positively impact their community.

## Significance, Primary Question, and the Objectives

Amidst the dynamic landscape of rural planning and development, the significance of a smart strategy becomes increasingly pertinent to explore. In particular, this research is imperative to uncover the complex growth balance in rural areas while preserving their unique character. This study is structured around the following research question,

*"What Smart Growth Principles can rural communities implement in plans and policies to help sustain rural character?"*

While searching for this answer, look for this report to answer: "Do Smart Growth Principles align in a way that benefits rural character? Moreover, "Are there potential challenges in adopting Smart Growth concepts in rural areas? The findings will provide valuable insights for policymakers and planners seeking sustainable community solutions, enriching the dialogue on Smart Growth planning and rural development. Through these question, the research aims to accomplish this through the following objectives:

- To understand their challenges better, provide a comprehensive analysis of small towns and rural areas.
- Introduce the nuanced history and discussion on Smart Growth as a concept.

- Conduct a thorough assessment to select case study communities based on relevant criteria.

- Conduct a comparative analysis between selected communities, identifying similarities and differences in their readiness and potential for rural communities to implement Smart Growth concepts.

- Develop strategies for small communities based on integrating Smart growth principles to preserve and enhance historic character and promote environmental sustainability based on empirical review.

- Provide a dialogue to discuss further how this research can be used to contribute to a broader body of knowledge in the field.

The outlined objectives will help guide this research to provide a comprehensive understanding of the rural communities and the Smart Growth concept for a informed discussion on how the two can interact in the planning context. As the United States experiences a shift toward globalized city markets, concerns about inadvertent development and its impact on community ambiance and vitality have sparked a significant conversation about community development and public administration involvement. In response to the challenges faced by rural areas and the potential loss of identity, this research explores Smart Growth principles and their potential application as a strategic solution. The study plans to explore the delicate balance between fostering growth and preserving the distinctive character of local communities. The outlined objectives will help guide this research to provide a comprehensive understanding of

# Chapter 2 - Literature Review

## History of Small Towns and Rural Communities

After introducing the importance and objectives of this research, which establishes an interest in learning if Smart Growth principles may bring about more sustainable communities. First, a discussion on the history of rural areas and small towns is pertinent, as it sets the stage for understanding why introducing new strategies could be crucial for sustaining America's rural areas.

Throughout America's history, many rural areas have experienced diverse trajectories – some prospering, some merely existing. Others ceasing to exist (*Daniels et al., 2017*). Over ninety percent of the country's landmass is considered rural. Despite these areas containing the nation's bulk of natural resources, energy production, agriculture, and food production, climate change mitigation, and adaption efforts, only fourteen percent of the population resides there (*Gkartzios et al., 2022; U.S. Census Bureau, 2024*). This reality contrasts with the beginning of the 20th century, which marked the Golden Age of American Agriculturalism. Rural farmers enjoyed growing local economies and middle-class lifestyles during this era.



**Figure 2.1** Depicts two rural communities during the 1920s. The communities shown in these pictures are Oatman, Arizona (left) and Hermosa, South Dakota (right).

However, the post-World War II period shifted the markets again. It ushered in a new era of globalism, with innovations like the interstate highway system and telecommunications transforming the nation into a Network society. This shift contributed to the rise of world cities, capturing key economic opportunities at the global level. This global shift proved detrimental to small towns as the once-prospering small-town market declined to the now lucrative urban city one (*Daniels et al., 2017*).

Furthermore, this shift has also been evident in the literature to show an urban orientation of the planning profession, which has led to a neglect of rural communities, often treating them as scaled-down cities (*Frank & Reiss, 2014*). This perspective, influenced by broader professional, administrative, and policy trends, overlooks rural areas' unique needs and dynamics (*Frank & Reiss, 2014; Gkartzios et al., 2022*). Critics argue that this urban bias has marginalized rural regions, with planners predominantly discussing priorities regarding urban environments, leading to a need for recognition of the distinct planning needs of rural areas (*Edwards & Haines, 2007*). From this, there is a need for a planning solution that considers the rural planning context.



**Figure 2.2** Depicts areas where urban development is sprawling into rural agricultural land.

## Sense of Place in Rural Areas

The concept of community, in both rural and urban areas, refers to the shared place identity among a group, encompassing connections with people, cultures, and the built/natural environment of a specific location (*Belanche, 2021; Flora et al., 2018*). Scholars argue that places fostering social interactions and community building contribute to residents' physical and emotional well-being (*Tilt et al., 2007*). In smaller rural settlements, frequent social interactions and direct community relations enhance familiarity and involvement among residents (*Belanche, 2021*). In a survey by the Nicholas Institute, rural voters expressed a strong connection to their living area, scoring higher than urban or suburban voters, indicating shared values among rural residents (*Bonnie et al., 2020*). While the community itself is not the sole determinant of a shared sense of place, it provides a defined space for interactions, with people and places influencing each other (*Flora et al., 2018*).

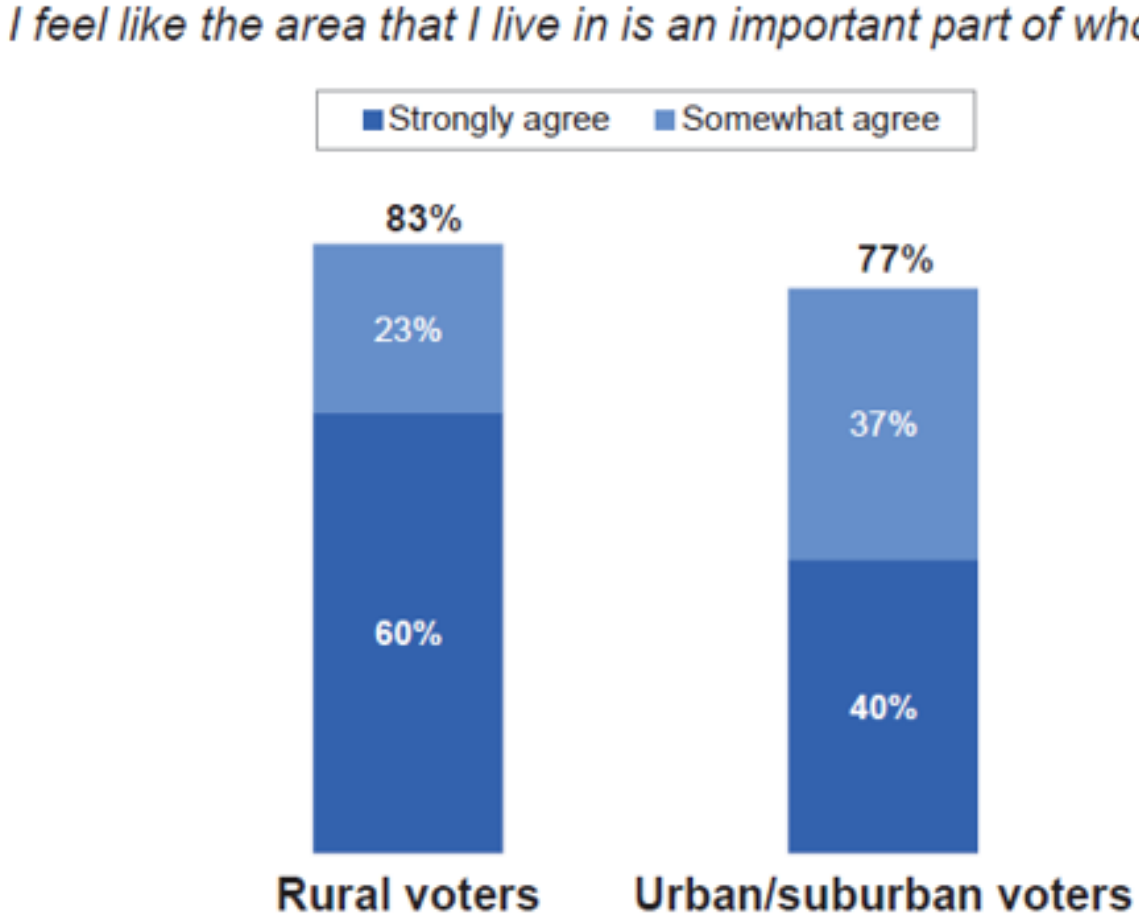



**Figure 2.3** Shows that rural respondents felt more strongly about their place connection than suburban/urban respondents.

"Rural Communities: Legacy + Change" emphasizes that every community, regardless of size, possesses resources that, when reinvested, become capital contributing to sustainable communities. The capitals they list in their work include:

- Natural Capital is the ecological environment, including air, water, soil, wildlife, vegetation, landscape, and weather.
- Cultural Capital is the traditions and worldviews of a particular group.
- Human Capital is the capabilities of individuals and their ability to learn from new experiences continuously.
- Social Capital is the connections among other people and the ability to nurture new ones.
- Political Capital is the ability to influence rules and regulations that enforce or establish new norms.
- Financial Capital is the resources available to invest and grow the economic welfare of an area.
- Built Capital is the infrastructure supporting the area, including telecommunications, roads, water, sewage systems, etc. (*Flora et al., 2018*).

Emphasizing the importance of comprehending these capitals, sustainable communities flourish when each is given equal consideration, as neglecting them can diminish the community's overall well-being. Unfettered growth and development can directly impact these capitals and lead to negative consequences that diminish the rural sense of place (*Tilt et al., 2007; Flora et al., 2018*). Cultivating local capital to ensure the longevity of resources is necessary for the sustainable development of communities.

## Land-Use Planning and Smart Growth

Aligning land-use strategies with rural areas' authentic essence and potential evolution poses a compelling challenge for rural planners. Furthermore, there has been a resurgence among progressive planners in addressing community growth patterns and how they can be influenced and managed (*Arendt, 2015*). While growth offers substantial opportunities for innovation, organized development is essential for fostering vibrant communities.

Some rural communities aim to preserve some resemblance of their distinctive character while enhancing their economic base (*Nelson, 2012*). As Daniels and colleagues say in "The Small Town Planning Handbook:" - "*As a community grows and changes, its special character can also change, but good planning can help maintain certain charm found only in small towns* (*Daniels et al., 2017*)." Many communities have enacted comprehensive plans, zoning, and subdivision codes to manage growth and prevent haphazard development. However, these strategies alone will not completely mitigate challenges over land use; there also requires critical importance on planning and connecting strategies to the vision of what the community would like to look like (*Aredndt, 2015; Daniels et al., 2017; Frank & Reiss, 2014*). This has made some rural communities question whether these strategies genuinely result in the results they seek (*Nelson, 2012*). This may cause some communities to seek alternatives through experimentation of other strategies to find intuitive solutions for some of the more complex land-use-related problems. As Solberg aptly mentions in "Rural Zoning, Present and Future," -

*"Experience provides guidelines for the future(Solberg, 195, p. 760)."*

Community stakeholders play a dynamic role in deciding the development's pace, scale, and location. This shift has prompted communities to accept goals that benefit economic growth and not diminish their sense of place. These efforts often involve channeling growth to existing communities and protecting the natural environment. Many of these goals have been dubbed "smart growth" (*Edward & Haines, 2007; Pollard III, 2000*).

The Smart Growth concept was one of the newer solutions to emerge at the tail end of the '90s and into the early 2000s. Initially introduced as a statewide initiative in Maryland's Neighborhood Conservation Act, Smart Growth gained prominence in the public arena as a solution to using land more efficiently and promoting better planning (*Daniels, 2001; Edwards & Haines, 2007*). Some think that Smart Growth policies are rehashed growth management ideas, but rather, they represent less regulatory, more comprehensive ways to approach land use (*Pollard III, 2000*).

Like other growth management strategies, Smart Growth has also received some criticism. Some authors argue that the imprecise definitions of the concept make it difficult for communities to implement comprehensive policy (*Pollard, 2000*); others argue that Smart Growth principles should remain exclusive to larger cities and metropolitan areas (*Edwards & Haines, 2007*), and even some dismiss the concept almost altogether unless implemented as a statewide approach (*Downs, 2005*). However, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) advocates for Smart Growth as a viable development approach at the federal level. Despite often being hailed as a statewide initiative, the EPA has produced numerous guides for rural and urban communities that provide proven strategies to improve plans and policies for more sustainable communities (*Smart Growth in Small Towns and Rural Communities, 2024).*

**Figure 2.4** Shows the Smart Growth Principles defined by the Smart Growth Network.


Smart Growth Principles
Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions.
Provide a variety of transportation choices.
Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas.
Create walkable neighborhoods.
Take advantage of compact building design.
Mix land uses.
Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.
Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place.
Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities.
Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective.
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Balancing development with preserving community character presents a unique challenge for rural officials. Rather than imposing restrictions on growth, these officials can plan conscientiously, considering the context and timing of development to ensure it aligns with and enhances existing community character.

While there is no concrete definition of what rural community character should look like, combining multiple sources, some overlap begins to emerge.




**Figure 2.5** Depicts various elements that can be used to define rural character. This list contains characteristics that originate from three sources.

Interestingly, based on the shared terminology used, there appears to be a significant alignment between Smart Growth principles and rural character, prompting further exploration of their potential applicability in those contexts.

By leveraging an understanding of rural character and integrating Smart Growth principles, rural officials can promote sustainable development that respects their communities' unique identity and heritage.

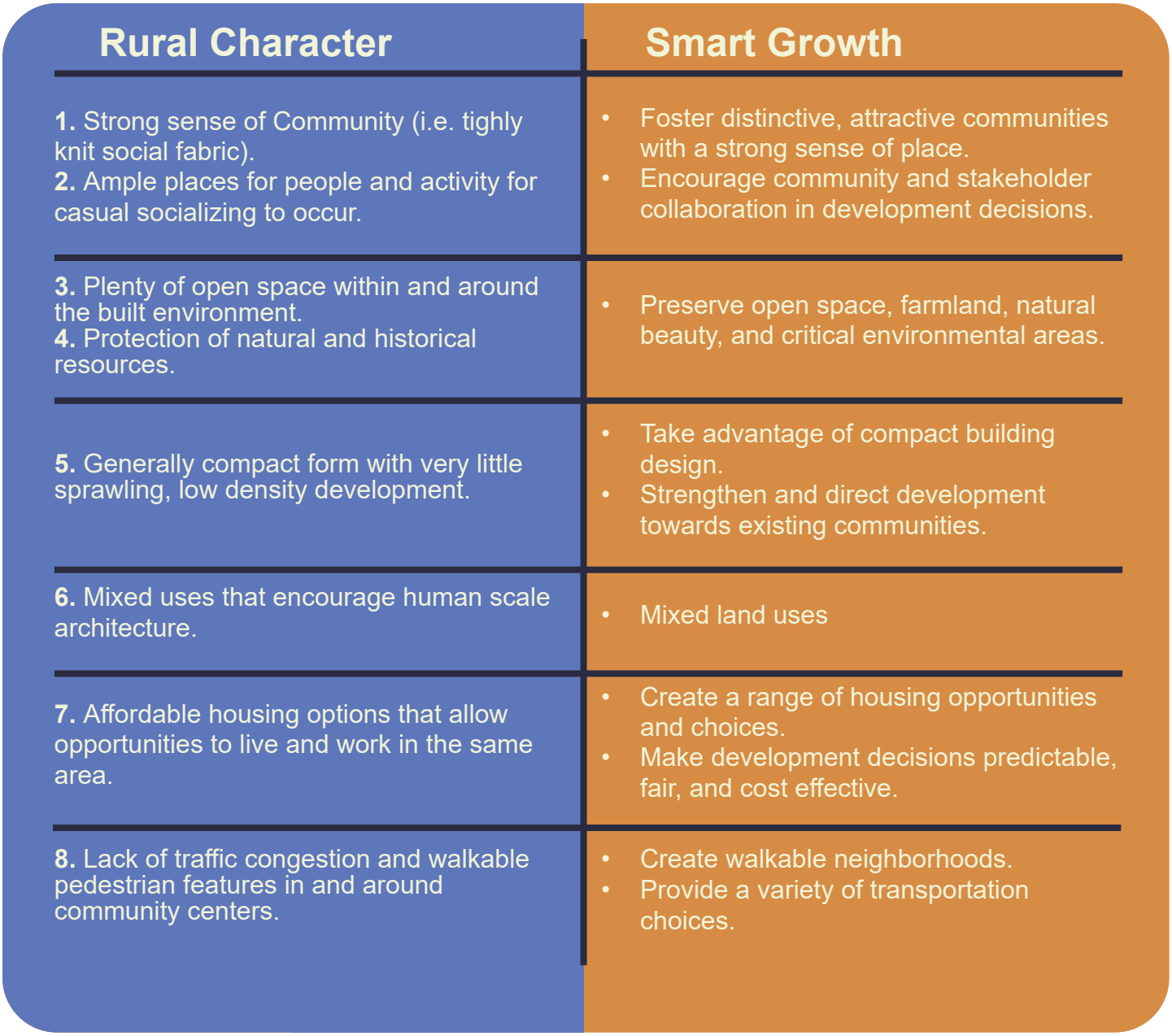



**Figure 2.6** Depicts a comparison diagram showing that the Smart Growth principles have a noteworthy overlap with rural characteristics.

# Chapter 3 - Methodology

## Overview

The central challenge highlighted in the literature review involves balancing development growth in rural areas with preserving their distinctive character. The dynamic interplay of population shifts, technological advancements, and evolving economies has presented difficulties in retaining the traditional attributes of rural regions while responding to developmental needs.

Introducing the Smart Growth concept offers a potential solution to this dilemma. Smart Growth empowers public officials and stakeholders in a collaborative process, expanding upon existing land use policies to help control the timing and location of development in ways that match community preferences. This research aims to address the identified challenges in the literature review and contribute to the broader discourse on sustainable planning and rural development by investigating how integrating Smart Growth Principles can sustain rural community character.

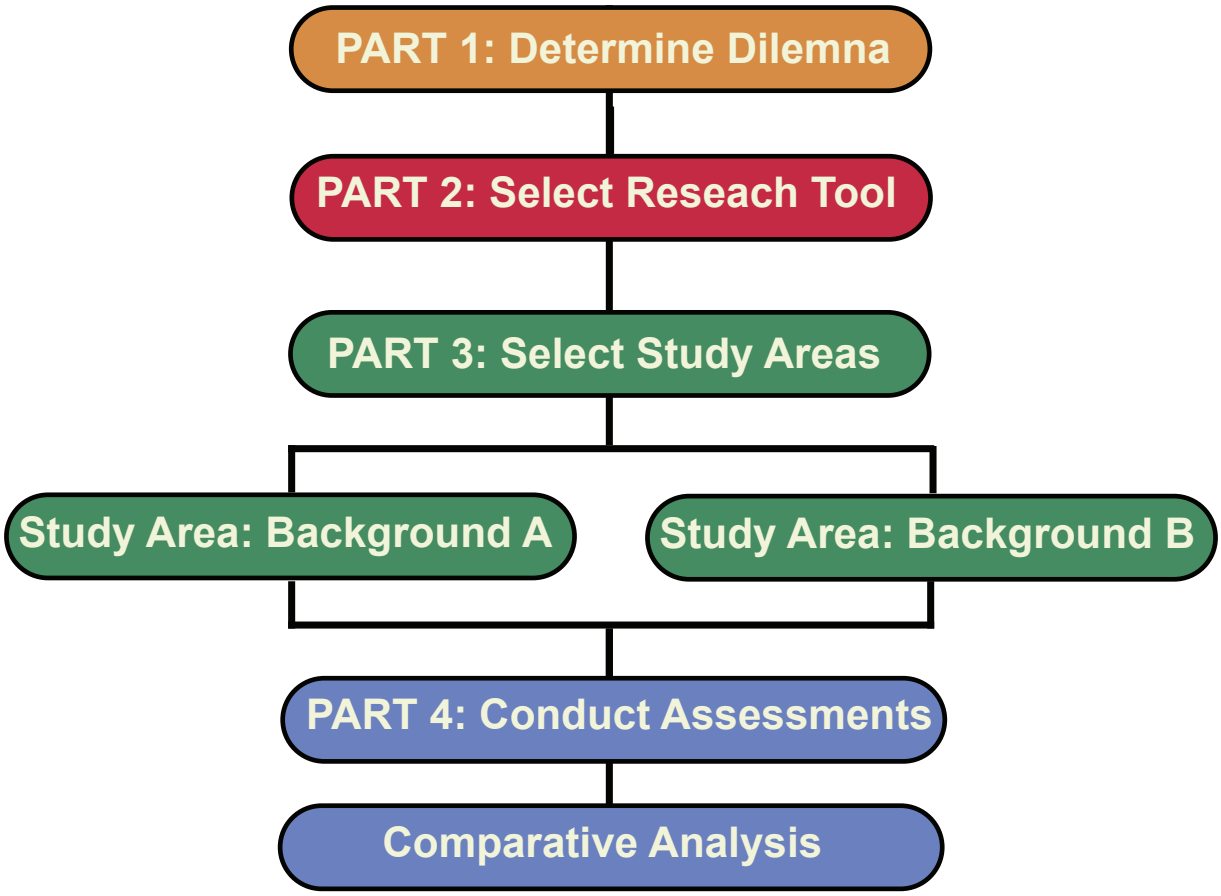



**Figure 3.1** Depicts the methodology process used throughout the report.

## Smart Growth Assessment Overview

This research uses the guides made available through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency designed to educate and facilitate the application of Smart Growth principles. The guides include the “Smart Growth Assessment for Rural Communities” and “Essential Smart Growth Fixes for Rural Planning, Zoning, and Development Codes.”

These publications outline actionable steps for small-town and rural jurisdictions to tackle development challenges. Created by national rural smart growth experts, they offer solutions for specific rural-related issues and can serve as the foundation for broader revisions. The provided policy options are adaptable, allowing each community to determine what suits its needs and context. These assessments are designed for local stakeholders. They determine priority areas and find gaps in policies, plans, codes, and zoning regulations that prevent communities from hitting their goals. In “Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities,” eleven goal areas for communities interested in identifying critical areas for improvement.



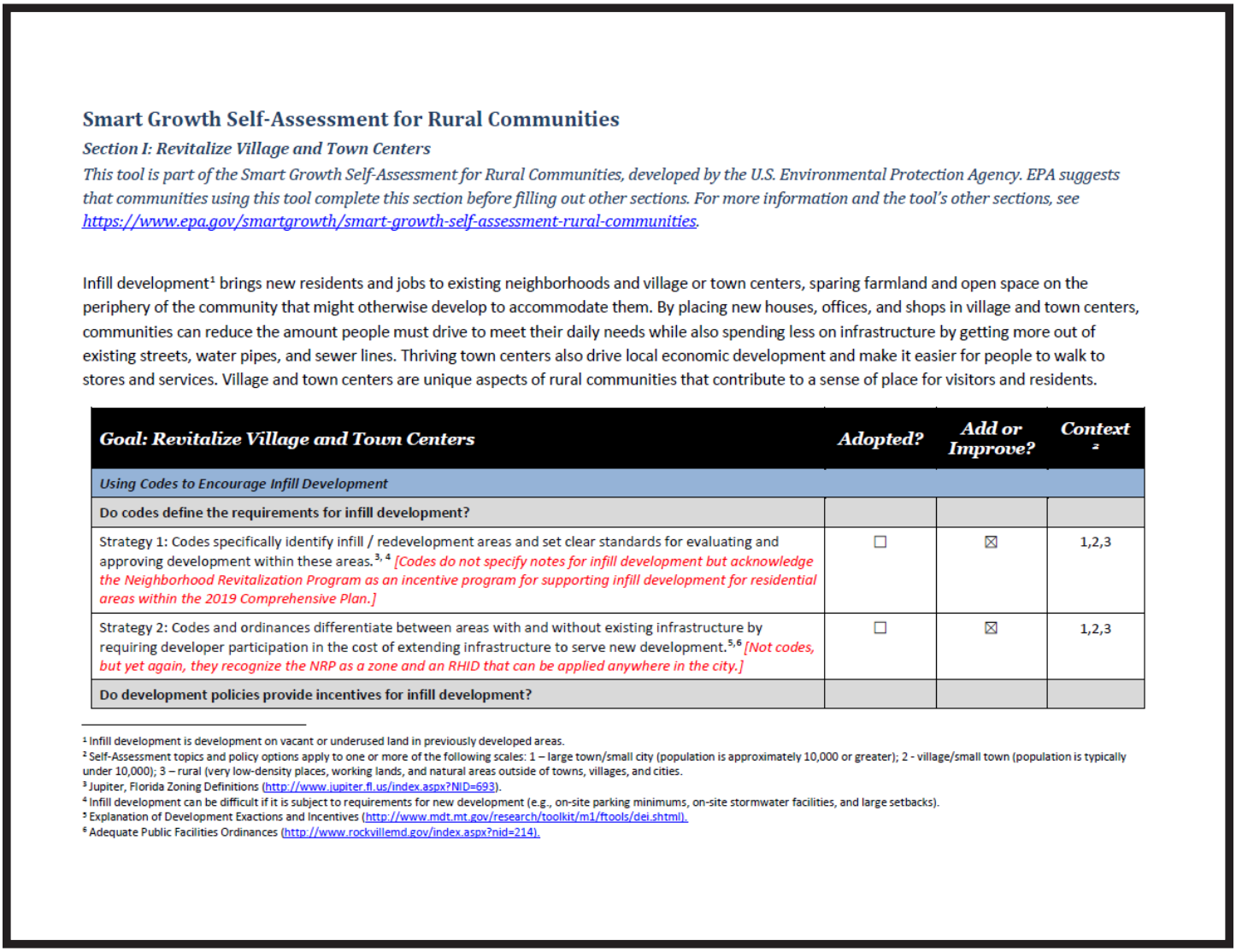

**Figure 3.2** Shows the cover pages of two of the EPA’s guides/assessments for Smart Growth for small towns and rural areas.

Each goal area comprises a series of “Yes” or “No” questions. Every assessment starts by completing the first goal area in “*I. Revitalize Village and Town Centers*,” a baseline section for the rest of the assessment. From there, the remaining sections are optional and allow for more freedom in which sections can be taken. The list of remaining goal areas includes - “*II. Strengthen the Local Economy, III. Engage and Connect Community Members, IV. Improve Health and Promote Active Living, V. Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems, VI. Support Productive Agriculture for a Variety of Markets, VII. Meet Housing Needs for Different Ages and Incomes, VIII. Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources, IX. Provide Transportation Choices, X. Invest in Efficient Public Infrastructure Systems and Operations, and XI. Use Energy Efficiently and Provide Renewable Energy.*”

While conducting a comprehensive analysis of every category in the assessment would offer a thorough examination, the flexibility inherent in the process allows for a more focused discussion on key areas of emphasis. With this in mind, this research is particularly concerned with how changes in place affect the community itself. Therefore, in addition to section “*I. Revitalize Village and Town Centers*,” this study also assess sections “*V. Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems*” and “*VII. Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources*,” as these three sections place the greatest emphasis on the significance of place. By identifying gaps in these place management policies, this research enables a strategic and targeted application of Smart Growth principles. This approach ensures that efforts to revitalize communities are holistic and mindful of their environmental, cultural, and historical contexts.

In Figure 3.3, the first page of the assessment tool is shown. In this assessment criterion are assessed by determining if they have been “Adopted” already or if that is something that they need to“Add or Improve ” that specific criteria. With 129 criteria in total across the three selected sections, each criterion requires a binary “Yes” or “No” assessment based on whether the community meets the written criteria. Marking the appropriate box under “Adopted” or “Add or Improve” depends on the community’s compliance with the criterion.

Conducting this assessment necessitates a thorough understanding of public documents such as municipal codes, regulations, plans, and policies. Alternatively, prior knowledge of the community may facilitate completing the assessment, as some criteria may not be universally applicable.



## Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities

***Section I: Revitalize Village and Town Centers***

*This tool is part of the Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities, developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. EPA suggests that communities using this tool complete this section before filling out other sections. For more information and the tool's other sections, see https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-growth-self-assessment-rural-communities.*

Infill development[1] brings new residents and jobs to existing neighborhoods and village or town centers, sparing farmland and open space on the periphery of the community that might otherwise develop to accommodate them. By placing new houses, offices, and shops in village and town centers, communities can reduce the amount people must drive to meet their daily needs while also spending less on infrastructure by getting more out of existing streets, water pipes, and sewer lines. Thriving town centers also drive local economic development and make it easier for people to walk to stores and services. Village and town centers are unique aspects of rural communities that contribute to a sense of place for visitors and residents.

| ***Goal: Revitalize Village and Town Centers*** | ***Adopted?*** | ***Add or Improve?*** | ***Context [2]*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Using Codes to Encourage Infill Development*** | | | |
| **Do codes define the requirements for infill development?** | | | |
| Strategy 1: Codes specifically identify infill / redevelopment areas and set clear standards for evaluating and approving development within these areas.[3, 4] *[Codes do not specify notes for infill development but acknowledge the Neighborhood Revitalization Program as an incentive program for supporting infill development for residential areas within the 2019 Comprehensive Plan.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 2: Codes and ordinances differentiate between areas with and without existing infrastructure by requiring developer participation in the cost of extending infrastructure to serve new development.[5,6] *[Not codes, but yet again, they recognize the NRP as a zone and an RHID that can be applied anywhere in the city.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| **Do development policies provide incentives for infill development?** | | | |

[1] Infill development is development on vacant or underused land in previously developed areas.
[2] Self-Assessment topics and policy options apply to one or more of the following scales: 1 – large town/small city (population is approximately 10,000 or greater); 2 - village/small town (population is typically under 10,000); 3 – rural (very low-density places, working lands, and natural areas outside of towns, villages, and cities.
[3] Jupiter, Florida Zoning Definitions (http://www.jupiter.fl.us/index.aspx?NID=693).
[4] Infill development can be difficult if it is subject to requirements for new development (e.g., on-site parking minimums, on-site stormwater facilities, and large setbacks).
[5] Explanation of Development Exactions and Incentives (http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/toolkit/m1/ftools/dei.shtml).
[6] Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances (http://www.rockvillemd.gov/index.aspx?nid=214).

**Figure 3.3** Shows the first page of the assessment.

This research initiative aims to establish intentional partnerships with two distinct communities. This strategic approach facilitates a comprehensive exploration of fundamental concepts outlined in the assessment while fostering relationships conducive to uncovering nuanced insights into the communities. By doing so, the research endeavors to shed light on the factors influencing the persistence or absence of specific criteria within these areas, thus enabling the construction of a narrative elucidating the reasons behind such phenomena. Critical to the success of this endeavor is the establishment of discernible relationships with the selected communities, facilitating the exchange of resources essential for a thorough examination of the completed assessment. Trips to the chosen communities and consultation about their potential nuances will help determine whether the community meets the criteria.

Although the utilization of public community documents will form the basis for much of the assessment process ensuring the accuracy of listed criteria is paramount. This precision enhances the quality of the proposed solutions, enabling a more practical analysis. It is important to emphasize that the evaluation of communities will not revolve around their effectiveness in implementing Smart Growth strategies. Rather, the primary objective of the assessment lies in offering solutions in key areas conducive to the implementation of growth tendencies aligned with rural character values. The next step in this research is to find eligible communities to conduct this assessment.

## Study Area Selection

Given the intricate and context-dependent nature of the assessment, conducting a background study of a study area is paramount to ensure an accurate evaluation of the community's adherence to the criteria. A background study would furnishes essential context for identifying the most relevant and effective criteria for assessing the community's alignment with Smart Growth principles. However, before delving into the assessment process, it is crucial to select suitable rural communities for evaluation.

In identifying these communities, this research relies on the definition provided by the Office of Management and Budget. According to their criteria, any area outside of a metropolitan statistical area, including micropolitan areas, is considered rural. Despite often containing urban population figures, micropolitan areas are categorized as rural.

While the primary focus of this study is to investigate the applicability of Smart Growth strategies in a rural context, this endeavor aligns with personal and professional interests that extend beyond the scope of the study itself.

Although any rural area in the country could be chosen for research purposes, a specific interest in working in the western-half of Kansas guides the community selection. While acknowledging the geographical limitation as a study constraint, this intentional focus strengthens the investigation's precision and reliability. It enhances the accuracy of findings by aligning them with research objectives and a commitment to the rural community in western Kansas.

## Core-Based Statistical Areas in Kansas

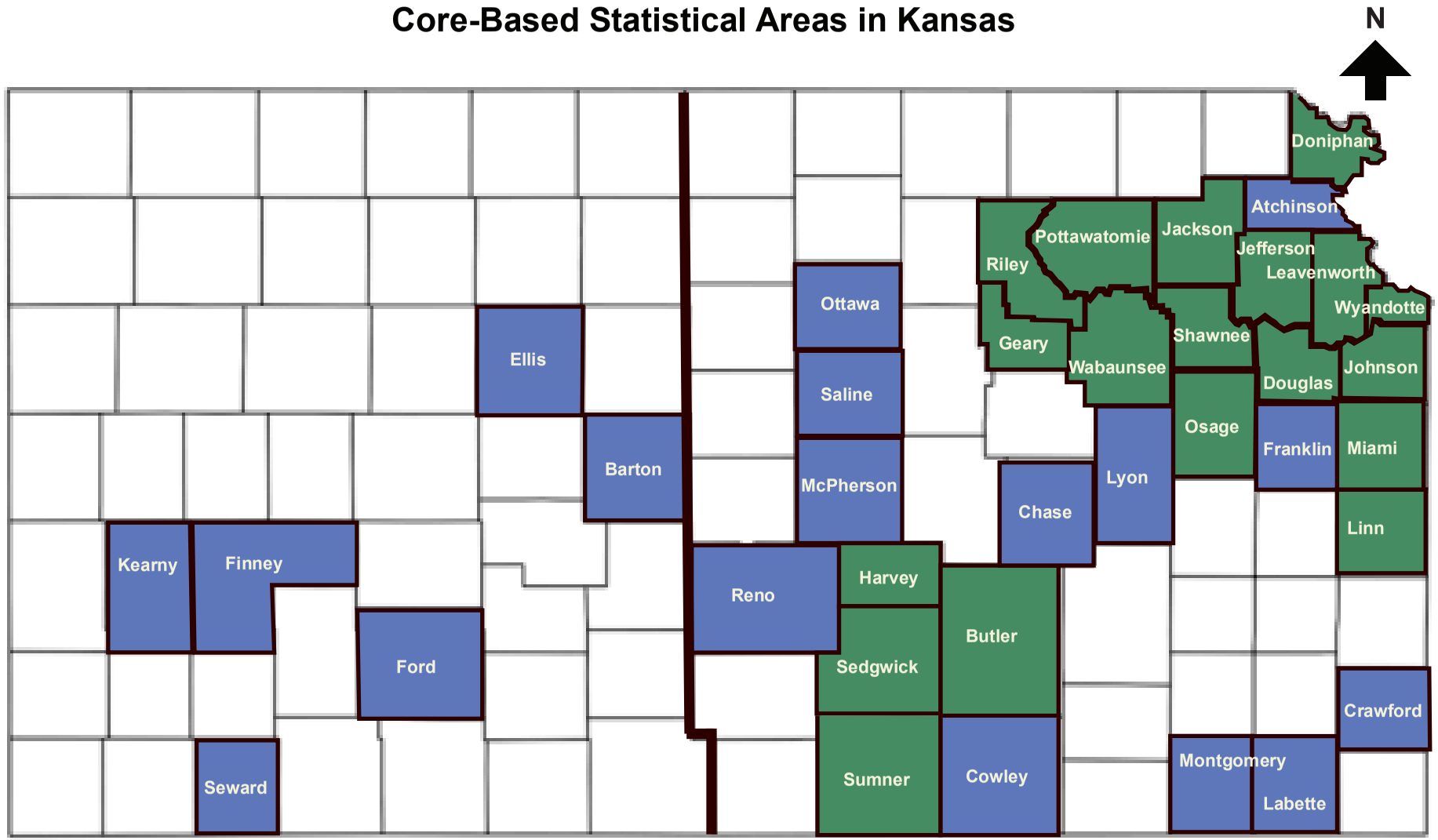



**Figure 3.4** This map shows all of the core-based statistical areas in Kansas. It utilizes the Office of Management and Budget's classifications.

Focusing on the western-half of Kansas significantly narrows down the selection of rural communities. For this research, a deliberate approach involves choosing two communities in this region for comparative analysis. This method aims to discern the dynamic nuances of growth and development in rural Kansas, identifying patterns, trends, and context-related factors. Examining shared gaps in policies and plans between these communities helps uncover challenges in rural areas, facilitating learning and informing communities of context-specific solutions.

Two primary criteria for community selection have been established: in western-half of Kansas and rural areas. The final criterion is evidence of a fast growing urban population, acknowledging the complexity of coexisting urban and rural elements. This consideration arises from the literature review, indicating that communities with both characteristics may risk losing their rural identity due to population demand.

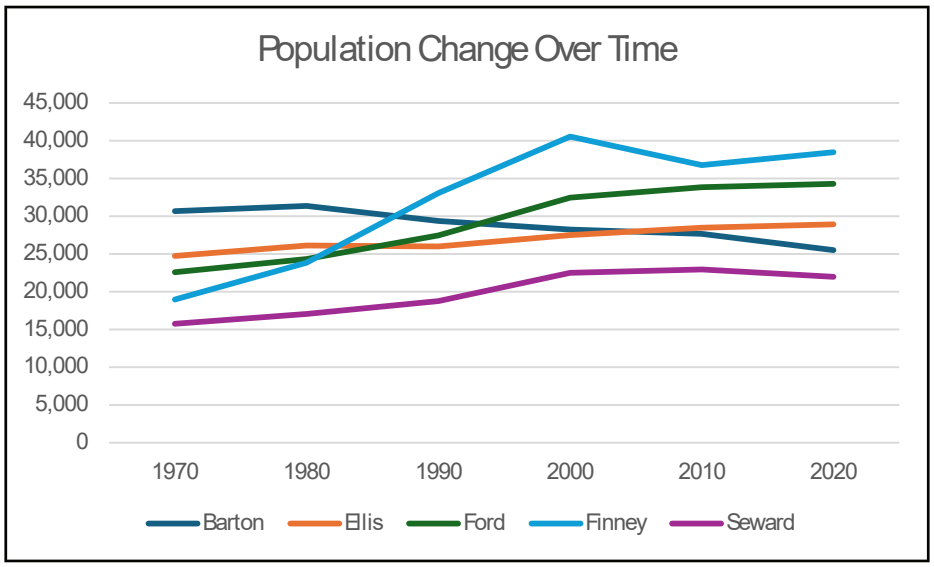



**Figure 3.5** This graph shows U.S. Census Bureau's Decennial population for five western Kansas counties from the years 1970 to 2020.

The region comprises five counties with the highest populations: Barton, Ellis, Ford, Finney, and Seward. While counties like Ellis and Barton initially had higher populations in the 1970s, both Finney and Ford counties have since outpaced the others and are the only ones with populations exceeding 30,000 people.

Due to the rapid growth experienced by these areas, they face a heightened risk of haphazard development, which could potentially compromise their rural character. Consequently, these communities represent valuable subjects for research and offer potential sources of solutions to address the challenges associated with unchecked development while preserving their distinct rural character.

By focusing on Finney and Ford counties respective core-based statistical areas in Garden City and Dodge City, this research can provide insights into how rapidly growing rural communities navigate the delicate balance between growth and preservation. Analyzing their experiences and approaches can yield valuable lessons and strategies applicable to other rural communities facing similar challenges. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to the development of sustainable solutions that uphold the unique rural character of these communities while promoting responsible growth and development.

The intentional choice of these communities, guided by the specified criteria, guarantees the practical application of Smart Growth principles in rural areas. This methodological approach enables a profound comprehension of the distinctive challenges and opportunities within the rural context and facilitates the customized implementation of Smart Growth strategies. The overarching goal is to promote sustainable development, actively address challenges linked to growth, and safeguard the unique character of these communities.

## Background Information - Dodge City

The population of Dodge City and its surrounding Ford County has consistently grown over the past few decades. Between 1990 and 2010, the population increased by nearly 30%, implying an approximate 10% growth rate per decade. However, as per U.S. Decennial Census data, recent years have seen a slower ascent, with a mere 1.6% population growth recorded from 2010 to 2020. This trend mirrors broader demographic shifts observed in southwest Kansas, characterized by a high Hispanic population and a decline in the population identifying as white alone (*Dodge City 2030 Comprehensive Plan, 2023; United States Census Bureau, 2023*).

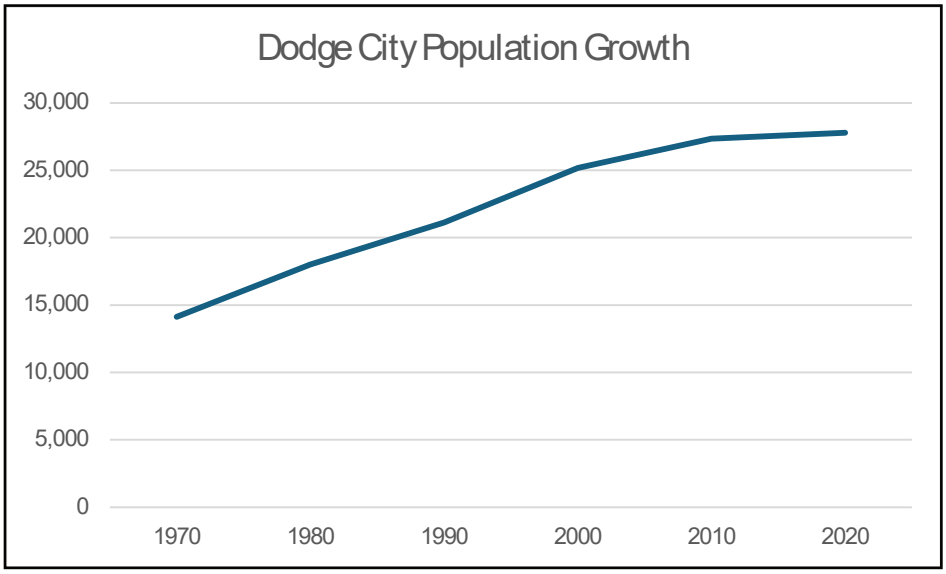



**Figure 3.6** Shows Dodge City's population change.

In Ford County specifically, the population has undergone significant changes. In 1990, the population stood at 27,463, with Hispanics comprising just under 16%. By 2020, the population had reached 34,287, with Hispanics constituting roughly 58% of the demographic makeup. This demographic transition underscores the need for Dodge City to balance its growth with creating diverse job opportunities, as outlined in the Dodge City Comprehensive Plan (*Dodge City 2030 Comprehensive Plan, 2023; United States Census Bureau, 2023*).

The expansion of Dodge City's agricultural and food processing industry has been a significant driver of growth and economic success. Companies like National Beef Packing Company and Cargill Meat Solutions, employing over 2,500 individuals, have attracted workers outside the community (*Knight, 2015*). However, this transformative economic and demographic growth has shifted Dodge City from an affordable, isolated rural community to a more urbanized setting that must compete nationally to sustain its growth trajectory (*Dodge City 2030 Comprehensive Plan, 2023*).

**Largest Employers**

| Employer | Employees |
|---|---|
| National Beef Packing Company | 2,950 |
| Cargill Meat Solutions | 2,700 |
| Unified School District #443 | 1,292 |
| Wal-Mart Super Center | 400 |
| Western Plains Medical Complex | 295 |
| Boot Hill Casino & Resort | 288 |
| Dodge City Community College | 284 |
| Ford County Government | 263 |
| City of Dodge City | 238 |

**Table 3.1** This table shows major employers and employee counts in Dodge City as of 2015.




**Figure 3.7** Shows two two largest employers in Dodge City, National Beef Packing Company (left) and Cargil Meat Solutions (right).

As the community evolves, it faces challenges with service provision and infrastructure development. Efforts to direct growth towards areas with existing community assets aim to mitigate these challenges. Furthermore, developments like the Boot Hill Casino and Resort on the periphery represent a balance between growth and sustainable community practices. Revenue and job opportunities generated by such ventures can contribute positively to the community's needs, reinforcing the importance of strategic development planning (*Dodge City 2030 Comprehensive Plan, 2023*).

Dodge City boasts a rich tapestry of culturally significant landmarks and events that reflect its past and represent its present heritage. Dodge City Days, organized by the Dodge City Chamber of Commerce, stands out as one of the state's most prominent community events. This festival spans ten days and offers diverse activities. These activities foster community cohesion, allowing individuals from various backgrounds to interact and celebrate (*Dodge City Days, 2024; Visit Dodge City, 2024; Dodge City Roundup, 2024*).




**Figure 3.8** Depicts the Dodge City Parade that takes place during the annual Dodge City Days event.

Another highlight of Dodge City's cultural calendar is the Cinco De Mayo celebration, an annual event held in Wright Park. This festival is a vibrant homage to the city's sizable Hispanic population, showcasing their heritage and traditions (*Perez, 2011*).



**Figure 3.9** Show performers during Dodge City's Cinco de Mayo Celebration at Wright Park.

Dodge City's deep-rooted connection to its Old West history is evident in its numerous historical sites, including the iconic Boot Hill Museum downtown. The city has designated its downtown business district as the historic Old Dodge City to capitalize on this heritage. This strategic move aims to preserve and perpetuate the Western theme throughout the district, ensuring visitors and residents can immerse themselves in the city's storied past (*Main Street Dodge City, 2024; Boot Hill Museum, 2024*).




**Figure 3.10** Depicts two major attractions in Dodge City's downtown area in the Boot Hill Museum (left) and El Capitan Longhorn Statue (right).

Dodge City and Ford County are nestled within the expansive Great Plains landscape, which includes vast upland plains and occasional stream floors, plains, and intermediate slopes. The region's geography is primarily shaped by the Arkansas River, the county's principal drainage system.

With fertile soils and favorable climatic conditions, the land in Dodge City and Ford County is well-suited for agricultural endeavors. This agricultural landscape supports a variety of crops and livestock, contributing significantly to the region's economy and livelihood.

Furthermore, Dodge City sits atop a geological feature in the Ogallala Aquifer. As one of the world's largest underground bodies of water, the Ogallala Aquifer plays a crucial role in sustaining agricultural activities and meeting water needs in the region. Its presence underscores the importance of responsible water management practices to ensure the long-term sustainability of both agricultural and municipal water resources in Dodge City and Ford County (*Waite et al., 1942*).

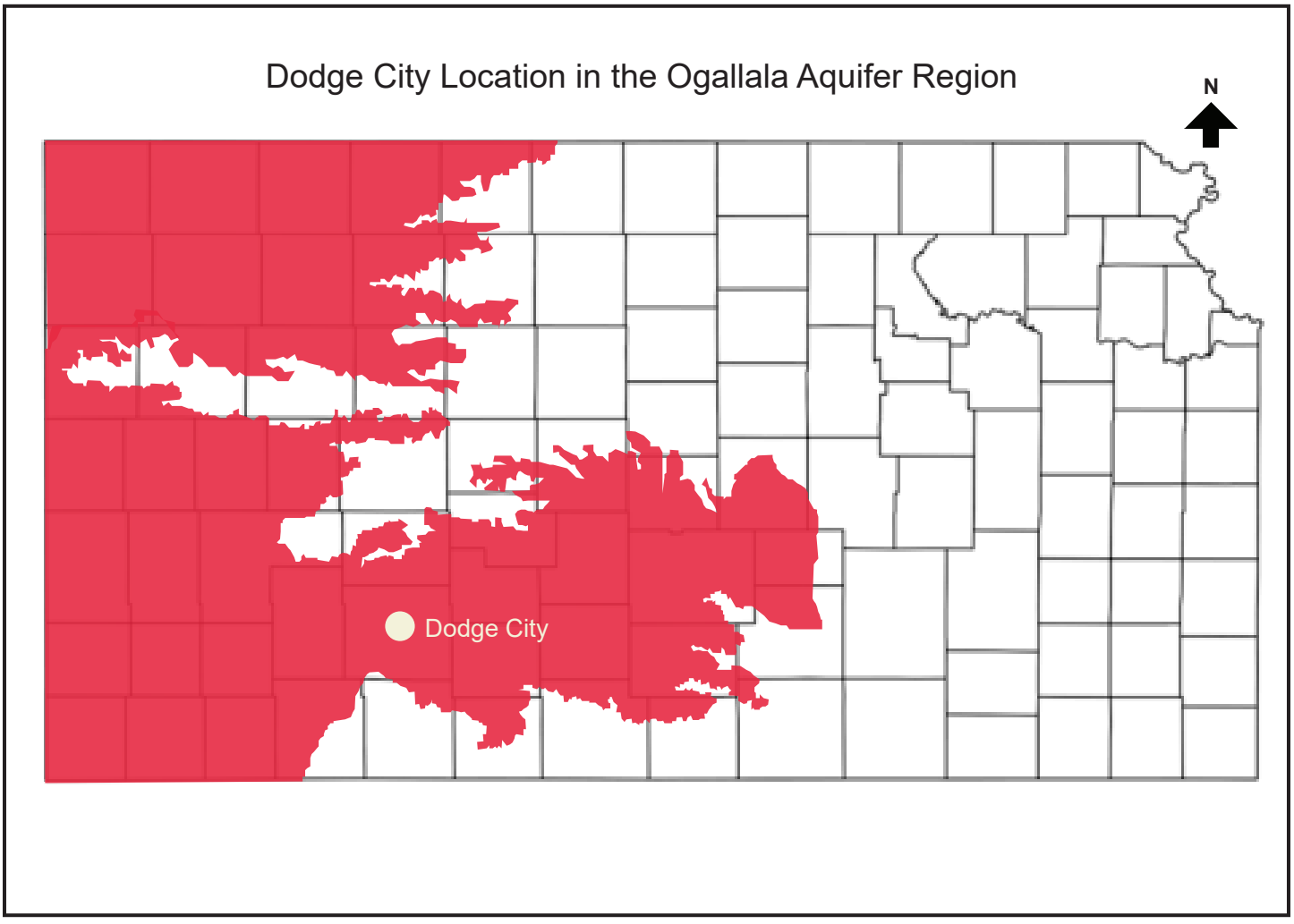



**Figure 3.11** Shows where Dodge City lands in the Ogallala Aquifer region.

## Background Information - Garden City

Between 1960 and 1990, Garden City experienced remarkable population growth. According to the U.S. Decennial Census, the population surged from 11,811 in the 1960s to 24,097 by the 1990s, more than doubling within three decades. However, in recent years, the pace of growth has decelerated. From 2010 to 2020, the population increased by a modest 5.6%. Even with this, the city contends that these figures might underestimate its population. According to research cited in the Comprehensive Plan, the city estimates its population to be closer to 31,290 residents, suggesting an underestimation of nearly 3,000 individuals by the U.S. Census Bureau (Garden City Comprehensive Plan*, 2023; U.S. Censu Bureau, 2023*).

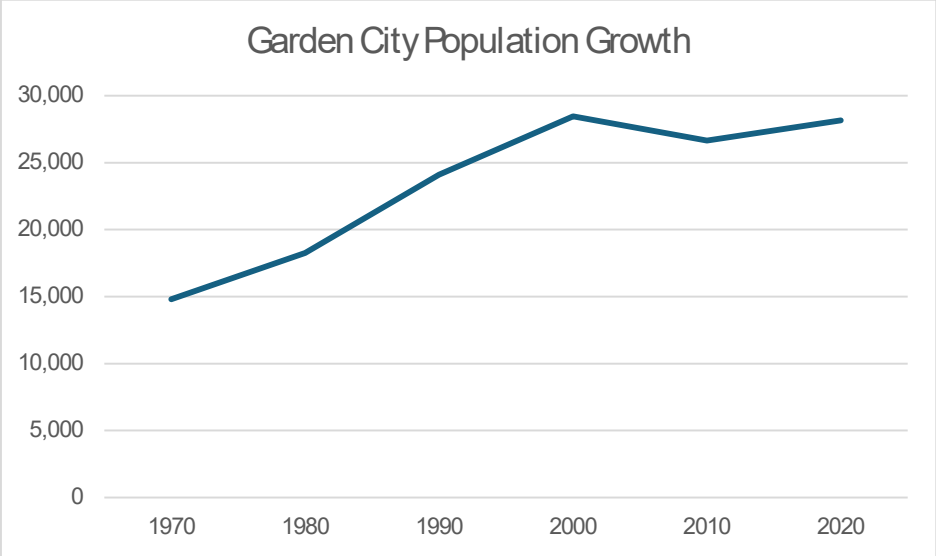



**Figure 3.12** Shows Garden City's Population Change

The dramatic growth of Garden City can be attributed to four decades of expansion in the meat-packing industry. The construction of the world's largest meat packing plant near Garden City in the 1980s was a catalyst, leading to a rapid influx of residents. This is still somewhat represented in terms of Kearny county as the reason for why this county is included within the micropolitan area is due to the high percentage of residents who comute to work in Finney County (*Benson, 1996*).

**Largest Employers**

| Employer | Employees |
|---|---|
| Tyson Fresh Meats | 3,600 |
| Unified School District #457 | 1,299 |
| St. Catherine Hospital | 1,292 |
| City of Garden City | 400 |
| Finney County | 295 |

**Table 3.2** This table shows major employers and employee counts in Garden City since 2021.




**Figure 3.13** Depicts Tyson Fresh Meats, one of the city's top employers.

Those plants, often seeking to streamline labor processes, attracted low-wage workers, many of whom were immigrants. Consequently, this influx has significantly altered the demographic composition of Garden City (*Benson, 1996*).

Analysis of school district data reveals a substantial demographic shift during the 1980s. While the population was predominantly Anglo (white) in the early part of the decade, comprising 82% of the population, by 1988, the Anglo population had declined to approximately 64%, with the Hispanic population rising to 34%. Presently, Garden City, alongside Dodge City and Liberal, stands as one of the few cities in Kansas with a Hispanic majority, reflecting the profound demographic transformation over the years (*Benson, 1996*).

As outlined in its Comprehensive Plan, Garden City positions itself as a regional leader in Southwest Kansas, catering to the needs of its progressively diverse population by expanding opportunities and enhancing its overall quality of life. While the city responds to growing demand by expanding outward, it concurrently prioritizes the revitalization of its core. Emphasizing a vibrant blend of new housing and commercial development, particularly in its downtown area, Garden City aims to attract individuals from across the region, enticing them to partake in the city's sought-after high quality of life. This strategic approach accommodates growth and fosters community engagement and economic vitality, positioning Garden City as a dynamic hub within the broader region (*Garden City Comprehensive Plan, 2023*).

Garden City boasts several iconic features, including Finnup Park, Garden Rapids at the Big Pool, and the Windsor Hotel, all of which contribute to preserving its historic character. These landmarks serve as enduring reminders of the community's heritage, anchoring its identity in the collective memory of its residents (*Garden City Comprehensive Plan, 2023*).




**Figure 3.14** Depicts two major attractions in Garden City. The Windsor Hotel (left) and Finnup Park (right).

Moreover, Garden City leverages cultural events like Fiesta Mexicana and Beef Empire Days to reaffirm its commitment to honoring and preserving its cultural and historical resources. These events celebrate the city's diverse heritage and foster a sense of pride and belonging among its residents (*Garden City Comprehensive Plan, 2023*).




**Figure 3.15** Depicts childen on a float during the Fiesta Mexican event.

Significantly, these efforts are bolstered by the city's Downtown Plan, which aims to revitalize the urban core and enhance the overall livability of Garden City. By investing in its cultural and historical assets, Garden City continues to distinguish itself as a unique and vibrant place to live, enriching the lives of its residents and visitors.

Like Dodge City and Ford County, Garden City, and Finney County are also nestled within the Great Plains landscape. Agricultural practices in Finney County are standard, and access to the Ogallala Aquifer further reinforces that notion. While the prominence of this asset is valuable for Garden City and this region, ensuring its long-term use spurs the responsibility to engage in sustainable practices for the continued use of this resource (*Holmes and Latte, 1944*).

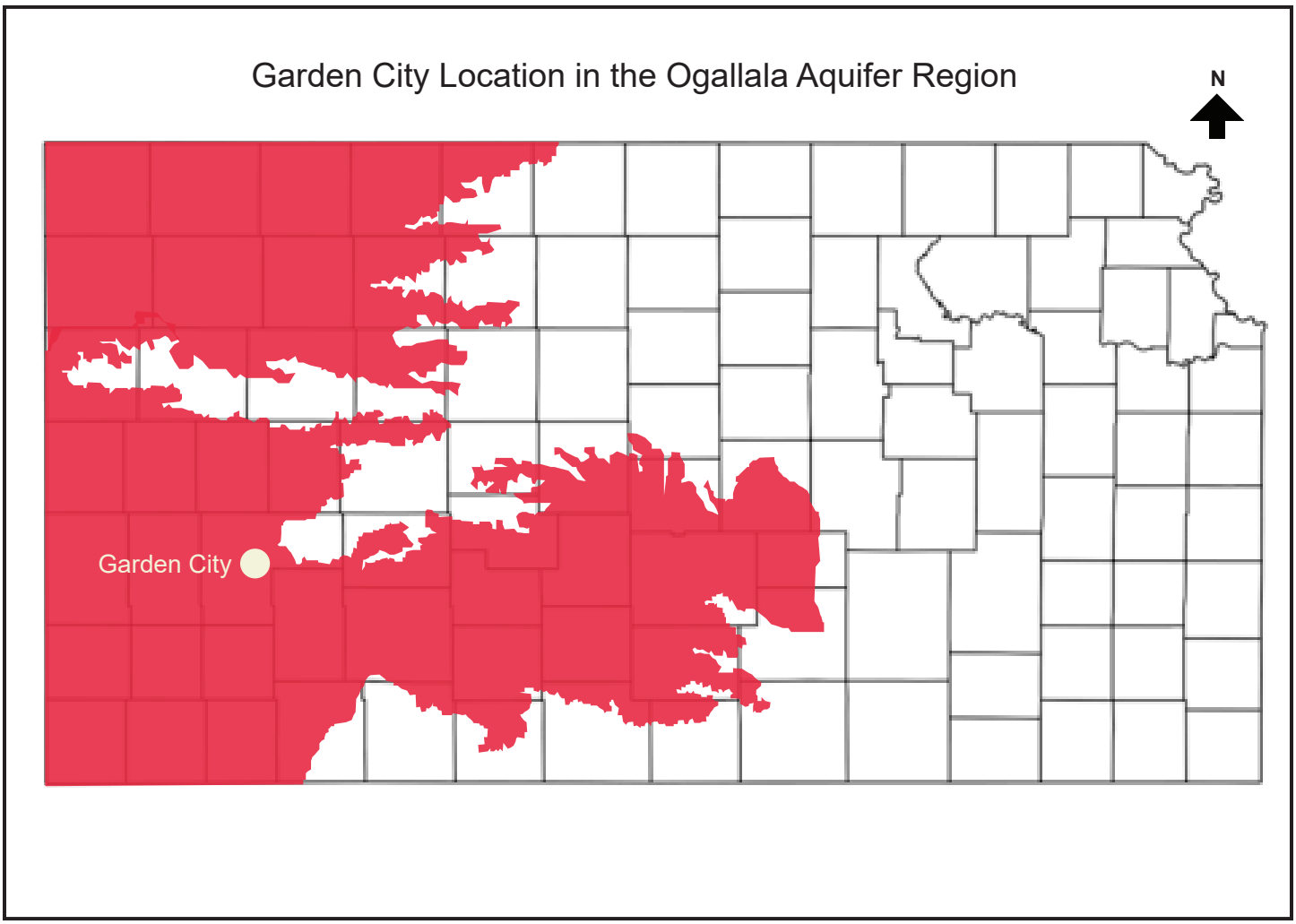



**Figure 3.16** Shows where Garden City lands in the Ogallala Aquifer region.

# Chapter 4 - Assessment

## Comparative Analysis of Communities

In this section, the research will thoroughly examine the comprehensive results of the Environmental Protection Agency's Smart Growth Assessment, as outlined in the methodology. Building upon the groundwork laid in the preceding sections, this research will delve into the findings elucidated by the assessment. With a focused lens on understanding the unique dynamics of rural communities, this analysis aims to uncover nuanced patterns and unveil significant correlations. By doing so, it will open up the narrative to offer solutions to the underlying mechanisms of Garden City's and Dodge City's local policies and plans.

Through a detailed examination of the assessment results, this research seeks to gain deeper insights into how these communities are implementing Smart Growth principles and the effectiveness of these strategies in preserving their rural character while managing growth and development. By unraveling these findings, the research aims to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement in current local policies and plans. Ultimately, the goal is to inform future decision-making processes and facilitate the development of more sustainable and resilient communities in Garden City and Dodge City, as well as in similar rural areas facing comparable challenges.

The figures presented in this section represent an amalgamation of all criteria categorized under "Add or Improve," pinpointing specific areas where Dodge City and Garden City could introduce enhancements to address the challenges identified in the assessment. These figures serve as visual aids to illustrate potential strategies for bolstering existing infrastructure or implementing new initiatives aimed at resolving critical issues outlined in the evaluation. The entire assessment will be found in the appendix, which provides a complete look into all the criteria examined.

| Revitalize Village and Town Centers | Dodge City | Garden City | Shared |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Codes specifically identify infill/ redevelopment areas and set clear standards for evaluating and approving development. | | | |
| • Codes and ordinances differentiate between areas with and without existing infrastructure by requiring developer participation in the cost of extending infrastructure to serve new development. | | | |
| • Impact fees are set, and/or public utilities are priced according to the project's distance from the downtown core and designated growth areas. | | | |
| • Provide density bonuses for mixed-use and/or residential development in downtowns and village centers. | | | |
| • Expedited permit review and/or lower development fees encourage mixed-use, residential, or infill development in downtowns and village centers. | | | |
| • Provide incentives to rehabilitate existing structures. | | | |
| • Establish a minimum lot size to preserve the community's rural character for permitted development in agricultural areas and encourage the clustering of housing units. | | | |
| • Zoning requires a minimum density in mixed-use districts. | | | |
| • Reduce or eliminate minimum lot sizes in areas targeted for infill development. | | | |

**Table 4.1** Shows the criteria absent in either Dodge City and/or Garden City's plans and policies. The criteria were derived from the Environmental Protection Agency's "*Smart Growth Assessment for Rural Communities*," and researcher Caden Pfeifer (2024) constructed the table.

## Smart Growth Strategy

| Revitalize Village and Town Centers | Dodge City | Garden City | Shared |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Codes encourage ground-floor retail space in village and town centers through tools such as density bonuses. | | | |
| • Policies and codes ensure windows or active uses on building facades in village and town centers. | | | |
| • Screen parking areas from sidewalks with landscaping and/or use green infrastructure techniques to make parking lots more attractive. | | | |
| • Codes allow street closures for outdoor markets or street festivals. | | | |
| • Codes allow outdoor dining. | | | |
| • Encourage alleys in new residential and mixed-use developments to reduce the number of curb cuts and driveways. | | | |
| • Codes set a maximum number of curb cuts per block in pedestrian-oriented or mixed-use districts. | | | |
| • Count shared or off-site parking toward parking minimums. | | | |
| • Encourage new development in village and town centers, including bike racks or other bike parking facilities. | | | |

**Table 4.2** Shows the criteria absent in either Dodge City and/or Garden City's plans and policies. The criteria were derived from the Environmental Protection Agency's "*Smart Growth Assessment for Rural Communities*," and researcher Caden Pfeifer (2024) constructed the table.

## Smart Growth Strategy

| Revitalize Village and Town Centers | Dodge City | Garden City | Shared |
|---|---|---|---|
| • A business improvement district or similar special taxing district funds enhanced services for village and town centers. | | | |
| • Locate public facilities in developed areas rather than on the fringes of the community. | | | |
| • Infrastructure policies prioritize rehabilitating or improving existing systems over system expansion. | | | |
| • Level of service standards for public facilities guide rezoning applications. | | | |
| • Prices or time limits encourage a sufficient turnover of parking spaces and availability in village and town centers. | | | |
| • Purchase and make available tax-delinquent properties for rehabilitation or redevelopment. | | | |
| • Financial incentives are available for brownfield redevelopment. | | | |
| • Adopt a multimodal mobility plan with policies and strategies for all modes, including bicycling, walking, transit, and driving. | | | |
| • Wayfinding signs help pedestrians and bicyclists find vital destinations. | | | |

**Table 4.3** Shows the criteria absent in either Dodge City and/or Garden City's plans and policies. The criteria were derived from the Environmental Protection Agency's "*Smart Growth Assessment for Rural Communities*," and researcher Caden Pfeifer (2024) constructed the table.

## Smart Growth Strategy

| Preserve Natural Habitats and Ecosystems | Dodge City | Garden City | Shared |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Codes encourage the re-use of gray water where some or all water used in a building is captured, treated, and used or reused on site. | | | |
| • Codes include incentives or requirements for green infrastructure, including permeable pavement, vegetated swales near roadways, green roofs, and rain gardens. | | | |
| • Codes provide incentives for rain barrels and cisterns. | | | |
| • Climate-appropriate and native plants that use less water are encouraged or required. | | | |
| • Local land use regulations require riparian and wetland buffer areas. | | | |
| • New development is prohibited in flood plains unless it is a use that can be flooded without threatening property or human life. | | | |
| • Prohibit development on previously undeveloped land where the elevation is lower than that of the 100-year flood as defined by FEMA. | | | |
| • Regulations require restoring a development site's degraded riparian or wetland areas. | | | |

**Table 4.4** Shows the criteria absent in either Dodge City and/or Garden City's plans and policies. The criteria were derived from the Environmental Protection Agency's "*Smart Growth Assessment for Rural Communities*," and researcher Caden Pfeifer (2024) constructed the table.

| Preserve Natural Habitats and Ecosystems | Dodge City | Garden City | Shared |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Codes include provisions that exist to minimize or reduce the amount of impervious surface. | | | |
| • Critical water resource areas cannot be counted when calculating allowable density on a site. | | | |
| • Prohibit development on previously undeveloped land within a setback to any endangered or protected fish and wildlife habitat or wetland conservation area. | | | |
| • Streetlights and commercial lighting direct light to the streets to preserve dark skies. | | | |
| • The local government uses open space or recreation impact fees to preserve open space. | | | |
| • Open space dedication and/or set-aside requirements exist and are based on the demand generated by new development. | | | |
| • Public trees removed or damaged during construction of private development are required to be replaced on- or off-site with an equivalent amount of tree caliper. | | | |
| • Construction protection rules exist, covering all public trees. | | | |

**Table 4.5** Shows the criteria absent in either Dodge City and/or Garden City's plans and policies. The criteria were derived from the Environmental Protection Agency's "*Smart Growth Assessment for Rural Communities*," and researcher Caden Pfeifer (2024) constructed the table.

## Smart Growth Strategy

| Preserve Natural Habitats and Ecosystems | Dodge City | Garden City | Shared |
|---|---|---|---|
| • A transfer of development rights exists and enables transactions between well-defined sending and receiving areas. | | | |
| • Local tax credits are available for land conservation. of sensitive land. | | | |
| • Designate and protect critical natural lands outside the town centers, identifying areas with a solid rural legacy. | | | |
| • Designated growth and preservation areas are defined by a municipal services area, municipal development area, or similar designation. | | | |
| • Brownfield and other contaminated sites have been successfully remediated. | | | |
| • Measures are in place to minimize the use of water pollutants, including pesticides, herbicides, and chemical fertilizers, by both public and private entities. | | | |
| • Inventory the community's current tree cover and complete plans to protect and expand the tree canopy. | | | |

**Table 4.6** Shows the criteria absent in either Dodge City and/or Garden City's plans and policies. The criteria were derived from the Environmental Protection Agency's "*Smart Growth Assessment for Rural Communities*," and researcher Caden Pfeifer (2024) constructed the table.

## Smart Growth Strategy

| Preserve Natural Habitats and Ecosystems | Dodge City | Garden City | Shared |
|---|---|---|---|
| • A green infrastructure plan, developed with various public- and private-sector partners, connects habitats to protect habitat. | | | |
| Encourage green infrastructure strategies to collect and treat stormwater runoff, such as rain gardens, vegetated swales, and permeable pavements, through incentives in new developments or redevelopments. | | | |
| • Road construction or reconstruction projects implement green infrastructure strategies when possible. | | | |
| • Public programs exist to support fee simple acquisition of sensitive land. | | | |
| • The community has the transfer of development rights or purchase of development rights programs for conservation easements. | | | |
| • A community land trust supports managed open space. | | | |
| • Prioritize community-owned lands, such as community gardens or open spaces held in a land trust, to be protected from development. | | | |

**Table 4.7** Shows the criteria absent in either Dodge City and/or Garden City's plans and policies. The criteria were derived from the Environmental Protection Agency's "*Smart Growth Assessment for Rural Communities*," and researcher Caden Pfeifer (2024) constructed the table.

## Smart Growth Strategy

| Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources | Dodge City | Garden City | Shared |
|---|---|---|---|
| • A local historic district or overlay zone has been adopted by ordinance. | | | |
| • Design standards apply to new residential and commercial development in historic or cultural districts, requiring design features consistent with the area's historic architecture or natural features. | | | |
| • Establish a review process for development in protected viewsheds. | | | |
| • Local codes regulate the height and size of signs and billboards in protected viewsheds. | | | |
| • Subdivision codes encourage techniques like cluster subdivisions to protect viewsheds. | | | |
| • Develop an inventory of significant viewsheds. | | | |
| • Historic structures and sites have interpretative signs and are included in the community's wayfinding signs. | | | |

**Table 4.8** Shows the criteria absent in either Dodge City and/or Garden City's plans and policies. The criteria were derived from the Environmental Protection Agency's "*Smart Growth Assessment for Rural Communities*," and researcher Caden Pfeifer (2024) constructed the table.

## Summary of Assessment

It's crucial to acknowledge that before the assessment, neither Dodge City nor Garden City explicitly recognized Smart Growth as a core planning strategy in their primary documents. However, the EPA assessment revealed a positive outcome: both communities had implemented more than half of the Smart Growth principles under scrutiny in this research. While this result doesn't immediately confirm their alignment with Smart Growth sensibilities, it underscores both cities' practical efforts in their ongoing sustainability initiatives. Nevertheless, with 126 criteria in the assessment, there is still ample room for discussion and improvement.

The next significant step in this research involves generating community-specific recommendations tailored to Dodge City and Garden City's unique contexts. However, before delving into this discussion, it's essential to address the Comparative Analysis. Reviewing all the Smart Growth strategies that each community lacks would provide a comprehensive analysis and individualized solutions, and including the "Shared" category in the Comparative Analysis was intentional.

The solutions derived from the shared analysis have the potential to be more scalable and generalized across different contexts. By identifying shared patterns and addressing areas where each community can improve its planning policies, the proposed solutions may offer strategies for other communities facing similar challenges to adapt to their contexts. This approach extends the impact of the research beyond the immediate context of Dodge City and Garden City, potentially benefiting a broader range of communities. The following pages will display the "Shared" strategies that both Dodge City and Garden City can implement.

**Table 4.9** Shows the first page of the "Shared" criteria from both Dodge and Garden from the assessment. Table made by author Caden Pfeifer, 2024.

# Comparative Results

## Revitalize Village and Town Centers

1. Codes specifically identify infill/ redevelopment areas and set clear standards for evaluating and approving development.
2. Impact fees are set, and/or public utilities are priced according to the project's distance from the downtown core and designated growth areas.
3. Provide property tax abatements for mixed-use and residential development in downtowns and village centers.
4. Zoning requires a minimum density in mixed-use districts.
5. Reduce or eliminate minimum lot sizes in areas targeted for infill development.
6. Codes encourage ground-floor retail space in village and town centers through tools such as density bonuses.
7. Encourage alleys in new residential and mixed-use developments to reduce the number of curb cuts and driveways.
8. Count shared or off-site parking toward parking minimums.

## Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems

9. Codes encourage the re-use of gray water where some or all water used in a building is captured, treated, and used or reused on site.
10. Codes include incentives or requirements for green infrastructure, including permeable pavement, vegetated swales near roadways, green roofs, and rain gardens.
11. Codes provide incentives for rain barrels and cisterns.
12. Prohibit development on previously undeveloped land within a setback to any endangered or protected fish and wildlife habitat or wetland conservation area.

| |
|---|
| 13. Critical water resource areas cannot be counted when calculating allowable density on a site. |
| 14. Streetlights and commercial lighting direct light to the streets to preserve dark skies. |
| 16. The local government uses open space or recreation impact fees to preserve open space. |
| 17. Open space dedication and/or set-aside requirements exist and are based on the demand generated by new development. |
| 18. A transfer of development rights exists and enables transactions between well-defined sending and receiving areas. |
| 19. Local tax credits are available for land conservation. |
| 20. Designated growth and preservation areas are defined by a municipal services area, municipal development area, or similar designation. |
| 21. Public programs exist to support fee simple acquisition of sensitive land. |
| 22. The community has the transfer of development rights or purchase of development rights programs for conservation easements. |
| **Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources** |
| 23. Establish a review process for development in protected viewsheds (areas with views of attractive features such as ridgelines, water bodies, or landmarks). |
| 24. Local codes regulate the height and size of signs and billboards in protected viewsheds. |
| 25. Subdivision codes encourage techniques like cluster subdivisions to protect viewsheds. |
| 26. Develop an inventory of significant viewsheds. |

**Table 4.10** Shows the second page of the “Shared” criteria from both Dodge and Garden from the assessment. Table made by author Caden Pfeifer, 2024.

## Limitations of the Assessment

Before delving into the conclusion chapter of this research and subsequently providing recommendations for both Dodge City and Garden City, it is essential to address the potential limitations of this assessment. Following the conclusion of the assessment and exploration of suggestions provided within resources such as “Smart Growth Assessment for Rural Communities” and “Essential Smart Growth Fixes for Rural Planning, Zoning, and Development Codes,” it becomes apparent that while these strategies are practical and include instances of successful implementation across the country, there remains one major limitation.

The significant limitation is that some of the options provided in these resources come from communities much larger than rural communities. While they offer valuable references on how these strategies can be introduced, planners and policymakers must make decisions relevant to their community’s context. While some solutions offered may still benefit both Dodge City and Garden City, it’s essential to recognize that larger communities have very different contextual differences that influenced the introduction of those strategies.

While this research draws from successful strategies and instances, its primary goal is to provide personalized recommendations that are specifically tailored to the needs and challenges of Dodge City and Garden City. By considering each community’s unique characteristics, the recommendations presented aim to be contextually relevant and maximize their effectiveness in fostering sustainable growth and development.

## Assessment Recommendations

The final step in this chapter involves generating recommendations tailored to Dodge City and Garden City. After Utilizing the assessment which examined public documents, these recommendations will serve as practical guidelines to assist the communities in achieving strategies that can help bolster sustainible rural development.

The primary objective of this section is not to critique existing public plans and policies but rather to illustrate new opportunities for Dodge City and Garden City to pursue to promote sustainability and growth within their communities. These context-specific recommendations aim to guide the communities toward informed decision-making and proactive measures that align with their unique needs and goals.

Revitalize Village and Town Centers

*1. Codes specifically identify infill/ redevelopment areas and set clear standards for evaluating and approving development.*

Establishing precise standards and definitions for identified areas earmarked for infill/redevelopment within community ordinances can be a helpful resource. While these terms are referenced in community documents such as Comprehensive Plans or Neighborhood Revitalization plans, their absence in the code of ordinances could present a challenge to effective planning. A notable example of a community enacting these codes can be found in Jupiter, Florida's. In their Codes of Ordinances, the redevelopment overlay is clearly defined. This allows for a precise location and development standards to be determined, thereby facilitating clear connections between regulations and their corresponding geographical areas (*Jupiter, Florida Codes of Ordinances, 2024*).

By providing clear frameworks and guidelines, including explicit definitions of concepts such as infill and redevelopment areas, communities can ensure consistent interpretations and promote fair and predictable development processes for developers and community members. Notably, both Dodge City and Garden City have existing Neighborhood Revitalization Programs (NRP) and Reinvestment Housing Incentive Districts, along with development rules governing activities within these areas.

Incorporating these existing areas into public documents like codes of ordinances would be an effective strategy, ensuring that planning efforts properly define these areas and provide transparent guidance for development activities. This integration would streamline regulatory processes and promote more cohesive urban development strategies aligned with community goals and values.




**Figure 5.1** Shows the Redevelopment Overlay in Jupiter, Florida's Codes of Ordinances. The overlay has been enhanced in color to better show the overlay.

*2. Impact fees are set, and public utilities are priced according to the project's distance from the downtown core and designated growth areas.*

The guide recommends a strategy akin to the Georgia Development Impact Fee Act, which empowers local governments to levy exactions on developers through an impact fee system, thereby aiding in financing the expansion of necessary infrastructure (*Georgia Department of Community Affairs, 2024*).

However, in researching this subject, it was discovered that while impact fees generally generate higher tax revenues in higher-density mixed-use areas, their effectiveness diminishes in low-density areas, particularly along the periphery of a community.

This discrepancy could deter developers from engaging in projects in such places, posing long-term challenges as both Dodge City and Garden City seek to continue their expansion.

An alternative approach involves utilizing a fiscal impact analysis, such as Peter Katz's fiscal impact quotient model. This model enables communities to assess the economic viability of projects by examining the years required for anticipated property taxes to offset the municipality's initial costs associated with accommodating the development, calculated on a per-acre basis (*Arendt, 2015*).

By employing this metric, Dodge City and Garden City can gauge the financial feasibility of projects, allowing them to make informed decisions based on the projected fiscal impact on their community. This approach screens out developments that may impose excessive costs on the community, ensuring that proposed projects align with the municipality's long-term economic interests and fiscal sustainability goals.

*3. Provide property tax abatements for mixed-use and residential development in downtowns and village centers.*

When developers engage in renovation projects or construct new homes, the resulting increase in property taxes can pose additional financial hurdles. Tax abatements serve as a mechanism to alleviate these burdens by reducing the taxes owed, contingent upon meeting specific criteria. Notably, both Ford and Finney counties offer property tax relief for the establishment or expansion of businesses engaged in manufacturing, commerce, research, or interstate commerce activities (*Finney County, 2023; Main Street Dodge City, 2023*).

In contrast, the Cincinnati community provides a unique tax abatement program targeting downtown areas. While adhering to similar tax abatement regulations, this program explicitly focuses on downtown revitalization efforts. Under this scheme, property owners or developers must pay taxes based on the property's pre-improvement values for up to fifteen years (*City of Cincinatti Community and Economic Development, 2024*).

Dodge City and Garden City have already made strides in incentivizing economic growth through downtown revitalization, primarily through their Neighborhood Revitalization Plans, which offer a tax rebate to participants. While similar in intent, it’s worth noting the nuanced difference between a tax abatement and a rebate.

A tax abatement typically entails a reduction or elimination of taxes before they are paid, whereas a rebate involves a refund after taxes have been paid, contingent upon meeting specific requirements. While the variance between the two may seem negligible, it can influence developer preference regarding when taxes are paid, thereby influencing their decision to participate in a project. By leveraging both tax abatements and rebates, Dodge City and Garden City can enhance their attractiveness to developers and stimulate continued growth and development in their downtown areas.

*4. Zoning requires a minimum density in mixed-use districts.*

Implementing minimum-density requirements in zoning, particularly within mixed-use districts, entails setting a minimum threshold for development intensity. This approach promotes efficient land utilization, encouraging the creation of compact and mixed-use developments. By establishing minimum-density requirements, municipalities aim to enhance the economic viability of mixed-use spaces by attracting diverse businesses and residents, thereby stimulating sustainable local economic activities.

A notable example of this zoning strategy can be found in Williston, Vermont, where the community mandates a minimum area per dwelling unit. The minimum area per dwelling unit varies based on the development type, including open space or infill developments (*For the Village Zoning District - Town of Williston, Vermont, 2022*).

Dodge City and Garden City can adopt a similar approach to optimizing land use efficiency in areas where low-density sprawl is not feasible. These municipalities can ensure a purposeful and compact design in residential mixed-use areas by implementing minimum-density requirements. This strategy maximizes available space while promoting a vibrant and




**Figure 5.2** Shows the downtown location of Garden City (top) and Dodge City (bottom).

*5. Codes encourage ground-floor retail space in village and town centers through tools such as density bonuses.*

A density bonus provides an increase in either the amount of dwelling units per acre, floor area ration, or height over the baseline density. This is usually determined depending on whether a developer has met a specific requirement in the zoning (*Inclusionary Housing, 2024*).

While density bonuses are a means to incentivize mixed-use developments, Dodge City and Garden City already pursue similar objectives through alternative avenues, such as their existing Neighborhood Revitalization Plans. These initiatives offer various local incentives to promote the revitalization and development of town centers, thus aligning to foster mixed-use environments. In addition to these programs, both communities provide supplementary grants and loans to further support the realization of similar objectives, thereby preventing the urgency for incentives such as density bonuses, could potentially be implemented to further diversify their incentive options (*Dodge City Ford County, 2023; Garden City, 2023*).

*6. Reduce or eliminate minimum lot sizes in areas targeted for infill development.*

Relaxing zoning restrictions to reduce minimum lot size requirements allows developers to construct smaller, more affordable homes, expanding housing options for diverse consumers. In many municipalities across New York, eliminating minimum lot sizes is a common practice, as it helps alleviate the constraints imposed by extensive lot standards. Such large lot requirements often prove financially burdensome, particularly for lower-income individuals, as they inflate the overall cost of purchasing a home and limit access to affordable housing within the market (*Office for the Aging, New York, 2024*).

Dodge City and Garden City benefit significantly from adopting a strategic approach to zoning regulations, particularly regarding minimum lot size requirements. While eliminating all minimums may not be the optimal strategy, selectively reducing these requirements in targeted areas designated for redevelopment or growth could yield substantial advantages for both communities.

By implementing moderate reductions in minimum lot sizes, Dodge City and Garden City can facilitate the introduction of new housing options into their respective markets. This approach allows for the construction of smaller, more affordable homes, catering to a broader range of demographics and accommodating the evolving needs of increasingly diverse populations.

Moreover, these communities can foster greater housing diversity and inclusivity by strategically reducing minimum lot sizes in areas earmarked for redevelopment or growth. This enhances housing affordability and promotes neighborhood socioeconomic integration, creating more vibrant and resilient communities.

*7. Encourage alleys in new residential and mixed-use developments to reduce the number of curb cuts and driveways.*

Incorporating alleys into new development projects offers several advantages, including creating a more aesthetically pleasing public streetscape with porches and greenery instead of garage doors and driveways. Kansas City has effectively implemented this design approach by incorporating wider alleys and back-of-lot parking arrangements, enhancing the overall appeal of neighborhood frontages (*Kansas City Unified Development Codes, 2024*).

While Dodge City and Garden City have predominantly utilized traditional approaches in their residential and mixed-use developments thus far, there remains an opportunity to prioritize the integration of alleys in future projects. Implementing this approach in new developments can significantly reduce street clutter by providing designated spaces for parking and vehicle travel behind properties.

Although the absence of alleys in existing neighborhoods and districts may present challenges for retrofitting, prioritizing alley incorporation in new developments can still yield benefits. This approach enhances neighborhood attractiveness and livability while promoting pedestrian safety and community cohesion by facilitating a more organized and aesthetically pleasing streetscape.

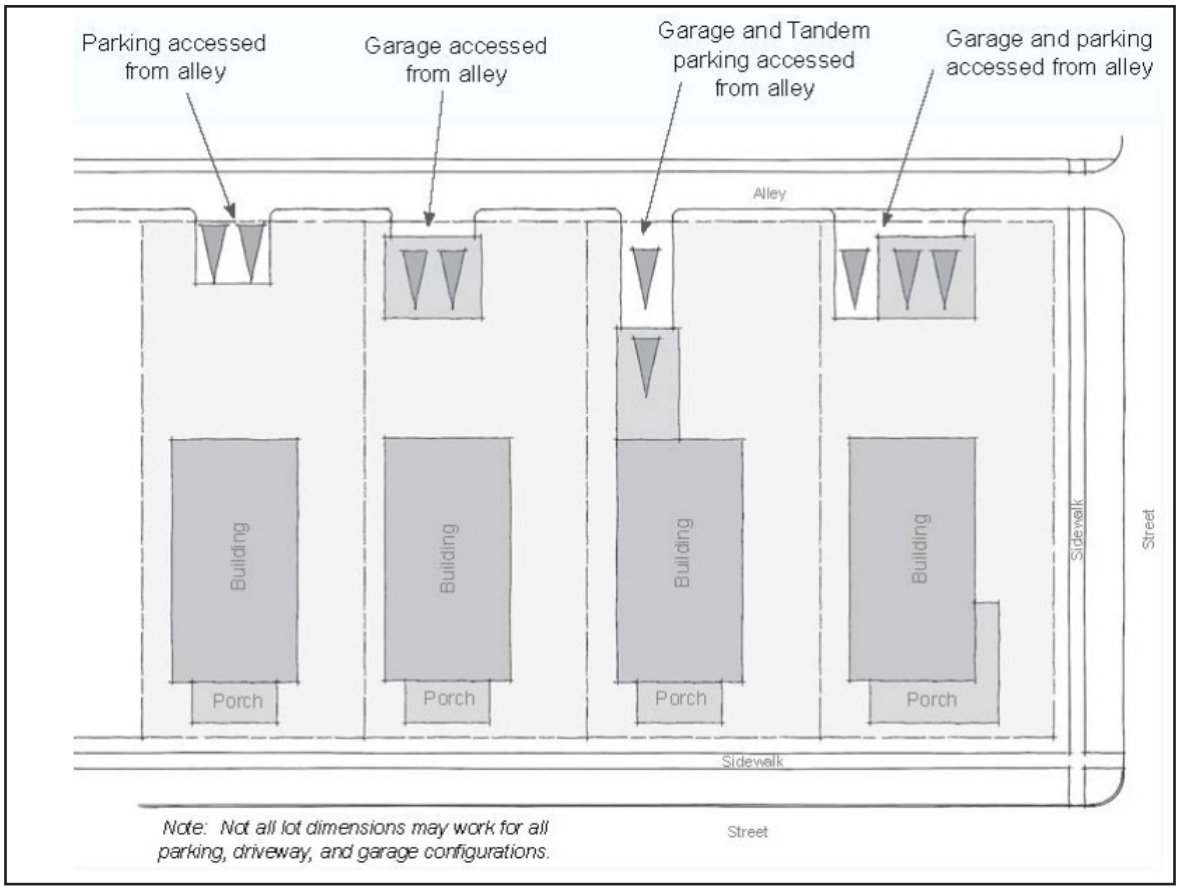



**Figure 5.3** Depicts Kansas City's alley design. Diagram from Kansas City Unified Development Codes, 2024.

*8. Count shared or off-site parking toward parking minimums.*

Encouraging shared parking presents numerous benefits for communities, including reducing the number of parking spaces required to meet minimum standards. This approach not only lowers development costs for developers but also promotes more efficient land use by minimizing the space dedicated to parking in both mixed-use and single-use areas. A prime example of successful implementation is the Circle Centre in Indianapolis, which utilized shared parking facilities in nearby locations to significantly decrease the required number of parking spaces from 6,000 to approximately 2,815. This resulted in more available land for additional developments while yielding substantial cost savings on parking amenities (*Environmental Protection Agency, 2023*).

Adopting shared parking strategies for Dodge City and Garden City could effectively mitigate conflicts over parking availability, particularly in downtown areas. Given the centralized nature of downtown districts in these communities, integrating new developments can be challenging when additional parking infrastructure is also required. By implementing shared parking arrangements, these communities can leverage existing parking facilities in and around downtown areas to reduce minimum parking requirements, thus optimizing land use and facilitating more effective development planning.

Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems

*9. Codes encourage the re-use of gray water where some or all water used in a building is captured, treated, and used or reused on site.*

Graywater, which encompasses wastewater derived from sources such as hand-washing sinks, laundry machines, and showers within a home or building, can be effectively recycled. However, before graywater can be repurposed, it must undergo treatment to remove potentially harmful elements. In Kansas, communities can establish graywater reuse facilities, provided they adhere to specifications outlined by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (*Kansas Department of Health and Environment, 2014*).

Once treated, recycled gray water can be utilized for purposes such as irrigating lawns and vegetation and conserving potable water resources. This approach offers significant benefits for communities like Dodge City and Garden City, as it enables the preservation of potable drinking water while simultaneously repurposing wastewater for other uses.

By implementing graywater reuse systems, Dodge City and Garden City can optimize water management practices within their communities. Recycled graywater can supplement agricultural practices in surrounding areas, reducing reliance on potable water sources and promoting more efficient water usage.

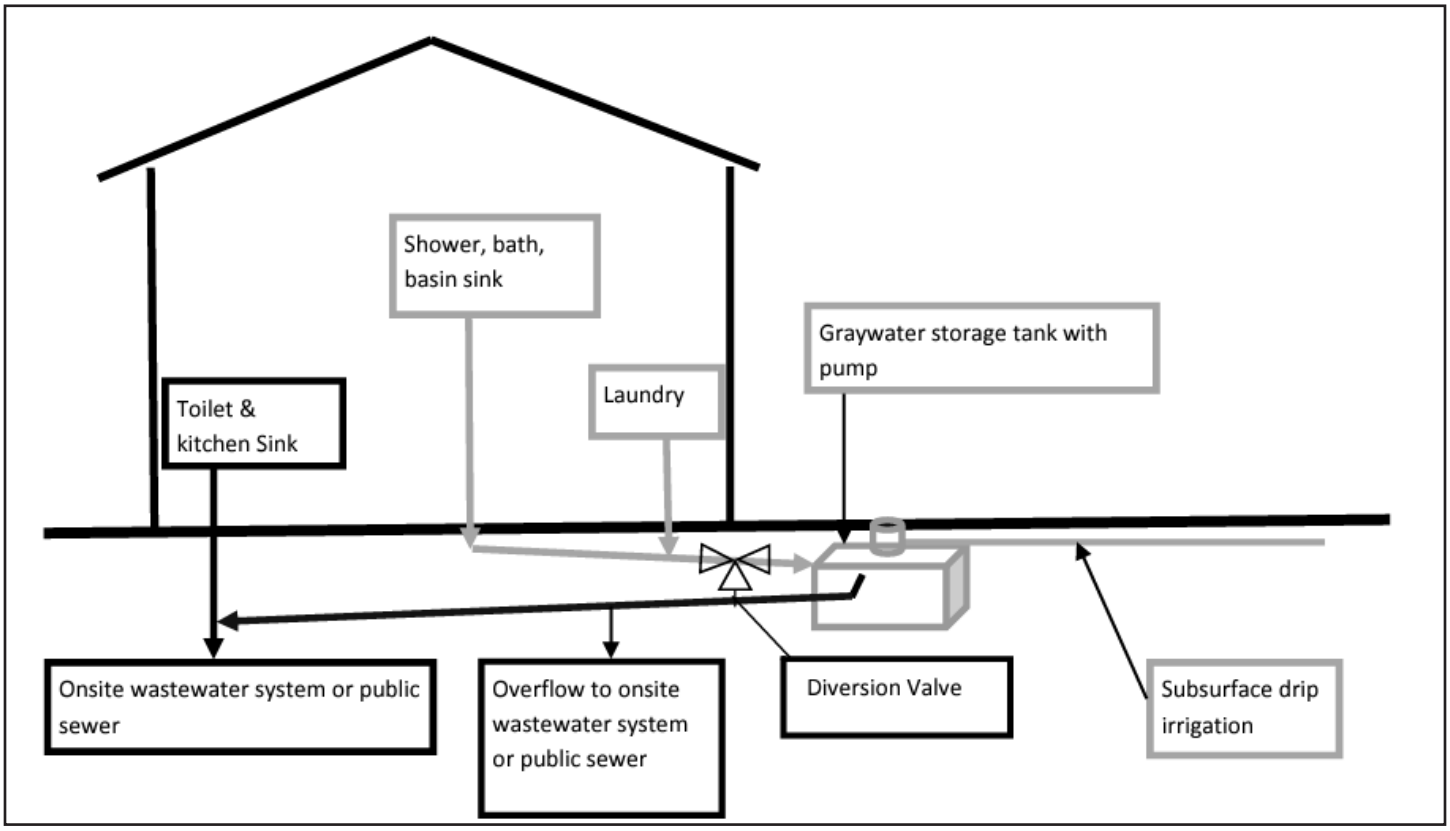



**Figure 5.4** Depicts Kansas Department of Health and Environment's diagram for graywater re-use for buildings.

*10. Codes include incentives or requirements for green infrastructure.*

Dodge City and Garden City could encourage significant benefits from incentivizing developers to incorporate green infrastructure into their projects. This approach integrates infrastructure elements with environmental benefits, such as rain barrels, cisterns (above or below ground), rain gardens, and permeable driveways. These strategies capture rainwater or stormwater runoff, preventing harmful chemicals and bacteria from contaminating water sources and reducing water quality (*Dwood, 2017; Ohio University, 2024; Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation, 2024, Province on Manitoba, 2024*).

Given the critical importance of the Ogallala Aquifer to these communities, implementing green infrastructure measures becomes especially pertinent. By incorporating these practices, communities can safeguard emergency access to water and preserve water quality over time.

Moreover, utilizing cost-share practices, as seen in various sources, including Kansas, can help offset the financial burden for landowners engaging in conservation practices.

Incentivizing developers to integrate green infrastructure contributes to environmental sustainability and enhances communities' resilience to water-related challenges. By proactively addressing stormwater management and water quality issues, Dodge City and Garden City can mitigate potential risks while promoting their ecosystems' long-term health and vitality.



**Figure 5.5** Depicts different green infrastructure. Rain gardens (top left), rain barrels (top right), and permeable pavement (bottom left).

*11. Prohibit development on previously undeveloped land within a setback to any endangered or protected fish and wildlife habitat or wetland conservation area.*

While not traditional wetlands, playas are unique wetland ecosystems characterized by their lack of reliable water or drainage systems. These areas are sustained solely by rain, snow, or runoff precipitation.

Situated within the High Plains region where Garden City and Dodge City are located, playas are particularly abundant, with Kansas boasting over 22,000 features. Despite often being dry, playas are crucial as significant groundwater recharge areas for the Ogallala Aquifer.

Moreover, when complete, playas transform into thriving ecosystems, supporting a diverse array of plants and wildlife, including migratory species that rely on these habitats for survival. Recognizing the ecological importance of playas, Kansas incentivizes landowners to engage in practices that preserve and restore these vital ecosystems (*Evans, 2020*).

To further support conservation efforts, Dodge City and Garden City can prioritize development away from areas within the playa basin or significant runoff zones. By avoiding construction in these sensitive areas, these communities can help safeguard playa ecosystems, protect groundwater resources, and preserve critical habitats for wildlife. Additionally, promoting public awareness and education about the ecological significance of playas can foster community stewardship and encourage sustainable land management practices. In doing so, Dodge City and Garden City can play a vital role in preserving the unique environmental heritage of the High Plains region.



**Figure 5.6** Shows playa lakes in Scott County, Kansas.

*12. Critical water resource areas cannot be counted when calculating allowable density on a site.*

One effective strategy for preserving buffer zones around significant wetlands, riparian areas, and floodplains is to exclude critical water resources from calculating allowable densities on development sites. For example, if a 360-acre site includes 60 acres of significant water areas, local regulations may stipulate that only the remaining 300 acres can be used to calculate density and subsequently be developed. This approach ensures that development is concentrated on non-critical areas, allowing for the intentional and careful use of land to prioritize protecting significant water resources (*Environmental Protection Agency, 2023*).

In Dodge City and Garden City, where the Arkansas River and Ogallala Aquifer recharge areas are significant resources for these communities, prioritizing strategies that maintain these areas is essential. These communities can effectively preserve buffer zones around these vital water bodies by implementing policies that exclude critical water resources from density calculations. This helps safeguard water quality and ecosystem health and ensures the long-term sustainability of water resources for both human and ecological needs.

*13. Streetlights and commercial lighting direct light to the streets to preserve dark skies.*

Provisions aimed at controlling outdoor artificial illumination are crucial to safeguarding the visibility of astronomical phenomena. These measures are essential to promote effective lighting practices that conserve energy and resources and ensure safety, utility, security, and productivity during nighttime hours. Maricopa County in Arizona exemplifies this approach by enforcing specifications to limit the intensity of lights emitted by buildings, signage, and street lighting, thus preserving the visibility of the night sky within the community (*Manicopa County, 2023*).

While Dodge City and Garden City can adopt a similar strategy to minimize light pollution from prominent city lights, technological advancements may gradually reduce the need for stringent regulations. However, it remains imperative to prioritize efforts to prevent artificial features from obstructing night sky views, whether intentionally or inadvertently.

By maintaining vigilance and incorporating measures to mitigate light pollution, these communities can continue to preserve the natural beauty of the night sky without necessitating significant changes in their existing practices.



**Figure 5.7** Shows Arizona's starry nights.

*14. Open space dedication and set-aside requirements exist and are based on the demand generated by new development.*

Development incentives tied to preserving open space are essential for encouraging environmentally sustainable practices, enhancing community livability, and promoting compact development. These incentives foster vibrant, socially connected communities aligned with innovative growth principles by incentivizing developers to incorporate green spaces or environmentally cautious design into their projects. Moreover, they contribute to optimizing land use, mitigating urban sprawl, and bolstering resilience to climate impacts, thereby striking a balance between development and environmental preservation.

For example, in Clifton Park, NY, development incentives extend beyond base density regulations in specific zoned areas, enticing developers to participate in projects they might otherwise overlook. This increased density enhances the viability of particular projects and improves profitability, depending on the developer (*Clifton Park, 2023*).

Implementing similar development incentives tied to open space preservation could significantly benefit Dodge City and Garden City. These cities can create more sustainable environments by incentivizing developers to integrate green spaces and environmentally conscious design into their projects. This approach not only enhances the aesthetic appeal of the urban landscape but also promotes healthier and more enjoyable living spaces for residents.

Moreover, by encouraging compact development and preserving open spaces, Dodge City and Garden City can optimize land use and reduce urban sprawl. This, in turn, helps to maintain the unique rural character of these communities while fostering a sense of community cohesion and well-being.



**Figure 5.8** Shows devepment pieces in open spaces that maintain the integrity of the parks. Wright Park (left), and Stevens Park (right).

*15. The community has transfer development rights or purchase development rights programs to conserve sensitive land.*

The Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs) and Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) are commonly employed to preserve agricultural land and open space along urban fringes, prevent sprawl, and conserve valuable natural resources. PDRs involve using public funds to purchase development rights to privately held land, while TDRs allow these rights to be transferred from one area to another (*Daniels, 1991; King County, 2024; Resource for the Future, 2007)*.

These market-driven approaches offer a more permanent land preservation solution than traditional zoning regulations or tax breaks. However, they are primarily prevalent in the Northeastern United States, particularly in rural areas bordering major urban centers (*Daniels, 1991*).

While these strategies may offer benefits in strictly rural settings, their success largely depends on market demand for development rights (*King County, 2024; Resources for the Future, 2007*). For communities like Dodge City and Garden City, where the demand for development rights may be lower than in more densely populated areas, the efficacy of PDRs and TDRs may be limited. While successful examples exist in states like Washington and Virginia, the viability of these programs in rural settings hinges on the presence of significant demand. Such demand is necessary for these strategies to yield the desired benefits for these communities.

*16. Local tax credits are available for land conservation.*

Landowners' donations of conservation easements, while valuable for protecting cherished places, often significantly reduce the land's value. To incentivize such conservation efforts, local tax incentives can play a crucial role in alleviating the financial burden associated with the loss in property value, thereby making conservation a more appealing option for landowners (*Land Trust Alliance, 2024*).

Dodge City and Garden City can effectively utilize this approach to preserve specific properties along the periphery of their communities and maintain essential ecosystems. By offering tax incentives to landowners interested in conserving their land, these cities can encourage participation in conservation efforts and prevent development that might otherwise diminish the sentimental value associated with these properties.

*17. Designated growth and preservation areas are defined by a municipal services area, municipal development area, or similar designation.*

In Albemarle and Montgomery Counties in Virginia, establishing historic conservation easements protects land with significant historical and cultural relevance to the area. These easements are often facilitated through tax incentives and other financial mechanisms. While not explicitly outlined in their documents, there may also be opportunities to allow for limited development on these lands outside of conservation easements, provided that such development adheres to city or county regulations. These regulations could dictate factors such as location-specific materials or restrictions on development in areas with the most historic or cultural significance (Abermarle, 2015; Montgomery, County, 2004).

Similarly, Dodge City and Garden City may have areas where implementing full conservation easements would be advantageous. However, it could also prove beneficial to identify critical historical or cultural natural properties and regulate developments to preserve the integrity of the land without entirely relinquishing the rights to develop it. By implementing specific regulations tailored to each area's unique characteristics, these communities can ensure that development activities uphold the value of the property while still allowing for limited growth in areas deemed appropriate.

*18. Public programs exist to support fee simple acquisition of sensitive land.*

In San Antonio, the initiation of a Sensitive Land Acquisition Program aimed to protect and preserve the quantity and quality of water entering their primary aquifer recharge zone. Through this program, sensitive lands are acquired via conservation easements and fee-simple acquisitions, allowing for the outright purchase of property, which a designated organization manages (*Land Acquisition Program San Antonio Water System, 2020*).

While initially geared towards water preservation, Dodge City and Garden City could adopt a similar approach, especially if the need to manage the Ogallala Aquifer recharge areas becomes a priority for the cities. This approach would entail the municipality or another public organization negotiating compensation with landowners to purchase property, ensuring it remains undeveloped to protect the natural resources.

By implementing such a program, Dodge City and Garden City can proactively safeguard critical aquifer recharge areas, preserving water quantity and quality for current and future generations. Additionally, this approach contributes to the overall sustainability and resilience of the communities, ensuring continued access to vital water resources for years to come.

<u>Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources</u>

*19. The community keeps an inventory of significant viewsheds and has standards for development or signage in relevant viewshed areas.*

A viewshed refers to a geographical area with notable scenic significance, often encompassing natural landscapes, city surroundings, and unique geological features (*Napa County, 2024*).

The objective of viewshed management is to ensure that future development projects harmonize with the natural environment, particularly the distinctive characteristics of a city's surroundings. A practical policy framework would establish procedures for evaluating and approving development proposals within areas with protected views, thus preventing inadvertent degradation of significant natural features.

Dodge City and Garden City can leverage this concept within and around their communities to safeguard areas of viewable significance. By establishing an inventory and review process for these areas, comprehensive regulations can be implemented to ensure that development activities align with the desired character and integrity of the land. This proactive approach enables these communities to maintain their unique visual identity and preserve the scenic beauty that contributes to their overall appeal.



**Figure 5.9** Shows a view along the Konza Prarie Trails in Manhattan, Kansas. Scenic views such as this can be considered viewsheds.

# Chapter 5 - Conclusion

## Revisiting the Question

Exploring the intersection of rural character and Smart Growth principles has revealed significant overlap, highlighting the necessity of devising strategies to maintain rural vitality amidst ongoing pressures for adaptation and change. While this research did not definitively establish the direct impact of Smart Growth principles on rural character, it did identify critical areas for improvement in rural communities such as Dodge City and Garden City.

By focusing on these two prominent communities in the region, this research not only sheds light on specific considerations but also presents an opportunity for innovation within the broader rural planning and development field. It is conceivable that the identified areas for improvement in Dodge City and Garden City may reflect larger challenges facing the region, and these communities can lead the way in addressing them.

The ultimate objective is clear: as rural community challenges persist, Smart Growth strategies should be included among the solutions. Not because they are guaranteed to work, but because implementing and examining these strategies can yield valuable insights into their effectiveness at the rural level. This research provides a list of potential areas for improvement as well as some strategies, offering crucial input not only for the region but for rural communities as a whole.

## Implications for Future Research

This research provides a list of potential areas for improvement and some strategies, offering crucial input not only for the region but also for rural communities as a whole. An important next step for this research would be to see if Dodge City or Garden City chose to expand upon their current plans and policies with the strategies outlined in the assessment and then conduct an additional study to see if those principles had an impact improving rural sustainibility. Both positive and negative results yield ample information about the viability of Smart Growth planning strategies for the purpose of rural sustainability.

Additionally, this research only focused on three of the eleven chapters in the “Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities.” While this approach provided a focused interrogation, should Dodge City and Garden City find that this research offers ample opportunity to continue building sustainable communities, they will conduct a comprehensive assessment.

Moreover, both Dodge City and Garden City are part of micropolitan areas. The implications of this research for rural communities at a smaller scale are still yet to be determined, presenting a unique and hopeful opportunity for smaller communities concerned with community vitality. They can explore alternatives to existing development standards that better align with their goals, shaping their future.

While only some recommendations offered in the assessments may be viable for communities of those sizes, they can still serve as sources of inspiration and ideas to help reinvigorate their communities within their context. By leveraging the insights from this research and adapting them to suit their specific circumstances, smaller communities can explore innovative approaches to sustainable development and community enhancement.

## Closing Remarks

Through this process, one quote from the “Small-Town Planning Handbook” guides this research:

“*As a community grows and changes, its special character can also change, but good planning can help maintain certain charm found only in small towns* (*Daniels et al., 2017*).”

Dodge City and Garden City are great examples of this quote; over the last 50 years, these communities have experienced tremendous change. It is evident that Dodge City and Garden City, despite their significant growth, have managed to retain much of their rural character (see page 13). This is a testament to the power of planning community preservation. To sustain this essence, communities must prioritize sustainable development. Among the various strategies, Smart Growth stands out, particularly in the rural context, as its principles align with rural character.

This research, with its intentional focus on Dodge City and Garden City, illuminates their sustainable development endeavors and identifies areas for improvement. Conducting the Smart Growth Assessment reveals persistent opportunities for enhancement in their planning and policy frameworks.

In conclusion, the exploration of Smart Growth principles within the context of Dodge City and Garden City highlights both their achievements and areas for growth. By continuing to delve into these concepts and adapting them to suit their specific needs, these communities can further progress toward sustainable development, benefiting current and future populations.

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# Appendices

## Glossary

| Terms | Definitions |
|---|---|
| Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) | A government agency responsible for the protection of human health and the environment. |
| Core-Based Statistical Area | Metropolitan and Micropolitan Areas are Core Based Statistical Areas and are defined by the Office of Management and Budget. |
| Graywater | Wastewater generated from homes that are not fecal contamination. |
| Neighborhood Revitalization Plan (NRP) | A program intended to promote the revitalization of neighborhoods and downtowns through incentives. |
| Ogallala Aquifer | The largest aquifer in the U.S. |
| Playa | Naturally forming dry wetland areas. |
| Rural Character | A community with open space in and around the built environment. Usually, it is a rural area. |
| Smart Growth | A planning and conservation strategy designed to create more sustainable communities. |
| Viewshed | A geographical location viewed from an area. Often having some kind of significance. |

# Calendar

**May 12th, 2023**

Proposal Presentation.

**May 15th, 2023**

Contact Dodge City and Garden City faculty and planners to gauge their interest in a client relationship. Work would be pro bono, but in return, they could provide materials/resources for the project.

**May 22nd, 2023**

Internship at Northwest Kansas Innovation Center Begins. This internship will be in western Kansas, so visiting Dodge City or Garden City will be easy if necessary.

**May 29th, 2023**

Both Dodge City and Garden City have verbally confirmed the project. Agreement form is constructed and approved by both communities.

**June, 2023**

Smart Growth Self-Assessment Preparations. Collect resources and make arrangements to visit both communities.

**July 17th - 18th, 2023**

Meet with both Dodge City and Garden City faculty. Work on Assessment.

**August 21st, 2023**

First day of fall semester begins. Start writing out the outline for the methods.

**August 28th, 2023**

Completed assessment work. Send documents out to the communities for confirmation.

**November 28th, 2023**

Draft on methods is due.

**December 2023 - January, 2024**

Work on general draft revisions. Get ready for committee meeting at the start of the Spring semester.

**January 19th, 2024**

Progress Meeting. Work on comments they have.

**February 23rd, 2024**

Substantial Completion. Make last adjustments before the final.

**March 20th, 2024**

Final Defense.

**April 12th, 2024**

Finalize the report in InDesign and submit.

# Terms of Agreement

## Student Research Agreement

This Research Collaboration Agreement is entered into by and between Caden Pfeifer, a student at Kansas State University, and the respective community chosen for this research. Specific terms and conditions are listed below.

**Permission to Use Resources:**

- The municipality hereby grants Caden Pfeifer permission to access, use, and
- analyze the resources provided for the research paper.
- Caden Pfeifer agrees to use the resources responsibly and exclusively for research.

**Confidentiality:**

- Caden Pfeifer agrees to maintain confidentiality regarding any sensitive information the municipality shares and not disclose it to third parties without written consent.

**Delivery of Research Paper:**

- Upon completion of the research paper, Caden Pfeifer agrees to provide a copy of the report within 60 days of its finalization.

**Authorship and Acknowledgment:**

- The municipality shall be acknowledged appropriately in the research paper unless specified otherwise.
- Caden Pfeifer retains sole authorship rights for the paper.

**Feedback and Cooperation:**

- The municipality reserves the right to provide feedback on the draft paper, and Caden Pfeifer agrees to consider such input in good faith.
- Caden Pfeifer agrees to cooperate with the municipality for any additional information or clarifications required after the paper submission.

**Covenant Not to Sue:**

- Caden Pfeifer covenants and agrees never, individually or with any person or in any way, to commence, aid in any way, prosecute or cause or permit to be commenced or prosecuted against the City or any City affiliate any action or other proceeding, including, without limitation, arbitration or other alternative dispute resolution procedure, based upon any claim, demand, cause of action, obligation, damage, or liability that is the subject of this agreement and/or the research of Caden Pfeifer (including this agreement and its attachments). Caden Pfeifer represents and agrees that he has not and will not make or file or cause to be made or filed any claim, charge, allegation, or complaint, whether formal, informal, or anonymous, with any governmental agency, department or division, whether federal, state or local, relating to the City or any City affiliate in any manner, including without limitation, the City or any City affiliate's business or employment practices. Caden Pfeifer waives any right to monetary recovery should any administrative or governmental agency or entity pursue any claim on his behalf.

**Entire Agreement:**

- This Agreement constitutes the entire understanding and agreement between the parties concerning the subject matter and supersedes all prior and contemporaneous agreements and understandings, whether oral or written.

# Dodge City

## Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities

### *Section I: Revitalize Village and Town Centers*

*This tool is part of the Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities, developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. EPA suggests that communities using this tool complete this section before filling out other sections. For more information and the tool's other sections, see https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-growth-self-assessment-rural-communities.*

Infill development[1] brings new residents and jobs to existing neighborhoods and village or town centers, sparing farmland and open space on the periphery of the community that might otherwise develop to accommodate them. By placing new houses, offices, and shops in village and town centers, communities can reduce the amount people must drive to meet their daily needs while also spending less on infrastructure by getting more out of existing streets, water pipes, and sewer lines. Thriving town centers also drive local economic development and make it easier for people to walk to stores and services. Village and town centers are unique aspects of rural communities that contribute to a sense of place for visitors and residents.

| *Goal: Revitalize Village and Town Centers* | *Adopted?* | *Add or Improve?* | *Context* [2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Using Codes to Encourage Infill Development*** | | | |
| **Do codes define the requirements for infill development?** | | | |
| Strategy 1: Codes specifically identify infill / redevelopment areas and set clear standards for evaluating and approving development within these areas.[3, 4] *[Codes do not specify notes for infill development but acknowledge the Neighborhood Revitalization Program as an incentive program for supporting infill development for residential areas within the 2019 Comprehensive Plan.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 2: Codes and ordinances differentiate between areas with and without existing infrastructure by requiring developer participation in the cost of extending infrastructure to serve new development.[5,6] *[Not codes, but yet again, they recognize the NRP as a zone and an RHID that can be applied anywhere in the city.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| **Do development policies provide incentives for infill development?** | | | |

[1] Infill development is development on vacant or underused land in previously developed areas.

[2] Self-Assessment topics and policy options apply to one or more of the following scales: 1 – large town/small city (population is approximately 10,000 or greater); 2 - village/small town (population is typically under 10,000); 3 – rural (very low-density places, working lands, and natural areas outside of towns, villages, and cities.

[3] Jupiter, Florida Zoning Definitions (http://www.jupiter.fl.us/index.aspx?NID=693).

[4] Infill development can be difficult if it is subject to requirements for new development (e.g., on-site parking minimums, on-site stormwater facilities, and large setbacks).

[5] Explanation of Development Exactions and Incentives (http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/toolkit/m1/ftools/dei.shtml).

[6] Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances (http://www.rockvillemd.gov/index.aspx?nid=214).

## I. *Revitalize Village and Town Centers*

| ***Goal: Revitalize Village and Town Centers*** | ***Adopted?*** | ***Add or Improve?*** | ***Context*** [2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 3: In close consultation with the public, designate growth areas for future development.[7] *[While they still promote infill, areas within the NRP recognize numerous areas significant for growth and limit sprawl.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| ***Strategy 4: Impact fees are set and/or public utilities are priced according to the project's distance from the downtown core and designated growth areas.***[8,9] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 5: Provide density bonuses for mixed-use and/or residential development in downtowns and village centers.[10,11,12] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 6: Expedited permit review and/or lower development fees encourage mixed-use, residential, or infill development in downtowns and village centers.[13,14] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 7: Use overlay zoning to encourage mixed-use and infill development.[15,16] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 8: Provide property tax abatements for mixed-use and residential development in downtowns and village centers.[17] *[Yes, but not specifically for downtowns.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 9: Provide incentives to rehabilitate existing structures.[18] *[The city doesn't have any state-issued programs like Historic Tax Credits. However, it does have a Mainstreet Façade Renovation Program.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| **Do zoning regulations remove barriers to infill development?** | | | |

[7] Designated Growth Area policy guidance (http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/guides/smart-growth-at-the-state-and-local-level/comprehensive-approaches/require-state-facilities-to-be-located-within-designated-growth-areas-and-downtowns/).
[8] The Georgia Development Impact Fee Act (http://www.dca.state.ga.us/development/PlanningQualityGrowth/programs/impactfees.asp).
[9] Explanation of Impact Fees, Duncan Associates (http://impactfees.com/).
[10] Density bonuses allow more development on a site in exchange for an amenity.
[11] Planning Implementation Tools: Density Bonus (http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/clue/Pages/publications-resources/PlanImplementation.aspx).
[12] Woodlake Zoning Ordinance: Density Bonus (http://www.cityofwoodlake.com/planning-documents/).
[13] Phoenix Priority Expedited Plan Review Policy (https://www.phoenix.gov/pdd/topics/priority-expedited-plan-review).
[14] San Diego Affordable/In-Fill housing and Sustainable Buildings Expedite Program (http://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/news/archive/ah.shtml).
[15] Infill Development Overlay District Bylaw: Town of Ware (http://www.townofware.com/pages/warema_planning/siteplanapproval).
[16] City of Chesapeake: Mixed Use and Infill Development in the Suburban Overlay District. Chapter 2 (http://www.cityofchesapeake.net/government/City-Departments/Departments/Planning-Department/Planning-Library/plans_studies/design-guidelines.htm).
[17] Cincinnati Community Reinvestment Area Residential Tax Abatement (http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/community-development/housing-assistance/residential-property-tax-abatement/).
[18] Vermont Downtown and Village Tax Credit (http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/opportunities/funding/downtown_village_tax_credit).

## I. Revitalize Village and Town Centers

| Goal: Revitalize Village and Town Centers | Adopted? | Add or Improve? | Context [2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 10: Establish minimum lot size that aims to preserve the rural character of the community for permitted development in agricultural areas, and encourage clustering of housing units.[19,20,21] | ☐ | ☒ | 2,3 |
| Strategy 11: Adopt agricultural/open space zone policies that ensure developed parcels are large enough to preserve the character and function of farms and sensitive lands.[22] *[The zoning recognizes specific lot densities that would help preserve function and character o farm and ag land.]* | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 12: Sites identified for new schools are within municipal service areas.[23] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 13: Zoning requires a minimum density in mixed-use districts.[24] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 14: Reduce or eliminate minimum lot sizes in areas targeted for infill development.[25,26] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| ***Encouraging Mixed Land Uses in Villages and Town Centers*** | | | |
| **Do codes allow mixed land uses in appropriate areas?** | | | |
| Strategy 15: Clearly define the downtown area. | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 16: Zoning defines "mixed-use development.[27] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 17: Designate mixed-use zones in town and village centers.[28] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |

[19] Explanation of Large Lot Zoning, Vermont Natural Resources Council (http://vnrc.org/resources/community-planning-toolbox/tools/large-lot-zoning/).
[20] The American Farmland Trust has developed guides to planning for agriculture in several states. An explanation of zoning tools for preserving greenfields and farmland begins on page 35 of *Planning for Agriculture in New York*. http://www.farmland.org/resources/publications/default2.asp.
[21] Cluster provisions in rural areas often focuses on securing expanses of open space consistent with rural character, or protecting environmentally sensitive areas and natural resource lands. Clustered development in rural areas remains compact and rural in character, while the open space tracts are generally permanently preserved. Spokane County, Washington, presents issues for rural residential cluster development (http://www.spokanecounty.org/bp/content.aspx?c=2639).
[22] Fauquier County Rural Land Use Plan (http://www.fauquiercounty.gov/government/departments/commdev/index.cfm?action=compplan1).
[23] Maryland Smart Growth Planning for Public School Construction (http://www.mdp.state.md.us/OurWork/publicSchoolConstruction.shtml).
[24] Williston, Vermont: Mixed Use Residential Zoning District Standards – Chapter 38 (http://www.town.williston.vt.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={26EA4BDF-4482-4523-B051-394E7ACEDA5C}&DE={4F5C3286-90D3-4CA7-A1F1-315C465E42BE}).
[25] "Relaxing zoning restrictions to reduce or eliminate minimum lot-size requirements gives developers the flexibility to build smaller, more affordable homes on smaller, more affordable lots for a variety of consumer groups who need and desire such options, including empty nesters, elderly adults, younger individuals with disabilities, young single workers, childless couples, and others" (Livable New York Resource Manual http://www.aging.ny.gov/LivableNY/ResourceManual/Index.cfm).
[26] Explanation of Residential Infill Development from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs: Planning & Quality Growth (https://www.dca.ga.gov/development/PlanningQualityGrowth/programs/documents/Part7gResidentialInfillDevelopment.doc).
[27] Model Downtown Mixed-Use District: provides basic language for creating a deliberately mixed use and dense development pattern geared to urban downtown areas (http://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/modelOrdinances.cfm).
[28] Salem, Oregon: Draft Neighborhood Center Mixed-Use (NCMU) Zone: a planning project intended to encourage the development of appropriately scaled and pedestrian friendly neighborhood center developments (http://www.cityofsalem.net/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/Planning/mixed-use_neighborhood_center_zone/Pages/default.aspx).

## I. *Revitalize Village and Town Centers*

| ***Goal: Revitalize Village and Town Centers*** | ***Adopted?*** | ***Add or Improve?*** | ***Context*** [2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 18: A form-based code or performance-based standards regulate the design and orientation of new buildings, allowing more flexibility in the uses.[29,30] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| ***Encouraging Street-Level Activity in Village and Town Centers*** | | | |
| **Do codes require pedestrian-oriented design in village and town centers?** | | | |
| Strategy 19: Minimize setback of buildings from sidewalks in village and town centers.[31,32] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 20: Codes encourage ground-floor retail space in village and town centers through tools such as density bonuses. *[Codes encourage ground-floor retail space, but not specifically as a bonus.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 21: Policies and codes ensure windows or active uses on building facades in village and town centers. | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 22: Codes establish appropriate sizes and aesthetic standards for signs in village and town centers. | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| **Do codes specify parking lot design and placement standards?** | | | |
| Strategy 23: Screen parking areas from sidewalks with landscaping and/or use green infrastructure techniques to make parking lots more attractive. | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 24: Locate parking lots behind or alongside buildings in pedestrian-oriented areas. | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| **Do codes allow outdoor markets or street festivals?** | | | |
| Strategy 25: Codes allow street closures for outdoor markets or street festivals. | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| **Do codes allow outdoor dining areas?** | | | |
| Strategy 26: Codes allow outdoor dining.[33] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 27: Codes allow mobile food vendors.[34] | ☒ | ☐ | 1 |
| ***Improving Pedestrian Safety in Village and Town Centers*** | | | |

[29] Form Based Codes: Implementing Smart Growth (http://www.lgc.org/form-based-codes).
[30] City of Winters Form Based Code for Downtown (http://www.cityofwinters.org/community_dev/community_reports.htm).
[31] Design Guidelines for Pedestrian-Oriented Business Districts (http://www.codepublishing.com/wa/kirklandpreview/html/KirklandZ92/KirklandZ92.html).
[32] City of Lathrup Village, Michigan: Design Guidelines (http://www.lathrupvillage.org/DocumentCenter/View/1021).
[33] Alexandria, Virginia: King Street Outdoor Dining Regulations / Design Guidelines (http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/planning/outdoor_dining_ordinance.pdf).
[34] City of Longmont, Colorado: Mobile Retail Food Vending Permit (http://longmontcolorado.gov/departments/departments-n-z/planning-and-development-services/development-applications-and-permits/mobile-retail-food-vending-permit).

| *Goal: Revitalize Village and Town Centers* | *Adopted?* | *Add or Improve?* | *Context* [2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Do codes require pedestrian-oriented street design?** | | | |
| Strategy 28: Minimize curb cuts and driveways in village and town centers.[35] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 29: Encourage alleys in new residential and mixed-use development to reduce the number of curb cuts and driveways.[36,37] *[No. They city uses a more "traditonal" approach.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 30: Codes set a maximum number of curb-cuts per block in pedestrian-oriented or mixed-use districts.[38] *[No. They minimize it from an engineering perspective.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 31: Street design standards set appropriate lane widths and use traffic-calming measures to ensure safe vehicle speeds in pedestrian-0riented areas.[39] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| ***Providing Appropriate Parking Options in Village and Town Centers*** | | | |
| **Do codes set parking requirements based on community context and actual parking demand?**[40] | | | |
| Strategy 32: Allow on-street parking in village and town centers. | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 33: Count shared or off-site parking toward parking minimums. *[N/A.]* | ☐ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 34: Buildings can reduce the amount of parking they need to supply if they are close to public transit or have bicycle parking, nearby public parking, or on-street parking.[41] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 35: Waive or reduce parking minimums in village and town centers and mixed-use districts.[42,43] *[Yes, they do require minimums in other areas just not specifically the central district.]* | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| **Do codes require amenities that encourage bicycling?** | | | |

[35] Fayetteville, Arkansas: Case Study on Eco Modern Flats with Design Standards (http://uli.org/case-study/uli-case-studies-eco-modern-flats-fayetteville-arkansas/).
[36] Example: alley widths are 10 to 12 feet for residential, 24 feet for commercial.
[37] Overland Park, Kansas: Planned Residential Neighborhood Design Guidelines (http://www.opkansas.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/planned-residential-design-guidelines.pdf?&redir=1).
[38] Prince William County, Virginia requires a special use permit for drive-throughs (http://www.pwcgov.org/government/dept/planning/Pages/Forms,-Permits-and-Applications.aspx).
[39] The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission includes recommendations for slowing traffic speeds on page 12 of its report "Design Manual for Small Towns" (http://www.tjpdc.org/community/designManual.asp).
[40] EPA offers a Parking Spaces / Community Places guide through its Smart Growth Program (http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/parking.htm).
[41] City of Cheyenne "Unified Development Code – Article 6 Design Regulations" (http://www.cheyennecity.org/index.aspx?nid=1824).
[42] Reducing Off-Street Parking Requirements Application (http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-137879.pdf).
[43] Nashville, Tennessee removed parking requirements for downtown development. Downtown Code (http://www.nashville.gov/Planning-Department/Community-Planning-Design/Community-Plans/Downtown.aspx).

## I. *Revitalize Village and Town Centers*

| *Goal: Revitalize Village and Town Centers* | *Adopted?* | *Add or Improve?* | *Context* [2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 36: Encourage new development in village and town centers to include bike racks or other bike parking facilities.[44] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| ***Revitalizing Village and Town Centers Through Comprehensive Plans and Local Government Policies*** | | | |
| **Are financing mechanisms available to promote development in village and town centers?** | | | |
| Strategy 37: A business improvement district or similar special taxing district funds enhanced services, such as landscaping, maintenance, and marketing, for village and town centers.[45] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 38: Value capture strategies, such as tax-increment financing, provide financial assistance for redevelopment in village and town centers and other specified areas with significant redevelopment potential.[46] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 39: Local government has adopted one or more strategies to address the issue of vacant properties including affordable home repair funds, land banks, and Vacant Property Registration Ordinances (VPROs).[47] *[Yes, they utilize land bank ordinaces, with provisions within the ordinances for vacant or in-repair properties.]* | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| **Do plans and policies support constructing or relocating municipal buildings in village and town centers?** | | | |
| Strategy 40: Identify potential central sites for major civic destinations such as city hall, a library, a post office, or a performing arts center.[48] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 41: Locate public facilities, particularly destinations that attract visitors, in developed areas rather than on the fringes of the community.[48] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| **Do plans and policies promote efficient use of infrastructure?** | | | |
| Strategy 42: Infrastructure policies prioritize rehabilitation or improvement of existing systems over system expansion.[49] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 43: Upgrade utilities and public amenities in infill locations to make them more attractive for development.[50] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |

[44] City of Cambridge Bicycle Parking Guide (http://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/Transportation/gettingaroundcambridge/bybike/Parking.aspx).
[45] The Heart of Brevard in western North Carolina is a business improvement district that supports downtown revitalization and organizes events that attract visitors (http://brevardnc.org).
[46] Tax Increment Financing Districts in Vermont are used as a public infrastructure financing tool (http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/opportunities/funding/tif).
[47] Mayor's Resource Guide on Vacant and Abandoned Properties (http://community-wealth.org/content/united-states-conference-mayors-resource-guide-vacant-and-abandoned-properties).
[48] City of Aspen, Colorado: Civic Master Plan (http://www.aspenpitkin.com/Portals/0/docs/businessnav/ApprovaltoDevelop/Civic%20Master%20Plan.pdf).
[49] Strategies for Enhancing Community Character, Mississippi Gulf Coast (http://smartgrowth.dmr.ms.gov/community-character).
[50] Lafayette, Louisiana: Infill Development Incentives (http://mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Planning/Development-Types-and-Land-Uses/Infill-Development-Completing-the-Community-Fabric.aspx).

## I. Revitalize Village and Town Centers

| Goal: Revitalize Village and Town Centers | Adopted? | Add or Improve? | Context [2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 44: Level of service standards for public facilities guide rezoning applications.[6] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 45: Prices or time limits encourage a sufficient turnover of parking spaces and availability in village and town centers.[51] *[No meter parking, but rather two hours and fifteen minute parking zones.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 46: A parking inventory identifies the number and location of parking spaces in village and town centers.[52] *[Yes, parking inventory has been done, but minimims are not requirred.]* | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| **Do plans and policies support infill development?** | | | |
| Strategy 47: Purchase and make available tax-delinquent properties for rehabilitation or redevelopment.[53] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 48: Financial incentives are available for brownfield redevelopment.[54] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 49: New schools are located as close as possible to existing development.[23] *[Typically yes, aside from only two.]* | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 50: Identify preferred areas for development or revitalization. [55] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| **Are a variety of transportation options supported?** | | | |
| Strategy 51: Adopt a multimodal mobility plan that includes policies and strategies for all modes including bicycling, walking, transit, and driving.[56] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 52: Convert one-way streets to two-way streets to improve access, reduce car speeds, and encourage greater pedestrian and bike mode-share.[57] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 53: Wayfinding signs help pedestrians and bicyclists find key destinations.[58] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 54: Install pedestrian-scale signs and lighting in pedestrian-oriented areas.[59] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| ***Revitalizing Village and Town Centers Through Programs and Services*** | | | |

[51] City of Redwood, California: Downtown Parking Management Plan (http://www.redwoodcity.org/bit/transportation/parking/parkingbigpicture.htm).
[52] Puget Sound Regional Council: Parking Inventory Analysis (http://www.psrc.org/data/transportation/parking-inventory/).
[53] Facilitate Reuse of Abandoned, Vacant, and Tax-Delinquent Properties (http://www.housingpolicy.org/policy_print.php?policyid=63).
[54] Brownfield Redevelopment Financial Incentives in Michigan (http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,4561,7-135-3311_4109_29262---,00.html).
[55] City of Syracuse, New York: Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area Plan (http://www.syracuse.ny.us/neighborhood_and_business_development.aspx).
[56] City of Evanston Multi-Modal Transportation Plan (http://www.cityofevanston.org/public-works/transportation-engineering/multi-modal-transportation-plan/).
[57] Converting One-way Streets to Two-way (http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/main-street-news/2002/06/converting-one-way-to-two-way.html).
[58] Rochester, New York: Center City Visitor Circulation and Pedestrian Wayfinding Study (http://www.cityofrochester.gov/article.aspx?id=8589948735).
[59] Medford, Oregon: Street Lighting and Pedestrian-Scale Street Lighting (http://www.ci.medford.or.us/CodePrint.asp?CodeID=3927).

## I. *Revitalize Village and Town Centers*

| *Goal: Revitalize Village and Town Centers* | *Adopted?* | *Add or Improve?* | *Context* [2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Are there programs to improve or preserve the aesthetics of village and town centers?** | | | |
| Strategy 55: Establish a Main Street program to promote and enhance the town center. | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 56: A program provides funds and assistance for building façade renovations.[60] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 57: A fund provides matching grants or low-interest loans for storefront façade improvements and/or interior renovations.[61] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 58: Identify vacant and underused buildings and collect data to help market the properties for occupancy or redevelopment. | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 59: The local government partners with businesses or civic groups for small beautification projects, such as flower plantings or holiday decorations.[62] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |

[60] Village of Hamburg, New York: Façade improvement program (http://www.townofhamburgny.com/Hamburg_Development_Corporation_-117158.html). Funding came in part from New York's Main Street Program (http://www.nyshcr.org/Programs/NYMainStreet/).
[61] Portland, Maine: Façade Improvement Program (http://portlandmaine.gov/557/Facade-Improvement-Program).
[62] Junction, Texas: Main Street Beautification Project Grant Assistance (http://www.cityofjunction.com/jtedc/financial-assist.html).

# Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities

## *Section V: Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems*

*This tool is part of the Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities, developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. EPA suggests that communities using this tool complete Section I: "Revitalize Village and Town Centers," before filling out other sections. For more information and the tool's other sections, see https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-growth-self-assessment-rural-communities.*

Directing development away from critical natural habitats and ecosystems and minimizing impacts from new development, such as increased stormwater runoff, help rural communities protect the waterways, forests, mountains, view sheds, and farmlands that are critical to their economic health, especially in places valued for their scenic or recreational assets. Providing incentives to use green infrastructure and preserve open space, along with programs to educate residents on the importance of land conservation, helps communities maintain their valuable natural resources.

| *Goal: Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems* | *Adopted?* | *Add or Improve?* | *Context*[1] |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Using Water More Efficiently*** | | | |
| **Do codes require water efficiency and stormwater runoff reduction in new development and redevelopment?** | | | |
| Strategy 1: Codes require new homes to meet at least the minimum requirements of a program designed to use water more efficiently and improve water quality.[2] *[Not for new homes, but homes in general.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 2: Codes encourage re-use of gray water where some or all water used in a building is captured, treated, and used or reused on site.[3] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 3: Codes include incentives or requirements for green infrastructure including permeable pavement, vegetated swales near roadways, green roofs, and rain gardens.[4,5,6,7,8,9] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |

[1] Self-assessment topics and recommendations apply to one or more of the following scales: 1 – large town/small city (population of approximately 10,000 or greater); 2 - village/small town (population typically under 10,000); 3 – rural (very low density places, working lands and natural areas outside of towns, villages and cities).
[2] One example of a program is EPA's WaterSense New Homes Specification (http://www.epa.gov/watersense/new_homes/index.html).
[3] US EPA Region 9 Water Recycling and Reuse: The Environmental Benefits (http://www.epa.gov/region9/water/recycling/).
[4] Greater Elkhart County Stormwater Partnership: Rain Garden and Rain Barrel Incentive Program (http://www.stormwaterelkco.org/pages.php?section=homeowners&item=Rain_Garden_and_Rain_Barrel_Incentive_Program).
[5] Portland EcoRoof Incentive Program (http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/48724).
[6] Plant Connection - Green Roof Legislation, Policies, and Tax Incentives (http://www.myplantconnection.com/green-roofs-legislation.php).
[7] Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District: Stormwater BMP Incentive Program: Vegetated Swales (http://www.rwmwd.org/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC=%7BAAF12B9B-AF31-48C8-B303-86C8ECA92851%7D).
[8] Burlington, Vermont pervious pavement incentive program (http://www.burlingtonvt.gov/docs/4083.pdf).
[9] US EPA Green Infrastructure Library (http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/greeninfrastructure/index.cfm).

## V. *Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems*

| ***Goal: Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems*** | ***Adopted?*** | ***Add or Improve?*** | ***Context[1]*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 4: The code includes guidelines for stormwater runoff reduction strategies, such as green infrastructure and building standards.[10, 5,9,6,4,11] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 5: In mitigating site stormwater loads, stormwater runoff reduction strategies can be used to calculate offsets to stormwater requirements using conventional strategies such as retention ponds.[11] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| **Do codes promote reduced water use in landscaping?** | | | |
| Strategy 6: Codes provide incentives for rain barrels and cisterns.[12] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 7: Climate-appropriate and native plants that use less water are encouraged or required.[13,14] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 8: Guidelines exist for climate-appropriate and native landscape design.[15] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| ***Regulating Development Near Water Resources*** | | | |
| **Do codes limit new development or redevelopment on wetlands or in flood plains?** | | | |
| Strategy 9: Local land use regulations require riparian and wetland buffer areas.[16,17, 18] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 10: New development is prohibited in flood plains unless it is a use that can be flooded without threatening property or human life.[19,20] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 11: Local governments evaluate development proposals near rivers for upstream and downstream impacts. | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 12: Prohibit development on previously undeveloped land where the elevation is lower than the elevation of the 100-year flood as defined by FEMA. | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |

[10] Dakota County, Minnesota Low Impact Development Standards (http://www.dakotaswcd.org/lowimpact.html).
[11] City of Sandy, Oregon Stormwater Management Incentive Program (http://www.ci.sandy.or.us/Stormwater-Management-Incentive-Program/).
[12] Cisterns can be permanent structures underground or above ground or non-permanent manufactured vessels that are typically above ground.
[13] Lake County, Florida Model Landscape Ordinance Requiring the Use and Preservation of Appropriate Native Vegetation. (https://www.lakecountyfl.gov/departments/public_resources/agricultural_education/soil_and_water_conservation_district/model_landscape_ordinance.aspx).
[14] Austin, Texas WaterWise Landscape Rebate program (http://www.austintexas.gov/department/waterwise-landscape-rebate).
[15] USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Living Landscapes in Minnesota: A Guide To Native Plantscaping (http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/publications/plantmaterials/pmc/central/ndpmc/pub/).
[16] An example of a buffer would be a 50-foot undisturbed buffer from the top of bank.
[17] River Basin Center. Model Riparian Buffer Ordinance (http://www.rivercenter.uga.edu/research/tools/buffers/model_buffer_ordinance.htm).
[18] Association of State Wetland Managers. Model Ordinances for Regulating Wetlands and Riparian Habitats/Stream Buffers (http://www.aswm.org/watersheds/streams/897-publications).
[19] Knox County, Tennessee Floodplain Management Regulations (http://www.knoxcounty.org/stormwater/volume2.php).
[20] US EPA. Planning for Flood Recovery and Long-Term Resilience in Vermont: Smart Growth Approaches for Disaster-Resilient Communities (http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/disaster-recovery-resilience.htm).

| *Goal: Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems* | *Adopted?* | *Add or Improve?* | *Context[1]* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 13: Regulations require restoration of degraded riparian or wetland areas of a development site.[21] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| **Do codes regulate uses to protect source water for wellheads or sensitive aquifers?** | | | |
| Strategy 14: The community has wellhead and/or aquifer protection regulations or zones to prevent incompatible development and uses.[22,23] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| **Do codes require stormwater management and monitoring on site in new developments or redevelopments?** | | | |
| Strategy 15: Codes include provisions exist to minimize or reduce the amount of impervious surface.[24] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 16: Stormwater quality and quantity performance standards exist for development sites.[25,26] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 17: Measures are required to limit waste during construction from flowing into water bodies and the stormwater system to protect water quality.[27] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 18: Pollution monitoring and mitigation strategies reduce harm to natural resources during construction.[28] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| ***Protecting Open Spaces for Agriculture, Recreation, and Wildlife*** | | | |
| **Do codes require land use regulations to protect open spaces or natural resources?** | | | |
| Strategy 19: Critical water resource areas cannot be counted in calculating allowable density on a site.[29] *[N/A]* | ☐ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 20: Prohibit development on previously undeveloped land within a setback to any endangered or protected fish and wildlife habitat or wetland conservation area.[30] *[N/A]* | ☐ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 21: Land development regulations protect steep slopes, hillsides, and other sensitive areas.[31,32] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |

[21] Pima County, Arizona Regulated Riparian Habitat Mitigation Standards and Implementation Guidelines (http://webcms.pima.gov/government/flood_control/rules_and_procedures/).
[22] Norway, Maine Wellhead Protection Ordinance for Norway Maine (http://norwaymaine.com/n/?page_id=301).
[23] Town of Canton, Connecticut Aquifer Protection Regulations (http://www.townofcantonct.org/content/19174/120/17179/3546/default.aspx).
[24] Town of Washington, Connecticut Zoning Regulations, Maximum Lot Coverage (http://www.riversalliance.org/ModelOrdinances/Town_of_Washington_Zoning_Reg_Impervious_Surface.htm).
[25] An example would be the restriction on sedimentation levels.
[26] Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District. Model Ordinance for Post-Development Stormwater Management for New Development and Redevelopment. (http://www.northgeorgiawater.org/stormwater/model-ordinances).
[27] Wisconsin Construction Site Storm Water Permits (http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/stormwater/construction/).
[28] City of Gilroy, California Storm Water & Urban Runoff Management (http://www.cityofgilroy.org/cityofgilroy/city_hall/community_development/engineering/storm_water/default.aspx).
[29] EPA Water Quality Scorecard: Incorporating Green Infrastructure Practices at the Municipal, Neighborhood, and Site Scale (http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/water_scorecard.htm).
[30] Clallam County, Washington Critical Areas Code (http://www.clallam.net/Permits/criticalarea.html).
[31] For example, by limiting development on slopes greater than 30 percent or requiring large lot sizes in sensitive areas.
[32] Town of Boone, North Carolina Steep Slope Regulations Brochure. (http://www.townofboone.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=94:planning-a-inspections&catid=82:important-links&Itemid=463).

## V. *Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems*

| *Goal: Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems* | *Adopted?* | *Add or Improve?* | *Context*[1] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 22: Streetlights and commercial lighting directs light to the streets to preserve dark skies.[33] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| **Are there open space creation or preservation requirements?** | | | |
| Strategy 23: The local government uses open space or recreation impact fees to preserve open space.[34] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 24: Open space dedication and/or set-aside requirements exist and are based on the demand generated by new development.[35,36] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| **Do codes support appropriate development in agricultural areas?** | | | |
| Strategy 25: There are agricultural, ranching, or forestry zoning districts that allow large minimum lot size.[37,38] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| ***Protecting the Tree Canopy*** | | | |
| **Do codes require tree protection strategies during construction?** | | | |
| Strategy 26: Public trees removed or damaged during construction of private development are required to be replaced on- or off-site with an equivalent amount of tree caliper.[39,40] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 27: Construction protection rules exist, covering all public trees.[41,42] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| ***Protecting Natural Habitats and Ecosystems Through Comprehensive Plans and Local Government Policies*** | | | |
| **Does the local government provide incentives to landowners to conserve land?** | | | |
| Strategy 28: A transfer of development rights program exists and enables transactions between well-defined sending and receiving areas.[43] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |

[33] The Maricopa County, Arizona Dark Sky Ordinance is a zoning ordinance controlling use of outdoor artificial illuminating devices (http://www.maricopa.gov/planning/Resources/Ordinances/DarkSkyOrdinance.aspx).
[34] Town of Cumberland, Maine Recreational Facilities and Open Space Impact Fee Ordinance (http://cumberlandmaine.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Impact_Fee_2nd_Amendments_current_adopted_7_23_12_fillable_application1.pdf).
[35] For example, the National Parks and Recreation Association recommends 10 acres of community and neighborhood parks for every 1,000 persons in a development.
[36] Creating Open Space in Clifton Park (http://www.cliftonpark.org/townhall/open-space-trails-and-riverfront-advisory-committee/).
[37] Ranges for minimum lot sizes could vary from 5 to 80 acres depending on the context and the purpose behind establishing the particular development pattern.
[38] Farmland Information Center. Agricultural Protection Zoning (http://www.farmlandinfo.org/agricultural-protection-zoning).
[39] For example, if a developer removes a 24-inch diameter tree, he would replace it with six 4-inch diameter trees.
[40] Round Rock, Texas Tree Ordinance (http://www.roundrocktexas.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/forestry/tree-ordinance/).
[41] Construction protection rules might include fencing around trees and avoiding cutting into root zones.
[42] Norfolk, Virginia Zoning Ordinance, Trees and Other Vegetation (https://www.municode.com/library/va/norfolk/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COCI_CH45TROTVE).
[43] King County, Washington Transfer of Development Rights Program (http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/stewardship/sustainable-building/transfer-development-rights/overview.aspx).

| *Goal: Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems* | *Adopted?* | *Add or Improve?* | *Context[1]* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 29: Local tax credits are available for land conservation.[44] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| **Are there policies to create designated growth areas and preserve rural areas?** | | | |
| Strategy 30: Designated growth areas and preservation areas are defined by a municipal services area, municipal development area, or similar designation.[45,46] *[The city has designated growth areas, but not designated preservation areas.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 31: Urbanized, town center policies allow for more dense development in the core downtown area of the community.[47] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 32: Designate and protect critical natural lands outside of the town centers, identifying areas that have a strong rural legacy.[48] | ☐ | ☒ | 3 |
| **Are there cleanup or restoration requirements to preserve or restore biological diversity?** | | | |
| Strategy 33: Brownfield and other contaminated sites have been successfully remediated.[49] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 34: Consider restoration and preservation of regional biodiversity in plans, with a focus on promoting native species and avoiding and eliminating invasive species.[50] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 35: Measures are in place to minimize the use of water pollutants, including pesticides, herbicides, and chemical fertilizers by both public and private entities.[51,52] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| **Are there regional and local green infrastructure investments?** | | | |
| Strategy 36: Inventory the community's current tree cover, and complete plans to protect and expand the tree canopy.[53] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |

[44] Land Trust Alliance. Tax Incentives (http://www.landtrustalliance.org/policy/tax-matters/campaigns/state-tax-incentives).
[45] Albemarle County, Virginia Urban/Development Area (http://www.albemarle.org/department.asp?department=cdd&relpage=3214).
[46] Montgomery County, Virginia Urban Development Areas (http://www.montgomerycountyva.gov/content/15989/16031/16767/default.aspx).
[47] Dennis Township Master Plan – Land Use Plan (http://www.dennistwp.org/pdfdoc2012/DTMasterPlanRevisedFinal2012-12-12.pdf).
[48] Albemarle County, Virginia Rural Areas Plan (http://www.albemarle.org/department.asp?department=cdd&relpage=3213).
[49] Missouri Department of Natural Resources Brownfields/Voluntary Cleanup Program (http://www.dnr.mo.gov/env/hwp/bvcp/hwpvcp.htm).
[50] Honeoye, New York Lake Watershed Management Plan (http://www.co.ontario.ny.us/DocumentCenter/View/1276).
[51] Oceanside, California Pesticides and Fertilizers effects on water quality (http://www.ci.oceanside.ca.us/gov/water/services_programs/clean/residential/pesticides.asp).
[52] Connecticut General Assembly. State Laws Banning Phosphorous Fertilizer Use (http://www.cga.ct.gov/2012/rpt/2012-R-0076.htm).
[53] Austin, Texas Urban Forestry Program (http://austintexas.gov/department/urban-forestry).

## V. *Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems*

| ***Goal: Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems*** | ***Adopted?*** | ***Add or Improve?*** | ***Context[1]*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 37: A green infrastructure plan, developed with a range of public- and private-sector partners, connects habitats to protect habitat.[54] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 38: Encourage green infrastructure strategies to collect and treat stormwater runoff, such as rain gardens, vegetated swales, and permeable pavements, through incentives in new developments or redevelopments. | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 39: Road construction or reconstruction projects implement green infrastructure strategies when possible.[55] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| ***Protecting Natural Habitats and Ecosystems Through Programs and Services*** | | | |
| **Are there programs to allow community-managed land?** | | | |
| Strategy 40: Public programs exist to support fee simple acquisition of sensitive land.[56] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 41: The community has transfer of development rights or purchase of development rights programs for conservation easements.[57] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 42: A community land trust supports managed open space.[58] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 43: Prioritize community-owned lands, such as community gardens or community open space held in a land trust, to be protected from development. | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| **Is there a water quality and preservation program?** | | | |
| Strategy 44: The local government has a system for ongoing monitoring and reporting of water quality in the watershed.[59] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 45: The community has systems for reclaiming and reusing water.[60] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |

[54] Kansas City, Missouri/Kansas MetroGreen Regional Greenway System (http://www.terrain.org/unsprawl/26/).
[55] Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. Green Infrastructure (http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/green-infrastructure).
[56] San Antonio Water System. Sensitive Land Acquisition Program (http://www.saws.org/environment/ResourceProtComp/aquifer_protection/acquisition.cfm).
[57] Northhampton County, Virginia Purchase of Development Rights Program (http://www.co.northampton.va.us/departments/Purchase_of_Development_Rights.html).
[58] Upper Valley Land Trust (New Hampshire) community based land conservancy (http://www.uvlt.org/).
[59] Tomales Bay (California) Water Quality Monitoring Plan (http://www.tomalesbaywatershed.org/library.html).
[60] Manatee County, Florida Reclaimed Water Program (https://www.mymanatee.org/home/government/departments/utilities/wastewater-system/reclaimed-water.html).

| *Goal: Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems* | *Adopted?* | *Add or Improve?* | *Context[1]* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Are there conservation education programs in place?** | | | |
| Strategy 46: The school system teaches students about water quality and conservation.[61] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 47: The school system teaches students about the unique natural habitat in which they live.[62] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 48: The school system teaches students about waste reduction, recycling, and the effects of polluting.[63] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 49: The local government provides online information on green infrastructure, energy efficiency, and water conservation.[64] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |

[61] Redwood City, California Water Conservation Education for Schools (http://www.redwoodcity.org/publicworks/water/conserve%20water%20education.html).
[62] US Fish and Wildlife Service Pacific Southwest Region. Schoolyard Habitat Program (http://www.fws.gov/cno/conservation/schoolyard.cfm).
[63] Boulder/Broomfield County, Colorado School Recycling and Environmental Education Program (http://www.ecocycle.org/schools/overview).
[64] US EPA. Why Green Infrastructure? (http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/greeninfrastructure/gi_why.cfm).

## Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities

### *Section VIII: Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources*

*This tool is part of the Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities, developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. EPA suggests that communities using this tool complete Section I: "Revitalize Village and Town Centers," before filling out other sections. For more information and the tool's other sections, see https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-growth-self-assessment-rural-communities.*

Reusing buildings, especially those with historic value, contributes to a community's distinctive identity, which can attract tourists and new residents. These buildings are often in the village or town center, so redeveloping them can bring new life to these places and absorb demand for residential, office, and retail space that might otherwise be satisfied at a more distant location. Preserving a community's cultural icons can also help attract tourism while promoting healthy living, beauty, and community pride.

| *Goal: Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources* | *Adopted?* | *Add or Improve?* | *Context [1]* |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Preserving Sites and Areas of Historical Significance*** | | | |
| **Do codes create a process for designating and protecting historic properties and districts?[2]** | | | |
| Strategy 1: A local administrative body is established to oversee historic preservation.[3,4] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 2: Codes or guidelines establish criteria for designating a property or neighborhood as historic.[5] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 3: A local historic district or overlay zone has been adopted by ordinance.[6,7] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 4: The administrative body reviews proposed additions, demolitions, new construction, rehabilitation projects, or other alterations to sites or buildings in the historic district.[8] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |

[1] Self-assessment topics and recommendations apply to one or more of the following scales: 1 – large town/small city (population of approximately 10,000 or greater); 2 - village/small town (population typically under 10,000); 3 – rural (very low density places, working lands, and natural areas outside of towns, villages, and cities).
[2] The New York State Historic Preservation Office provides information on a wide range of topics related to historic preservation (http://nysparks.com/shpo/).
[3] This body is typically a historic preservation review commission or design review board for a designated historic district. An administrative review by local government staff is also an option.
[4] Montpelier Historic Preservation Commission (http://www.montpelier-vt.org/group/68/Historic-Preservation-Commission.html).
[5] Rockville, Maryland Historic Designation Criteria (http://www.rockvillemd.gov/index.aspx?NID=625).
[6] A Model Historic District Ordinance for Local Governments in Pennsylvania (http://conservationtools.org/libraries/1/library_items/944-A-Model-Historic-District-Ordinance-for-Local-Governments-in-Pennsylvania).
[7] Lynchburg, Virginia Historic Districts Ordinance, Guidelines, Descriptions, and Maps (http://www.lynchburgva.gov/historic-districts-ordinance-guidelines-descriptions-and-maps).
[8] Boulder County, Colorado: Permit Process for Demolition and Alteration of Historic Structures (http://www.bouldercounty.org/property/build/pages/historicdemo.aspx).

| *Goal: Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources* | *Adopted?* | *Add or Improve?* | *Context [1]* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 5: Codes establish criteria for issuing demolition permits for historic structures.[8] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| ***Respecting Important Historic and Cultural Resources*** | | | |
| **Do codes establish design guidelines for new development?** | | | |
| Strategy 6: Design standards apply to new residential and commercial development in historic or cultural districts to require design features that are consistent with the historic architecture or natural features of the area.[9, 10] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 7: Design standards apply to the renovation of historic properties to ensure complementary features are integrated into new elements of the building.[11,7] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| **Do codes and policies encourage reuse or redevelopment of historic buildings?** | | | |
| Strategy 8: Codes allow rezoning to allow historic buildings be repurposed for a mix of uses.[12] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| **Do codes protect views of natural, historic, or culturally significant features?** | | | |
| Strategy 9: Establish a review process for development in protected viewsheds (areas with views of attractive features such as ridge lines, water bodies, or landmarks).[13] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 10: Local codes regulate the height and size of signs and billboards in protected viewsheds.[14] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 11: Subdivision codes encourage techniques, such as cluster subdivisions, to protect viewsheds.[15,16] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| ***Preserving Historic and Cultural Resources Through Comprehensive Plans and Local Government Policies*** | | | |

[9] The Town of Dryden, New York has developed commercial and residential design guidelines. They are available from the town's website (http://dryden.ny.us/departments/planning-department/planning/design-guidelines).

[10] Context sensitive zoning and development standards based on analysis of historic development patterns (http://www.ci.benicia.ca.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={D87C20DD-AE9B-41D5-84A7-D29CAD93E9F3}).

[11] The strategy refers to renovations of historic buildings, where substantive changes to or additions of doors, windows, façade elements, ceilings, and interior materials need to complement, but not necessarily match, the structure's historic elements.

[12] Duvall, Washington Old Town – Mixed Use Zoning District (http://www.duvallwa.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/519).

[13] Napa, California has a Viewshed Protection Program that aims to protect views of the area's ridges. Chapter 18.06 of the city's zoning ordinance describes it and it can also be found in the viewshed permit (http://www.countyofnapa.org/pages/departmentcontent.aspx?id=4294968649).

[14] Keuka Lake Waterfront Revitalization and Scenic Viewshed Protection Plan (http://www.stcplanning.org/usr/Program_Areas/Water_Resources/KeukaLake/Waterfront%20Revitalization%20and%20Scenic%20Viewshed%20Protection%20Plan_opt.pdf).

[15] Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. Model Zoning Ordinance for Rural Cluster Development (http://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPC/communityassistance/ModelOrdinancesGuides.htm).

[16] Conservation Subdivision Design Handbook (http://conservationtools.org/libraries/1/library_items/349-Conservation-Subdivision-Design-Handbook).

## *VIII. Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources*

| *Goal: Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources* | *Adopted?* | *Add or Improve?* | *Context [1]* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Have significant historic or cultural features been identified?** | | | |
| Strategy 12: Develop an inventory of historic buildings, landmarks, and neighborhoods.[17] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 13: The local government has established a historic district recognized by the National Register of Historic Places.[18] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 14: Develop an inventory of significant viewsheds.[19] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 15: Develop an inventory of cultural heritage tourism sites.[20] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| ***Preserving Historic and Cultural Resources Through Programs and Services*** | | | |
| **Does the local government promote the rehabilitation and enjoyment of historic and cultural resources?** | | | |
| Strategy 16: Historic structures and sites have interpretative signs and are included in the community's wayfinding signs.[21] *[Some, but not all.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 17: A self-guided historical walking tour is available to the community.[22] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 18: A façade improvement and landscaping grant program is available for historic properties.[23,24] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 19: A tax credit or tax abatement is available to buy and/or renovate historic properties.[25] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 20: A revolving loan fund is available to buy and/or renovate historic properties.[26] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |

[17] Santa Monica, California: Historic Resources Inventory (http://www.smgov.net/Departments/PCD/Historic-Resources-Inventory/).
[18] The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources (http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/).
[19] Hancock County Scenic Assessment Inventory and Analysis (http://www.hcpcme.org/environment/view/).
[20] State of Utah Cultural Heritage Tourism Planning (http://www.planning.utah.gov/CRMPHeritageTourism.htm).
[21] Best Practices for Developing Interpretive Signs (http://www.watershedco.com/blog/interpretive-program-from-start-to-finish/).
[22] Alexandria Walking & Guided Tours (http://www.visitalexandriava.com/things-to-do/tours/).
[23] Portland, Maine Façade Improvement Program (http://www.portlandmaine.gov/557/Facade-Improvement-Program).
[24] City of Yreka, California: The Miner Street Grant Program (http://ci.yreka.ca.us/business/miner-street-grant-program).
[25] Rockville, Maryland: Historic Tax Credit Program (http://www.rockvillemd.gov/index.aspx?NID=627).
[26] City of Dubuque Historic Preservation Revolving Loan Fund (http://www.cityofdubuque.org/index.aspx?NID=773).

| Goal: Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources | Adopted? | Add or Improve? | Context [1] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 21: Offer tax incentives to developers who redevelop historic buildings in city and town centers and maintain their historic character.[27] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |

[27] Creating American Prosperity through Preservation Act of 2013 (https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/s1141).

# Garden City

## Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities

### *Section I: Revitalize Village and Town Centers*

*This tool is part of the Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities, developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. EPA suggests that communities using this tool complete this section before filling out other sections. For more information and the tool's other sections, see https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-growth-self-assessment-rural-communities.*

Infill development[1] brings new residents and jobs to existing neighborhoods and village or town centers, sparing farmland and open space on the periphery of the community that might otherwise develop to accommodate them. By placing new houses, offices, and shops in village and town centers, communities can reduce the amount people must drive to meet their daily needs while also spending less on infrastructure by getting more out of existing streets, water pipes, and sewer lines. Thriving town centers also drive local economic development and make it easier for people to walk to stores and services. Village and town centers are unique aspects of rural communities that contribute to a sense of place for visitors and residents.

| *Goal: Revitalize Village and Town Centers* | *Adopted?* | *Add or Improve?* | *Context* [2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Using Codes to Encourage Infill Development*** | | | |
| **Do codes define the requirements for infill development?** | | | |
| Strategy 1: Codes specifically identify infill / redevelopment areas and set clear standards for evaluating and approving development within these areas.[3, 4] *[No, however, according to the Comprehensive Plan, that is a goal and action strategy.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 2: Codes and ordinances differentiate between areas with and without existing infrastructure by requiring developer participation in the cost of extending infrastructure to serve new development.[5,6] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| **Do development policies provide incentives for infill development?** | | | |

[1] Infill development is development on vacant or underused land in previously developed areas.
[2] Self-Assessment topics and policy options apply to one or more of the following scales: 1 – large town/small city (population is approximately 10,000 or greater); 2 - village/small town (population is typically under 10,000); 3 – rural (very low-density places, working lands, and natural areas outside of towns, villages, and cities.
[3] Jupiter, Florida Zoning Definitions (http://www.jupiter.fl.us/index.aspx?NID=693).
[4] Infill development can be difficult if it is subject to requirements for new development (e.g., on-site parking minimums, on-site stormwater facilities, and large setbacks).
[5] Explanation of Development Exactions and Incentives (http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/toolkit/m1/ftools/dei.shtml).
[6] Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances (http://www.rockvillemd.gov/index.aspx?nid=214).

## I. *Revitalize Village and Town Centers*

| ***Goal: Revitalize Village and Town Centers*** | ***Adopted?*** | ***Add or Improve?*** | ***Context*** [2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 3: In close consultation with the public, designate growth areas for future development.[7] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| *Strategy 4: Impact fees are set and/or public utilities are priced according to the project's distance from the downtown core and designated growth areas.*[8,9] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 5: Provide density bonuses for mixed-use and/or residential development in downtowns and village centers.[10,11,12] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 6: Expedited permit review and/or lower development fees encourage mixed-use, residential, or infill development in downtowns and village centers.[13,14] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 7: Use overlay zoning to encourage mixed-use and infill development.[15,16] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 8: Provide property tax abatements for mixed-use and residential development in downtowns and village centers.[17] *[Not specifically the downtown, but the city in general.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 9: Provide incentives to rehabilitate existing structures.[18] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| **Do zoning regulations remove barriers to infill development?** | | | |

[7] Designated Growth Area policy guidance (http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/guides/smart-growth-at-the-state-and-local-level/comprehensive-approaches/require-state-facilities-to-be-located-within-designated-growth-areas-and-downtowns/).
[8] The Georgia Development Impact Fee Act (http://www.dca.state.ga.us/development/PlanningQualityGrowth/programs/impactfees.asp).
[9] Explanation of Impact Fees, Duncan Associates (http://impactfees.com/).
[10] Density bonuses allow more development on a site in exchange for an amenity.
[11] Planning Implementation Tools: Density Bonus (http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr-ap/clue/Pages/publications-resources/PlanImplementation.aspx).
[12] Woodlake Zoning Ordinance: Density Bonus (http://www.cityofwoodlake.com/planning-documents/).
[13] Phoenix Priority Expedited Plan Review Policy (https://www.phoenix.gov/pdd/topics/priority-expedited-plan-review).
[14] San Diego Affordable/In-Fill housing and Sustainable Buildings Expedite Program (http://www.sandiego.gov/development-services/news/archive/ah.shtml).
[15] Infill Development Overlay District Bylaw: Town of Ware (http://www.townofware.com/pages/warema_planning/siteplanapproval).
[16] City of Chesapeake: Mixed Use and Infill Development in the Suburban Overlay District. Chapter 2 (http://www.cityofchesapeake.net/government/City-Departments/Departments/Planning-Department/Planning-Library/plans_studies/design-guidelines.htm).
[17] Cincinnati Community Reinvestment Area Residential Tax Abatement (http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/community-development/housing-assistance/residential-property-tax-abatement/).
[18] Vermont Downtown and Village Tax Credit (http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/opportunities/funding/downtown_village_tax_credit).

## *I. Revitalize Village and Town Centers*

| ***Goal: Revitalize Village and Town Centers*** | ***Adopted?*** | ***Add or Improve?*** | ***Context*** [2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 10: Establish minimum lot size that aims to preserve the rural character of the community for permitted development in agricultural areas, and encourage clustering of housing units.[19,20,21] | ☒ | ☐ | 2,3 |
| Strategy 11: Adopt agricultural/open space zone policies that ensure developed parcels are large enough to preserve the character and function of farms and sensitive lands.[22] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 12: Sites identified for new schools are within municipal service areas.[23] *[Yes, while not specifically codes, the comprehneisve plan shows proactive use of acquiring parcels for new schools.]* | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 13: Zoning requires a minimum density in mixed-use districts.[24] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 14: Reduce or eliminate minimum lot sizes in areas targeted for infill development.[25,26] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| ***Encouraging Mixed Land Uses in Villages and Town Centers*** | | | |
| **Do codes allow mixed land uses in appropriate areas?** | | | |
| Strategy 15: Clearly define the downtown area. | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 16: Zoning defines "mixed-use development.[27] *[The zoning does not clearly define mixed-use, however the Comprehensive plan clearly does.]* | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |

[19] Explanation of Large Lot Zoning, Vermont Natural Resources Council (http://vnrc.org/resources/community-planning-toolbox/tools/large-lot-zoning/).
[20] The American Farmland Trust has developed guides to planning for agriculture in several states. An explanation of zoning tools for preserving greenfields and farmland begins on page 35 of *Planning for Agriculture in New York*. http://www.farmland.org/resources/publications/default2.asp.
[21] Cluster provisions in rural areas often focuses on securing expanses of open space consistent with rural character, or protecting environmentally sensitive areas and natural resource lands. Clustered development in rural areas remains compact and rural in character, while the open space tracts are generally permanently preserved. Spokane County, Washington, presents issues for rural residential cluster development (http://www.spokanecounty.org/bp/content.aspx?c=2639).
[22] Fauquier County Rural Land Use Plan (http://www.fauquiercounty.gov/government/departments/commdev/index.cfm?action=compplan1).
[23] Maryland Smart Growth Planning for Public School Construction (http://www.mdp.state.md.us/OurWork/publicSchoolConstruction.shtml).
[24] Williston, Vermont: Mixed Use Residential Zoning District Standards – Chapter 38 (http://www.town.williston.vt.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={26EA4BDF-4482-4523-B051-394E7ACEDA5C}&DE={4F5C3286-90D3-4CA7-A1F1-315C465E42BE}).
[25] "Relaxing zoning restrictions to reduce or eliminate minimum lot-size requirements gives developers the flexibility to build smaller, more affordable homes on smaller, more affordable lots for a variety of consumer groups who need and desire such options, including empty nesters, elderly adults, younger individuals with disabilities, young single workers, childless couples, and others" (Livable New York Resource Manual http://www.aging.ny.gov/LivableNY/ResourceManual/Index.cfm).
[26] Explanation of Residential Infill Development from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs: Planning & Quality Growth (https://www.dca.ga.gov/development/PlanningQualityGrowth/programs/documents/Part7gResidentialInfillDevelopment.doc).
[27] Model Downtown Mixed-Use District: provides basic language for creating a deliberately mixed use and dense development pattern geared to urban downtown areas (http://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/modelOrdinances.cfm).

| ***Goal: Revitalize Village and Town Centers*** | ***Adopted?*** | ***Add or Improve?*** | ***Context*** [2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 17: Designate mixed-use zones in town and village centers.[28] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 18: A form-based code or performance-based standards regulate the design and orientation of new buildings, allowing more flexibility in the uses.[29,30] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| ***Encouraging Street-Level Activity in Village and Town Centers*** | | | |
| **Do codes require pedestrian-oriented design in village and town centers?** | | | |
| Strategy 19: Minimize setback of buildings from sidewalks in village and town centers.[31,32] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 20: Codes encourage ground-floor retail space in village and town centers through tools such as density bonuses. | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 21: Policies and codes ensure windows or active uses on building facades in village and town centers. | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 22: Codes establish appropriate sizes and aesthetic standards for signs in village and town centers. | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| **Do codes specify parking lot design and placement standards?** | | | |
| Strategy 23: Screen parking areas from sidewalks with landscaping and/or use green infrastructure techniques to make parking lots more attractive. | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 24: Locate parking lots behind or alongside buildings in pedestrian-oriented areas. | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| **Do codes allow outdoor markets or street festivals?** | | | |
| Strategy 25: Codes allow street closures for outdoor markets or street festivals. *[Special event request. Not specifically codes related.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| **Do codes allow outdoor dining areas?** | | | |
| Strategy 26: Codes allow outdoor dining.[33] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |

[28] Salem, Oregon: Draft Neighborhood Center Mixed-Use (NCMU) Zone: a planning project intended to encourage the development of appropriately scaled and pedestrian friendly neighborhood center developments (http://www.cityofsalem.net/Departments/CommunityDevelopment/Planning/mixed-use_neighborhood_center_zone/Pages/default.aspx).
[29] Form Based Codes: Implementing Smart Growth (http://www.lgc.org/form-based-codes).
[30] City of Winters Form Based Code for Downtown (http://www.cityofwinters.org/community_dev/community_reports.htm).
[31] Design Guidelines for Pedestrian-Oriented Business Districts (http://www.codepublishing.com/wa/kirklandpreview/html/KirklandZ92/KirklandZ92.html).
[32] City of Lathrup Village, Michigan: Design Guidelines (http://www.lathrupvillage.org/DocumentCenter/View/1021).
[33] Alexandria, Virginia: King Street Outdoor Dining Regulations / Design Guidelines (http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/planning/outdoor_dining_ordinance.pdf).

## I. *Revitalize Village and Town Centers*

| ***Goal: Revitalize Village and Town Centers*** | ***Adopted?*** | ***Add or Improve?*** | ***Context*** [2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 27: Codes allow mobile food vendors.[34] *[Yes, in commercial and indistrial lots.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1 |
| ***Improving Pedestrian Safety in Village and Town Centers*** | | | |
| **Do codes require pedestrian-oriented street design?** | | | |
| Strategy 28: Minimize curb cuts and driveways in village and town centers.[35] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 29: Encourage alleys in new residential and mixed-use development to reduce the number of curb cuts and driveways.[36,37] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 30: Codes set a maximum number of curb-cuts per block in pedestrian-oriented or mixed-use districts.[38] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 31: Street design standards set appropriate lane widths and use traffic-calming measures to ensure safe vehicle speeds in pedestrian-Oriented areas.[39] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| ***Providing Appropriate Parking Options in Village and Town Centers*** | | | |
| **Do codes set parking requirements based on community context and actual parking demand?**[40] | | | |
| Strategy 32: Allow on-street parking in village and town centers. | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 33: Count shared or off-site parking toward parking minimums. *[N/A]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 34: Buildings can reduce the amount of parking they need to supply if they are close to public transit or have bicycle parking, nearby public parking, or on-street parking.[41] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 35: Waive or reduce parking minimums in village and town centers and mixed-use districts. [42,43] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |

[34] City of Longmont, Colorado: Mobile Retail Food Vending Permit (http://longmontcolorado.gov/departments/departments-n-z/planning-and-development-services/development-applications-and-permits/mobile-retail-food-vending-permit).
[35] Fayetteville, Arkansas: Case Study on Eco Modern Flats with Design Standards (http://uli.org/case-study/uli-case-studies-eco-modern-flats-fayetteville-arkansas/).
[36] Example: alley widths are 10 to 12 feet for residential, 24 feet for commercial.
[37] Overland Park, Kansas: Planned Residential Neighborhood Design Guidelines (http://www.opkansas.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/planned-residential-design-guidelines.pdf?&redir=1).
[38] Prince William County, Virginia requires a special use permit for drive-throughs (http://www.pwcgov.org/government/dept/planning/Pages/Forms,-Permits-and-Applications.aspx).
[39] The Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission includes recommendations for slowing traffic speeds on page 12 of its report "Design Manual for Small Towns" (http://www.tjpdc.org/community/designManual.asp).
[40] EPA offers a Parking Spaces / Community Places guide through its Smart Growth Program (http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/parking.htm).
[41] City of Cheyenne "Unified Development Code – Article 6 Design Regulations" (http://www.cheyennecity.org/index.aspx?nid=1824).
[42] Reducing Off-Street Parking Requirements Application (http://www.minneapolismn.gov/www/groups/public/@cped/documents/webcontent/wcms1p-137879.pdf).
[43] Nashville, Tennessee removed parking requirements for downtown development. Downtown Code (http://www.nashville.gov/Planning-Department/Community-Planning-Design/Community-Plans/Downtown.aspx).

| *Goal: Revitalize Village and Town Centers* | *Adopted?* | *Add or Improve?* | *Context* [2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Do codes require amenities that encourage bicycling?** | | | |
| Strategy 36: Encourage new development in village and town centers to include bike racks or other bike parking facilities.[44] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| ***Revitalizing Village and Town Centers Through Comprehensive Plans and Local Government Policies*** | | | |
| **Are financing mechanisms available to promote development in village and town centers?** | | | |
| Strategy 37: A business improvement district or similar special taxing district funds enhanced services, such as landscaping, maintenance, and marketing, for village and town centers.[45] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 38: Value capture strategies, such as tax-increment financing, provide financial assistance for redevelopment in village and town centers and other specified areas with significant redevelopment potential.[46] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 39: Local government has adopted one or more strategies to address the issue of vacant properties including affordable home repair funds, land banks, and Vacant Property Registration Ordinances (VPROs).[47] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| **Do plans and policies support constructing or relocating municipal buildings in village and town centers?** | | | |
| Strategy 40: Identify potential central sites for major civic destinations such as city hall, a library, a post office, or a performing arts center.[48] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 41: Locate public facilities, particularly destinations that attract visitors, in developed areas rather than on the fringes of the community.[48] *[Not prioritze, but are considered.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| **Do plans and policies promote efficient use of infrastructure?** | | | |
| Strategy 42: Infrastructure policies prioritize rehabilitation or improvement of existing systems over system expansion.[49] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 43: Upgrade utilities and public amenities in infill locations to make them more attractive for development.[50] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |

[44] City of Cambridge Bicycle Parking Guide (http://www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/Transportation/gettingaroundcambridge/bybike/Parking.aspx).
[45] The Heart of Brevard in western North Carolina is a business improvement district that supports downtown revitalization and organizes events that attract visitors (http://brevardnc.org).
[46] Tax Increment Financing Districts in Vermont are used as a public infrastructure financing tool (http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/opportunities/funding/tif).
[47] Mayor's Resource Guide on Vacant and Abandoned Properties (http://community-wealth.org/content/united-states-conference-mayors-resource-guide-vacant-and-abandoned-properties).
[48] City of Aspen, Colorado: Civic Master Plan (http://www.aspenpitkin.com/Portals/0/docs/businessnav/ApprovaltoDevelop/Civic%20Master%20Plan.pdf).
[49] Strategies for Enhancing Community Character, Mississippi Gulf Coast (http://smartgrowth.dmr.ms.gov/community-character).
[50] Lafayette, Louisiana: Infill Development Incentives (http://mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Planning/Development-Types-and-Land-Uses/Infill-Development-Completing-the-Community-Fabric.aspx).

## I. *Revitalize Village and Town Centers*

| ***Goal: Revitalize Village and Town Centers*** | ***Adopted?*** | ***Add or Improve?*** | ***Context*** [2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 44: Level of service standards for public facilities guide rezoning applications.[6] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 45: Prices or time limits encourage a sufficient turnover of parking spaces and availability in village and town centers.[51] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 46: A parking inventory identifies the number and location of parking spaces in village and town centers.[52] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| **Do plans and policies support infill development?** | | | |
| Strategy 47: Purchase and make available tax-delinquent properties for rehabilitation or redevelopment.[53] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 48: Financial incentives are available for brownfield redevelopment.[54] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 49: New schools are located as close as possible to existing development.[23] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 50: Identify preferred areas for development or revitalization. [55] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| **Are a variety of transportation options supported?** | | | |
| Strategy 51: Adopt a multimodal mobility plan that includes policies and strategies for all modes including bicycling, walking, transit, and driving.[56] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 52: Convert one-way streets to two-way streets to improve access, reduce car speeds, and encourage greater pedestrian and bike mode-share.[57] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 53: Wayfinding signs help pedestrians and bicyclists find key destinations.[58] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 54: Install pedestrian-scale signs and lighting in pedestrian-oriented areas.[59] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| ***Revitalizing Village and Town Centers Through Programs and Services*** | | | |
| **Are there programs to improve or preserve the aesthetics of village and town centers?** | | | |

[51] City of Redwood, California: Downtown Parking Management Plan (http://www.redwoodcity.org/bit/transportation/parking/parkingbigpicture.htm).
[52] Puget Sound Regional Council: Parking Inventory Analysis (http://www.psrc.org/data/transportation/parking-inventory/).
[53] Facilitate Reuse of Abandoned, Vacant, and Tax-Delinquent Properties (http://www.housingpolicy.org/policy_print.php?policyid=63).
[54] Brownfield Redevelopment Financial Incentives in Michigan (http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,4561,7-135-3311_4109_29262---,00.html).
[55] City of Syracuse, New York: Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area Plan (http://www.syracuse.ny.us/neighborhood_and_business_development.aspx).
[56] City of Evanston Multi-Modal Transportation Plan (http://www.cityofevanston.org/public-works/transportation-engineering/multi-modal-transportation-plan/).
[57] Converting One-way Streets to Two-way (http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/main-street-news/2002/06/converting-one-way-to-two-way.html).
[58] Rochester, New York: Center City Visitor Circulation and Pedestrian Wayfinding Study (http://www.cityofrochester.gov/article.aspx?id=8589948735).
[59] Medford, Oregon: Street Lighting and Pedestrian-Scale Street Lighting (http://www.ci.medford.or.us/CodePrint.asp?CodeID=3927).

| *Goal: Revitalize Village and Town Centers* | *Adopted?* | *Add or Improve?* | *Context* [2] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 55: Establish a Main Street program to promote and enhance the town center. | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 56: A program provides funds and assistance for building façade renovations.[60] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 57: A fund provides matching grants or low-interest loans for storefront façade improvements and/or interior renovations.[61] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 58: Identify vacant and underused buildings and collect data to help market the properties for occupancy or redevelopment. | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 59: The local government partners with businesses or civic groups for small beautification projects, such as flower plantings or holiday decorations.[62] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |

[60] Village of Hamburg, New York: Façade improvement program (http://www.townofhamburgny.com/Hamburg_Development_Corporation_-117158.html). Funding came in part from New York's Main Street Program (http://www.nyshcr.org/Programs/NYMainStreet/).
[61] Portland, Maine: Façade Improvement Program (http://portlandmaine.gov/557/Facade-Improvement-Program).
[62] Junction, Texas: Main Street Beautification Project Grant Assistance (http://www.cityofjunction.com/jtedc/financial-assist.html).

## Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities

### *Section V: Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems*

*This tool is part of the Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities, developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. EPA suggests that communities using this tool complete Section I: "Revitalize Village and Town Centers," before filling out other sections. For more information and the tool's other sections, see https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-growth-self-assessment-rural-communities.*

Directing development away from critical natural habitats and ecosystems and minimizing impacts from new development, such as increased stormwater runoff, help rural communities protect the waterways, forests, mountains, view sheds, and farmlands that are critical to their economic health, especially in places valued for their scenic or recreational assets. Providing incentives to use green infrastructure and preserve open space, along with programs to educate residents on the importance of land conservation, helps communities maintain their valuable natural resources.

| ***Goal: Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems*** | ***Adopted?*** | ***Add or Improve?*** | ***Context[1]*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Using Water More Efficiently*** | | | |
| **Do codes require water efficiency and stormwater runoff reduction in new development and redevelopment?** | | | |
| Strategy 1: Codes require new homes to meet at least the minimum requirements of a program designed to use water more efficiently and improve water quality.[2] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 2: Codes encourage re-use of gray water where some or all water used in a building is captured, treated, and used or reused on site.[3] *[Kansas generally doesn't allow gray water re-use.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 3: Codes include incentives or requirements for green infrastructure including permeable pavement, vegetated swales near roadways, green roofs, and rain gardens.[4,5,6,7,8,9] *[Does include swales and drainage, but not rooftop gardens and landscaping requiremnents.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |

[1] Self-assessment topics and recommendations apply to one or more of the following scales: 1 – large town/small city (population of approximately 10,000 or greater); 2 - village/small town (population typically under 10,000); 3 – rural (very low density places, working lands and natural areas outside of towns, villages and cities).
[2] One example of a program is EPA's WaterSense New Homes Specification (http://www.epa.gov/watersense/new_homes/index.html).
[3] US EPA Region 9 Water Recycling and Reuse: The Environmental Benefits (http://www.epa.gov/region9/water/recycling/).
[4] Greater Elkhart County Stormwater Partnership: Rain Garden and Rain Barrel Incentive Program (http://www.stormwaterelkco.org/pages.php?section=homeowners&item=Rain_Garden_and_Rain_Barrel_Incentive_Program).
[5] Portland EcoRoof Incentive Program (http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/48724).
[6] Plant Connection - Green Roof Legislation, Policies, and Tax Incentives (http://www.myplantconnection.com/green-roofs-legislation.php).
[7] Ramsey-Washington Metro Watershed District: Stormwater BMP Incentive Program: Vegetated Swales (http://www.rwmwd.org/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC=%7BAAF12B9B-AF31-48C8-B303-86C8ECA92851%7D).
[8] Burlington, Vermont pervious pavement incentive program (http://www.burlingtonvt.gov/docs/4083.pdf).
[9] US EPA Green Infrastructure Library (http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/greeninfrastructure/index.cfm).

## V. *Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems*

| ***Goal: Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems*** | ***Adopted?*** | ***Add or Improve?*** | ***Context[1]*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 4: The code includes guidelines for stormwater runoff reduction strategies, such as green infrastructure and building standards.[10, 5,9,6,4,11] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 5: In mitigating site stormwater loads, stormwater runoff reduction strategies can be used to calculate offsets to stormwater requirements using conventional strategies such as retention ponds.[11] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| **Do codes promote reduced water use in landscaping?** | | | |
| Strategy 6: Codes provide incentives for rain barrels and cisterns.[12] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 7: Climate-appropriate and native plants that use less water are encouraged or required.[13,14] *[Enouraged, but not requiremnts.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 8: Guidelines exist for climate-appropriate and native landscape design.[15] *[Yes, but not from a codes perspective.]* | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| ***Regulating Development Near Water Resources*** | | | |
| **Do codes limit new development or redevelopment on wetlands or in flood plains?** | | | |
| Strategy 9: Local land use regulations require riparian and wetland buffer areas.[16,17, 18] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 10: New development is prohibited in flood plains unless it is a use that can be flooded without threatening property or human life.[19,20] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 11: Local governments evaluate development proposals near rivers for upstream and downstream impacts. | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |

[10] Dakota County, Minnesota Low Impact Development Standards (http://www.dakotaswcd.org/lowimpact.html).
[11] City of Sandy, Oregon Stormwater Management Incentive Program (http://www.ci.sandy.or.us/Stormwater-Management-Incentive-Program/).
[12] Cisterns can be permanent structures underground or above ground or non-permanent manufactured vessels that are typically above ground.
[13] Lake County, Florida Model Landscape Ordinance Requiring the Use and Preservation of Appropriate Native Vegetation. (https://www.lakecountyfl.gov/departments/public_resources/agricultural_education/soil_and_water_conservation_district/model_landscape_ordinance.aspx).
[14] Austin, Texas WaterWise Landscape Rebate program (http://www.austintexas.gov/department/waterwise-landscape-rebate).
[15] USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Living Landscapes in Minnesota: A Guide To Native Plantscaping (http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/publications/plantmaterials/pmc/central/ndpmc/pub/).
[16] An example of a buffer would be a 50-foot undisturbed buffer from the top of bank.
[17] River Basin Center. Model Riparian Buffer Ordinance (http://www.rivercenter.uga.edu/research/tools/buffers/model_buffer_ordinance.htm).
[18] Association of State Wetland Managers. Model Ordinances for Regulating Wetlands and Riparian Habitats/Stream Buffers (http://www.aswm.org/watersheds/streams/897-publications).
[19] Knox County, Tennessee Floodplain Management Regulations (http://www.knoxcounty.org/stormwater/volume2.php).
[20] US EPA. Planning for Flood Recovery and Long-Term Resilience in Vermont: Smart Growth Approaches for Disaster-Resilient Communities (http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/disaster-recovery-resilience.htm).

## V. *Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems*

| ***Goal: Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems*** | ***Adopted?*** | ***Add or Improve?*** | ***Context[1]*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 12: Prohibit development on previously undeveloped land where the elevation is lower than the elevation of the 100-year flood as defined by FEMA. *[It is not prohibited; you can build there, but it has specific development standards and typically must be built at a certain height. If it is industrial, machinery has to be moved to an upper level.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 13: Regulations require restoration of degraded riparian or wetland areas of a development site.[21] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| **Do codes regulate uses to protect source water for wellheads or sensitive aquifers?** | | | |
| Strategy 14: The community has wellhead and/or aquifer protection regulations or zones to prevent incompatible development and uses.[22,23] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| **Do codes require stormwater management and monitoring on site in new developments or redevelopments?** | | | |
| Strategy 15: Codes include provisions exist to minimize or reduce the amount of impervious surface.[24] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 16: Stormwater quality and quantity performance standards exist for development sites.[25,26] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 17: Measures are required to limit waste during construction from flowing into water bodies and the stormwater system to protect water quality.[27] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 18: Pollution monitoring and mitigation strategies reduce harm to natural resources during construction.[28] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| ***Protecting Open Spaces for Agriculture, Recreation, and Wildlife*** | | | |
| **Do codes require land use regulations to protect open spaces or natural resources?** | | | |
| Strategy 19: Critical water resource areas cannot be counted in calculating allowable density on a site.[29] *[N/A]* | ☐ | ☐ | 1,2 |

[21] Pima County, Arizona Regulated Riparian Habitat Mitigation Standards and Implementation Guidelines (http://webcms.pima.gov/government/flood_control/rules_and_procedures/).
[22] Norway, Maine Wellhead Protection Ordinance for Norway Maine (http://norwaymaine.com/n/?page_id=301).
[23] Town of Canton, Connecticut Aquifer Protection Regulations (http://www.townofcantonct.org/content/19174/120/17179/3546/default.aspx).
[24] Town of Washington, Connecticut Zoning Regulations, Maximum Lot Coverage (http://www.riversalliance.org/ModelOrdinances/Town_of_Washington_Zoning_Reg_Impervious_Surface.htm).
[25] An example would be the restriction on sedimentation levels.
[26] Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District. Model Ordinance for Post-Development Stormwater Management for New Development and Redevelopment. (http://www.northgeorgiawater.org/stormwater/model-ordinances).
[27] Wisconsin Construction Site Storm Water Permits (http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/stormwater/construction/).
[28] City of Gilroy, California Storm Water & Urban Runoff Management (http://www.cityofgilroy.org/cityofgilroy/city_hall/community_development/engineering/storm_water/default.aspx).
[29] EPA Water Quality Scorecard: Incorporating Green Infrastructure Practices at the Municipal, Neighborhood, and Site Scale (http://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/water_scorecard.htm).

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| *Goal: Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems* | *Adopted?* | *Add or Improve?* | *Context*[1] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 20: Prohibit development on previously undeveloped land within a setback to any endangered or protected fish and wildlife habitat or wetland conservation area.[30] *[N/A]* | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 21: Land development regulations protect steep slopes, hillsides, and other sensitive areas.[31,32] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 22: Streetlights and commercial lighting directs light to the streets to preserve dark skies.[33] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| **Are there open space creation or preservation requirements?** | | | |
| Strategy 23: The local government uses open space or recreation impact fees to preserve open space.[34] *[No recreational impact fees, but a local tax to support recreation.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 24: Open space dedication and/or set-aside requirements exist and are based on the demand generated by new development.[35,36] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| **Do codes support appropriate development in agricultural areas?** | | | |
| Strategy 25: There are agricultural, ranching, or forestry zoning districts that allow large minimum lot size.[37,38] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| ***Protecting the Tree Canopy*** | | | |
| **Do codes require tree protection strategies during construction?** | | | |
| Strategy 26: Public trees removed or damaged during construction of private development are required to be replaced on- or off-site with an equivalent amount of tree caliper.[39,40] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |

[30] Clallam County, Washington Critical Areas Code (http://www.clallam.net/Permits/criticalarea.html).
[31] For example, by limiting development on slopes greater than 30 percent or requiring large lot sizes in sensitive areas.
[32] Town of Boone, North Carolina Steep Slope Regulations Brochure. (http://www.townofboone.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=94:planning-a-inspections&catid=82:important-links&Itemid=463).
[33] The Maricopa County, Arizona Dark Sky Ordinance is a zoning ordinance controlling use of outdoor artificial illuminating devices (http://www.maricopa.gov/planning/Resources/Ordinances/DarkSkyOrdinance.aspx).
[34] Town of Cumberland, Maine Recreational Facilities and Open Space Impact Fee Ordinance (http://cumberlandmaine.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Impact_Fee_2nd_Amendments_current_adopted_7_23_12_fillable_application1.pdf).
[35] For example, the National Parks and Recreation Association recommends 10 acres of community and neighborhood parks for every 1,000 persons in a development.
[36] Creating Open Space in Clifton Park (http://www.cliftonpark.org/townhall/open-space-trails-and-riverfront-advisory-committee/).
[37] Ranges for minimum lot sizes could vary from 5 to 80 acres depending on the context and the purpose behind establishing the particular development pattern.
[38] Farmland Information Center. Agricultural Protection Zoning (http://www.farmlandinfo.org/agricultural-protection-zoning).
[39] For example, if a developer removes a 24-inch diameter tree, he would replace it with six 4-inch diameter trees.
[40] Round Rock, Texas Tree Ordinance (http://www.roundrocktexas.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation/forestry/tree-ordinance/).

## V. *Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems*

| ***Goal: Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems*** | ***Adopted?*** | ***Add or Improve?*** | ***Context[1]*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 27: Construction protection rules exist, covering all public trees.[41,42] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| ***Protecting Natural Habitats and Ecosystems Through Comprehensive Plans and Local Government Policies*** | | | |
| **Does the local government provide incentives to landowners to conserve land?** | | | |
| Strategy 28: A transfer of development rights program exists and enables transactions between well-defined sending and receiving areas.[43] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 29: Local tax credits are available for land conservation.[44] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| **Are there policies to create designated growth areas and preserve rural areas?** | | | |
| Strategy 30: Designated growth areas and preservation areas are defined by a municipal services area, municipal development area, or similar designation.[45,46] *[Yes, but not well defined. They have the three-jurisdictions. The county has not updated since 1996.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 31: Urbanized, town center policies allow for more dense development in the core downtown area of the community.[47] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 32: Designate and protect critical natural lands outside of the town centers, identifying areas that have a strong rural legacy.[48] | ☒ | ☐ | 3 |
| **Are there cleanup or restoration requirements to preserve or restore biological diversity?** | | | |
| Strategy 33: Brownfield and other contaminated sites have been successfully remediated.[49] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 34: Consider restoration and preservation of regional biodiversity in plans, with a focus on promoting native species and avoiding and eliminating invasive species.[50] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |

[41] Construction protection rules might include fencing around trees and avoiding cutting into root zones.
[42] Norfolk, Virginia Zoning Ordinance, Trees and Other Vegetation (https://www.municode.com/library/va/norfolk/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COCI_CH45TROTVE).
[43] King County, Washington Transfer of Development Rights Program (http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/stewardship/sustainable-building/transfer-development-rights/overview.aspx).
[44] Land Trust Alliance. Tax Incentives (http://www.landtrustalliance.org/policy/tax-matters/campaigns/state-tax-incentives).
[45] Albemarle County, Virginia Urban/Development Area (http://www.albemarle.org/department.asp?department=cdd&relpage=3214).
[46] Montgomery County, Virginia Urban Development Areas (http://www.montgomerycountyva.gov/content/15989/16031/16767/default.aspx).
[47] Dennis Township Master Plan – Land Use Plan (http://www.dennistwp.org/pdfdoc2012/DTMasterPlanRevisedFinal2012-12-12.pdf).
[48] Albemarle County, Virginia Rural Areas Plan (http://www.albemarle.org/department.asp?department=cdd&relpage=3213).
[49] Missouri Department of Natural Resources Brownfields/Voluntary Cleanup Program (http://www.dnr.mo.gov/env/hwp/bvcp/hwpvcp.htm).
[50] Honeoye, New York Lake Watershed Management Plan (http://www.co.ontario.ny.us/DocumentCenter/View/1276).

| ***Goal: Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems*** | ***Adopted?*** | ***Add or Improve?*** | ***Context[1]*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 35: Measures are in place to minimize the use of water pollutants, including pesticides, herbicides, and chemical fertilizers by both public and private entities.[51,52] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| **Are there regional and local green infrastructure investments?** | | | |
| Strategy 36: Inventory the community's current tree cover, and complete plans to protect and expand the tree canopy.[53] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 37: A green infrastructure plan, developed with a range of public- and private-sector partners, connects habitats to protect habitat.[54] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 38: Encourage green infrastructure strategies to collect and treat stormwater runoff, such as rain gardens, vegetated swales, and permeable pavements, through incentives in new developments or redevelopments. | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 39: Road construction or reconstruction projects implement green infrastructure strategies when possible.[55] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| ***Protecting Natural Habitats and Ecosystems Through Programs and Services*** | | | |
| **Are there programs to allow community-managed land?** | | | |
| Strategy 40: Public programs exist to support fee simple acquisition of sensitive land.[56] *[N/A]* | ☐ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 41: The community has transfer of development rights or purchase of development rights programs for conservation easements.[57] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 42: A community land trust supports managed open space.[58] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 43: Prioritize community-owned lands, such as community gardens or community open space held in a land trust, to be protected from development. | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |

[51] Oceanside, California Pesticides and Fertilizers effects on water quality (http://www.ci.oceanside.ca.us/gov/water/services_programs/clean/residential/pesticides.asp).
[52] Connecticut General Assembly. State Laws Banning Phosphorous Fertilizer Use (http://www.cga.ct.gov/2012/rpt/2012-R-0076.htm).
[53] Austin, Texas Urban Forestry Program (http://austintexas.gov/department/urban-forestry).
[54] Kansas City, Missouri/Kansas MetroGreen Regional Greenway System (http://www.terrain.org/unsprawl/26/).
[55] Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. Green Infrastructure (http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/green-infrastructure).
[56] San Antonio Water System. Sensitive Land Acquisition Program (http://www.saws.org/environment/ResourceProtComp/aquifer_protection/acquisition.cfm).
[57] Northhampton County, Virginia Purchase of Development Rights Program (http://www.co.northampton.va.us/departments/Purchase_of_Development_Rights.html).
[58] Upper Valley Land Trust (New Hampshire) community based land conservancy (http://www.uvlt.org/).

## *V. Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems*

| *Goal: Protect Natural Habitats and Ecosystems* | *Adopted?* | *Add or Improve?* | *Context[1]* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Is there a water quality and preservation program?** | | | |
| Strategy 44: The local government has a system for ongoing monitoring and reporting of water quality in the watershed.[59] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 45: The community has systems for reclaiming and reusing water.[60] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| **Are there conservation education programs in place?** | | | |
| Strategy 46: The school system teaches students about water quality and conservation.[61] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 47: The school system teaches students about the unique natural habitat in which they live.[62] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 48: The school system teaches students about waste reduction, recycling, and the effects of polluting.[63] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 49: The local government provides online information on green infrastructure, energy efficiency, and water conservation.[64] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |

[59] Tomales Bay (California) Water Quality Monitoring Plan (http://www.tomalesbaywatershed.org/library.html).
[60] Manatee County, Florida Reclaimed Water Program (https://www.mymanatee.org/home/government/departments/utilities/wastewater-system/reclaimed-water.html).
[61] Redwood City, California Water Conservation Education for Schools (http://www.redwoodcity.org/publicworks/water/conserve%20water%20education.html).
[62] US Fish and Wildlife Service Pacific Southwest Region. Schoolyard Habitat Program (http://www.fws.gov/cno/conservation/schoolyard.cfm).
[63] Boulder/Broomfield County, Colorado School Recycling and Environmental Education Program (http://www.ecocycle.org/schools/overview).
[64] US EPA. Why Green Infrastructure? (http://water.epa.gov/infrastructure/greeninfrastructure/gi_why.cfm).

# Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities

## *Section VIII: Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources*

*This tool is part of the Smart Growth Self-Assessment for Rural Communities, developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. EPA suggests that communities using this tool complete Section I: "Revitalize Village and Town Centers," before filling out other sections. For more information and the tool's other sections, see https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/smart-growth-self-assessment-rural-communities.*

Reusing buildings, especially those with historic value, contributes to a community's distinctive identity, which can attract tourists and new residents. These buildings are often in the village or town center, so redeveloping them can bring new life to these places and absorb demand for residential, office, and retail space that might otherwise be satisfied at a more distant location. Preserving a community's cultural icons can also help attract tourism while promoting healthy living, beauty, and community pride.

| *Goal: Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources* | *Adopted?* | *Add or Improve?* | *Context [1]* |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Preserving Sites and Areas of Historical Significance*** | | | |
| **Do codes create a process for designating and protecting historic properties and districts?[2]** | | | |
| Strategy 1: A local administrative body is established to oversee historic preservation.[3,4] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 2: Codes or guidelines establish criteria for designating a property or neighborhood as historic.[5] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 3: A local historic district or overlay zone has been adopted by ordinance.[6,7] *[Not specifically an overlay zone.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 4: The administrative body reviews proposed additions, demolitions, new construction, rehabilitation projects, or other alterations to sites or buildings in the historic district.[8] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |

[1] Self-assessment topics and recommendations apply to one or more of the following scales: 1 – large town/small city (population of approximately 10,000 or greater); 2 - village/small town (population typically under 10,000); 3 – rural (very low density places, working lands, and natural areas outside of towns, villages, and cities).
[2] The New York State Historic Preservation Office provides information on a wide range of topics related to historic preservation (http://nysparks.com/shpo/).
[3] This body is typically a historic preservation review commission or design review board for a designated historic district. An administrative review by local government staff is also an option.
[4] Montpelier Historic Preservation Commission (http://www.montpelier-vt.org/group/68/Historic-Preservation-Commission.html).
[5] Rockville, Maryland Historic Designation Criteria (http://www.rockvillemd.gov/index.aspx?NID=625).
[6] A Model Historic District Ordinance for Local Governments in Pennsylvania (http://conservationtools.org/libraries/1/library_items/944-A-Model-Historic-District-Ordinance-for-Local-Governments-in-Pennsylvania).
[7] Lynchburg, Virginia Historic Districts Ordinance, Guidelines, Descriptions, and Maps (http://www.lynchburgva.gov/historic-districts-ordinance-guidelines-descriptions-and-maps).
[8] Boulder County, Colorado: Permit Process for Demolition and Alteration of Historic Structures (http://www.bouldercounty.org/property/build/pages/historicdemo.aspx).

## *VIII. Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources*

| ***Goal: Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources*** | ***Adopted?*** | ***Add or Improve?*** | ***Context [1]*** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 5: Codes establish criteria for issuing demolition permits for historic structures.[8] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| ***Respecting Important Historic and Cultural Resources*** | | | |
| **Do codes establish design guidelines for new development?** | | | |
| Strategy 6: Design standards apply to new residential and commercial development in historic or cultural districts to require design features that are consistent with the historic architecture or natural features of the area.[9, 10] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 7: Design standards apply to the renovation of historic properties to ensure complementary features are integrated into new elements of the building.[11,7] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| **Do codes and policies encourage reuse or redevelopment of historic buildings?** | | | |
| Strategy 8: Codes allow rezoning to allow historic buildings to be repurposed for a mix of uses.[12] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| **Do codes protect views of natural, historic, or culturally significant features?** | | | |
| Strategy 9: Establish a review process for development in protected viewsheds (areas with views of attractive features such as ridge lines, water bodies, or landmarks).[13] | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 10: Local codes regulate the height and size of signs and billboards in protected viewsheds.[14] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 11: Subdivision codes encourage techniques, such as cluster subdivisions, to protect viewsheds.[15,16] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| ***Preserving Historic and Cultural Resources Through Comprehensive Plans and Local Government Policies*** | | | |

[9] The Town of Dryden, New York has developed commercial and residential design guidelines. They are available from the town's website (http://dryden.ny.us/departments/planning-department/planning/design-guidelines).
[10] Context sensitive zoning and development standards based on analysis of historic development patterns (http://www.ci.benicia.ca.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={D87C20DD-AE9B-41D5-84A7-D29CAD93E9F3}).
[11] The strategy refers to renovations of historic buildings, where substantive changes to or additions of doors, windows, façade elements, ceilings, and interior materials need to complement, but not necessarily match, the structure's historic elements.
[12] Duvall, Washington Old Town – Mixed Use Zoning District (http://www.duvallwa.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/519).
[13] Napa, California has a Viewshed Protection Program that aims to protect views of the area's ridges. Chapter 18.06 of the city's zoning ordinance describes it and it can also be found in the viewshed permit (http://www.countyofnapa.org/pages/departmentcontent.aspx?id=4294968649).
[14] Keuka Lake Waterfront Revitalization and Scenic Viewshed Protection Plan (http://www.stcplanning.org/usr/Program_Areas/Water_Resources/KeukaLake/Waterfront%20Revitalization%20and%20Scenic%20Viewshed%20Protection%20Plan_opt.pdf).
[15] Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. Model Zoning Ordinance for Rural Cluster Development (http://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPC/communityassistance/ModelOrdinancesGuides.htm).
[16] Conservation Subdivision Design Handbook (http://conservationtools.org/libraries/1/library_items/349-Conservation-Subdivision-Design-Handbook).

| *Goal: Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources* | *Adopted?* | *Add or Improve?* | *Context [1]* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Have significant historic or cultural features been identified?** | | | |
| Strategy 12: Develop an inventory of historic buildings, landmarks, and neighborhoods.[17] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 13: The local government has established a historic district recognized by the National Register of Historic Places.[18] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |
| Strategy 14: Develop an inventory of significant viewsheds.[19] *[Not necessarily codes, but community recognized.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 15: Develop an inventory of cultural heritage tourism sites.[20] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| ***Preserving Historic and Cultural Resources Through Programs and Services*** | | | |
| **Does the local government promote the rehabilitation and enjoyment of historic and cultural resources?** | | | |
| Strategy 16: Historic structures and sites have interpretative signs and are included in the community's wayfinding signs.[21] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 17: A self-guided historical walking tour is available to the community.[22] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 18: A façade improvement and landscaping grant program is available for historic properties.[23,24] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 19: A tax credit or tax abatement is available to buy and/or renovate historic properties.[25] | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2,3 |
| Strategy 20: A revolving loan fund is available to buy and/or renovate historic properties.[26] *[Not specific to historic, but there is one availible.]* | ☐ | ☒ | 1,2,3 |

[17] Santa Monica, California: Historic Resources Inventory (http://www.smgov.net/Departments/PCD/Historic-Resources-Inventory/).
[18] The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources (http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/).
[19] Hancock County Scenic Assessment Inventory and Analysis (http://www.hcpcme.org/environment/view/).
[20] State of Utah Cultural Heritage Tourism Planning (http://www.planning.utah.gov/CRMPHeritageTourism.htm).
[21] Best Practices for Developing Interpretive Signs (http://www.watershedco.com/blog/interpretive-program-from-start-to-finish/).
[22] Alexandria Walking & Guided Tours (http://www.visitalexandriava.com/things-to-do/tours/).
[23] Portland, Maine Façade Improvement Program (http://www.portlandmaine.gov/557/Facade-Improvement-Program).
[24] City of Yreka, California: The Miner Street Grant Program (http://ci.yreka.ca.us/business/miner-street-grant-program).
[25] Rockville, Maryland: Historic Tax Credit Program (http://www.rockvillemd.gov/index.aspx?NID=627).
[26] City of Dubuque Historic Preservation Revolving Loan Fund (http://www.cityofdubuque.org/index.aspx?NID=773).

## *VIII. Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources*

| *Goal: Preserve Historic and Cultural Resources* | *Adopted?* | *Add or Improve?* | *Context [1]* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 21: Offer tax incentives to developers who redevelop historic buildings in city and town centers and maintain their historic character.[27] *[Yes, historical tax credits available.]* | ☒ | ☐ | 1,2 |

[27] Creating American Prosperity through Preservation Act of 2013 (https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/113/s1141).