

Supporting Sustainable Communities through Smart Growth Approaches



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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Office of Sustainable Communities

West Virginia Transportation Planning and Programming Conference

October 2, 2012



Farm in Washington State



Port Washington, Wisconsin



Edwards, Colorado

EPA's Office of Sustainable Communities



**EPA's mission:
Protect human health and the environment.**

**Where and how we build our communities
impacts public health and our land, air, and water.**



How We Do Our Work



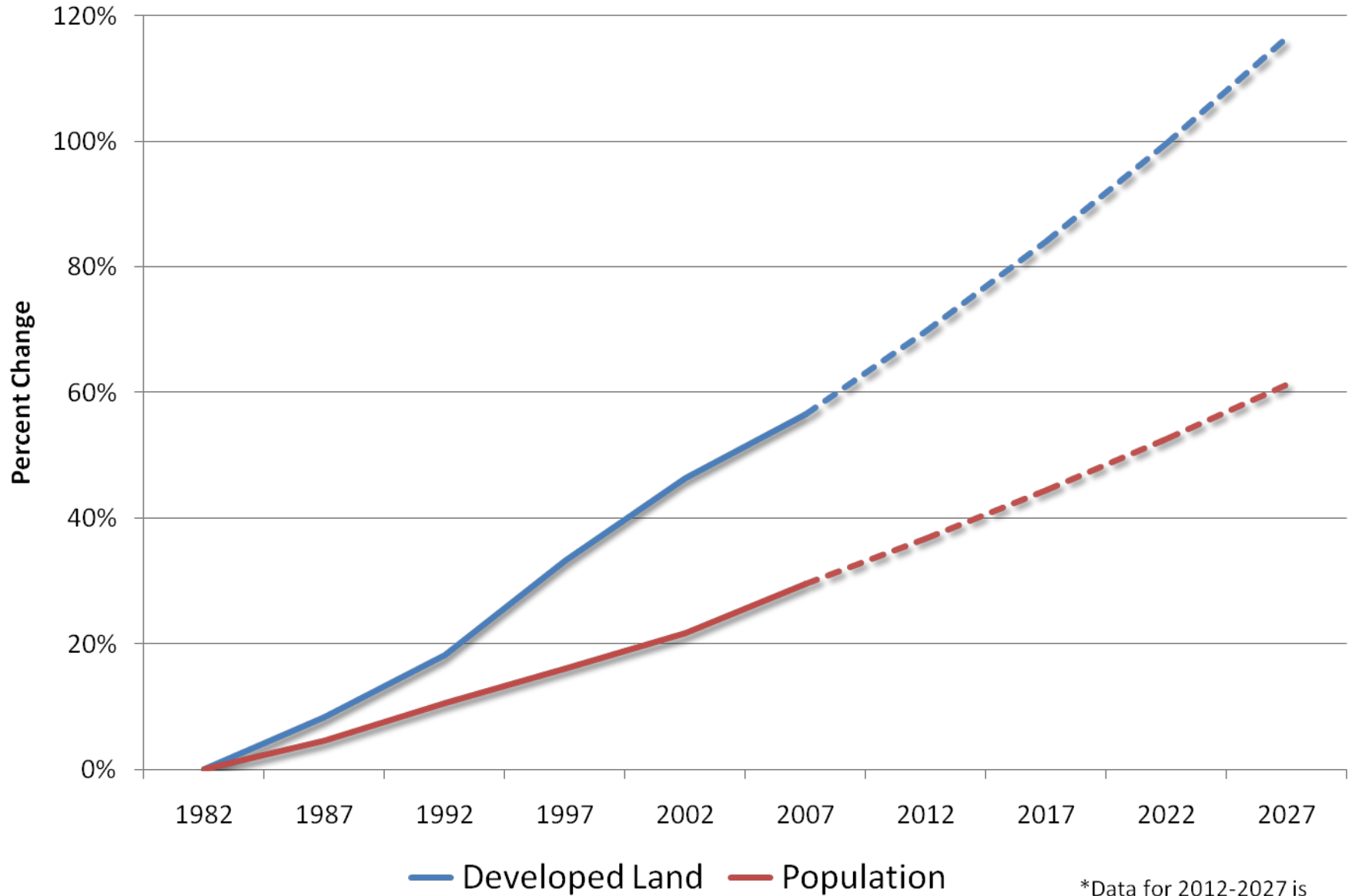
- **Local – Technical assistance to communities (cities, towns, counties), where land use decisions are made**
- **State – Target and address state-level barriers to smart growth (infrastructure funding decisions, etc.)**
- **Federal – Work to collaborate among federal agencies to better coordinate our investments in communities**

www.epa.gov/smartgrowth

Last 50 years of development...

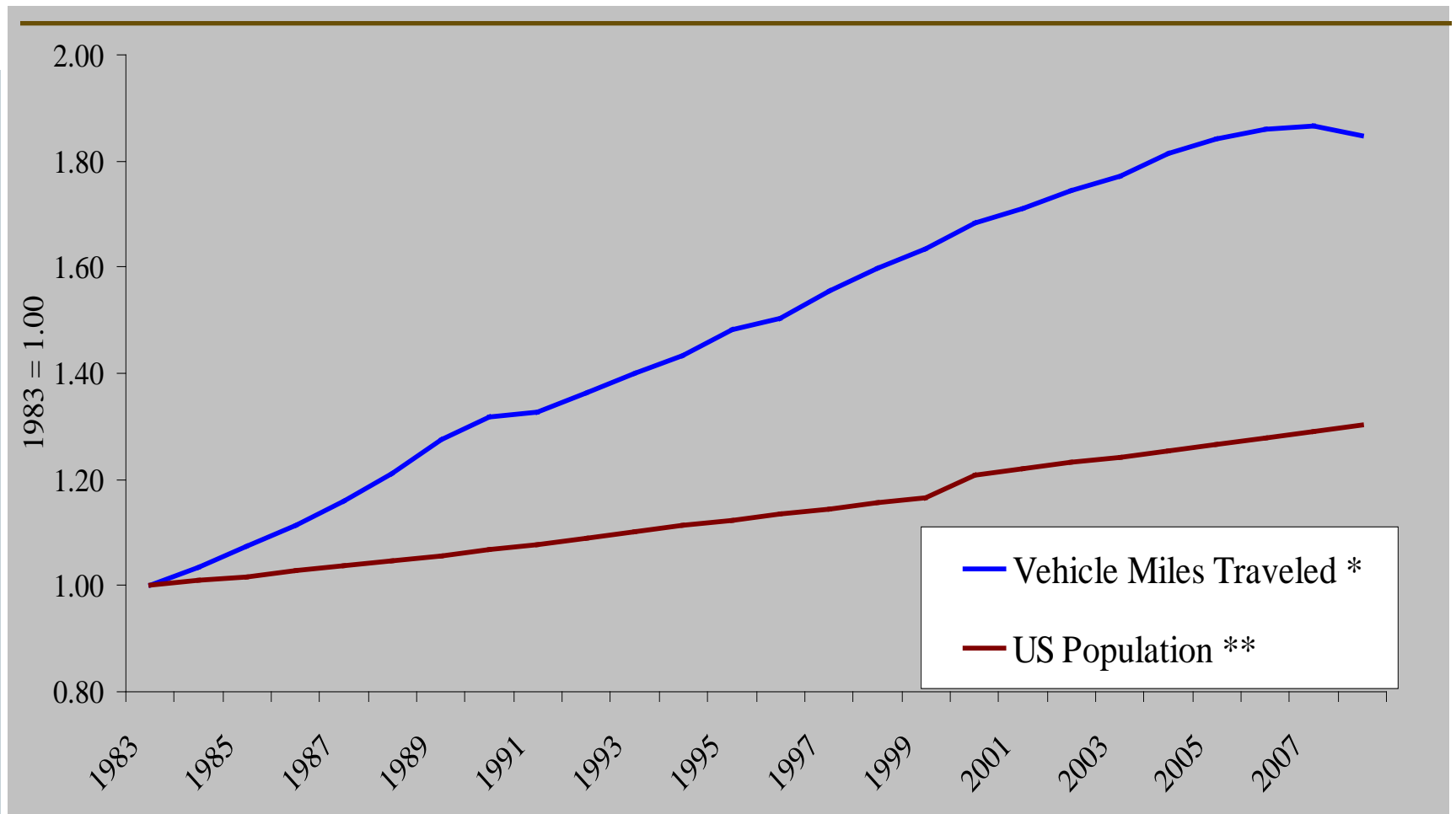
- Air and water pollution
- Land consumption
- Contribution to climate change
- A health crisis... even among children
- More money spent on infrastructure, bankrupting our cities and towns

U.S. Population Growth and Land Consumption



*Data for 2012-2027 is extrapolated.

Vehicle travel has grown faster than population



* Source – US DOT, Traffic Volume Trends, (12 Month Moving Average, April 1983 to April 2008)

** Source – US Census Bureau, Annual Population Estimates

Smart Growth: A Response to Development Challenges



Skaneateles, New York



Waitsfield, Vermont

- **Development that provides:**
 - Choices for where to live and how to get around
 - A stronger, more resilient economy
 - A safer, healthier place to live
 - Opportunities to protect the things that you love about the place you live (farmland and open space, natural beauty, sense of community, etc.)

Sustainable Communities



- *A Sustainable Community is an urban, suburban or rural community that has more housing and transportation choices, is closer to jobs, shops or schools, is more energy independent and helps protect clean air and water.*



“We’re working to change the way government works, and that means investing tax dollars wisely and well. We want to make sure that when we’re building infrastructure, we’re considering how housing, transportation, and the environment all impact each other.”

-- President Barack Obama, October 21, 2010



Smart growth means choices for where to live...



19

CLARKE



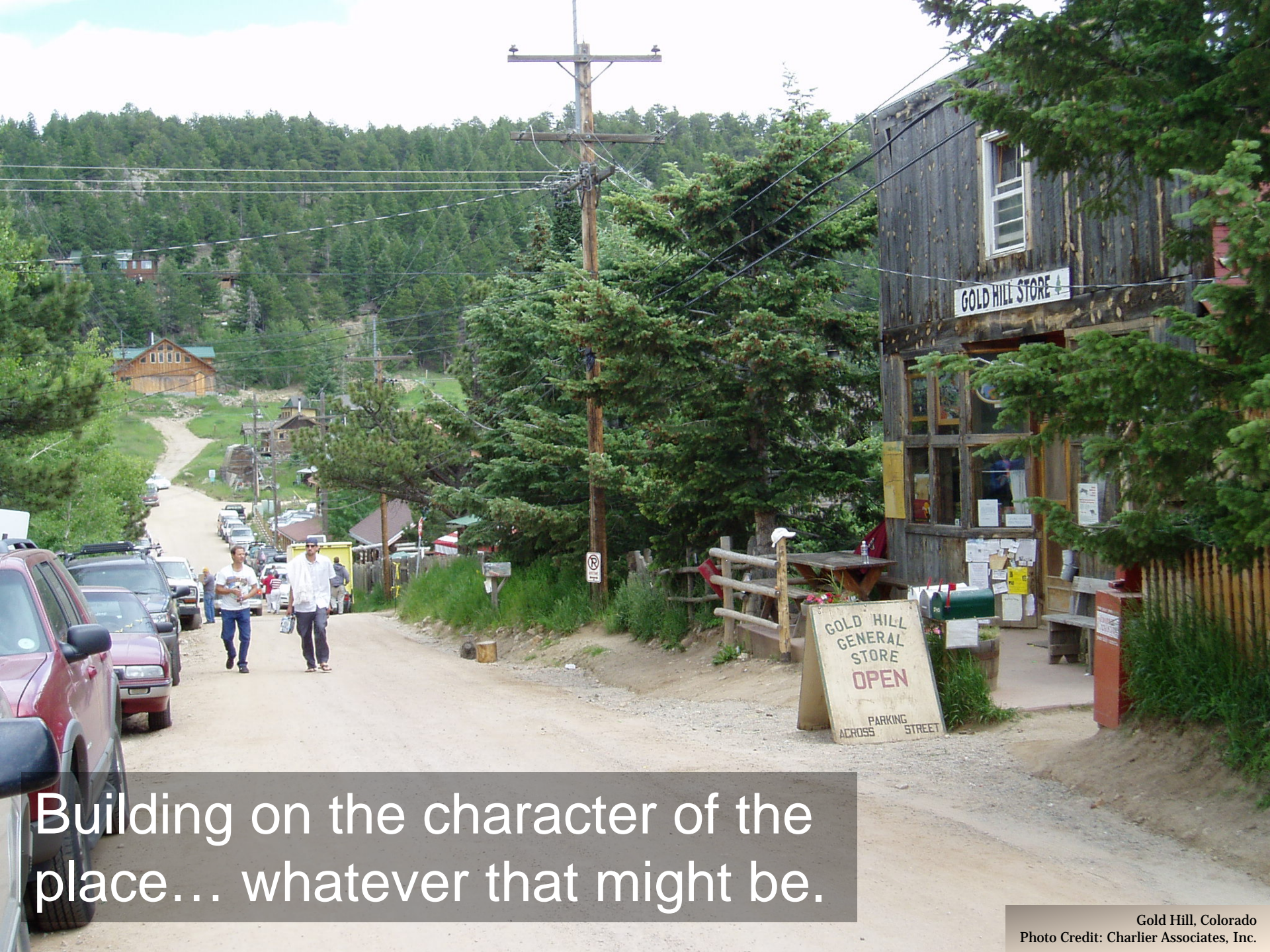
Kentlands Development, Maryland
Photo Credit: EPA



...and how to get around.



San Diego, California
Photo Credit: EPA



Building on the character of the place... whatever that might be.



Barracks Row, Washington D.C.
Photo Credit: EPA



Lewes, Delaware
Photo Credit: EPA



Chicago, Illinois
Photo Credit: EPA



And preserving what's
great about the community.





Smart growth also means developing a strong economy through economic development strategies that take advantage of a community's best assets.



Overall it means retaining and creating great communities – places where people want to live, where they have choices, and where they have opportunities for economic growth.



So what does smart growth mean for a rural community?



When you've seen one rural community...
you've seen one rural community.



Challenges Facing Rural Communities

- **Changing economies**
 - Decline of traditional economic base, questions about what's next
- **Fewer farms and farmers**
 - Although there is a growing interest in farming
- **Loss of forest and other natural and working land**
- **Some communities are growing, some are shrinking**
 - Rapid growth at metro edges
 - Shrinking population in some communities
- **Limited access to jobs, services, and transportation**
- **Limited planning capacity**





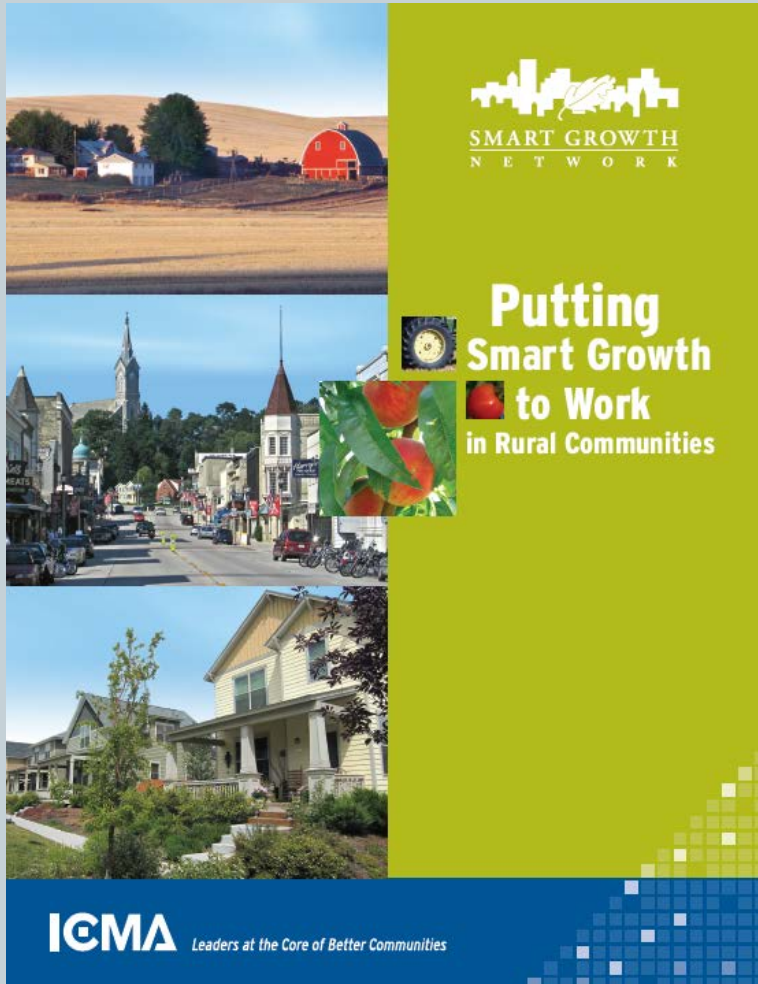
Goal #1: Protect valuable farmland.

Goal #2: Enhance the existing downtown.

Goal #3: Build new neighborhoods that are adjacent to town.

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

Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities

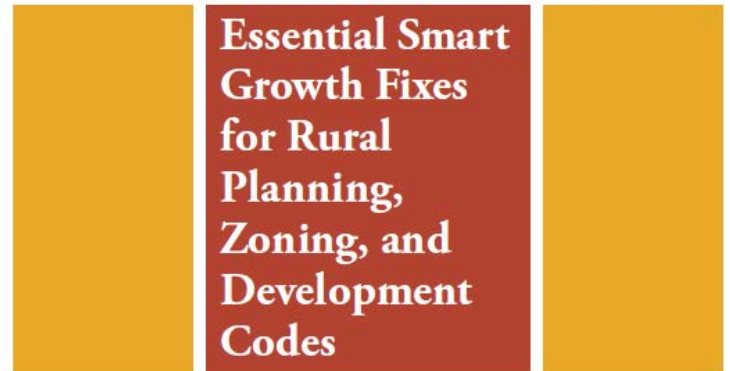


- Partnership between the U.S. EPA and ICMA – a Smart Growth Network publication
- Lays out a framework for rural communities and small towns seeking to implement smart growth
- Set of tools, case studies, and resources

Essential Smart Growth Fixes



- Outlines ten essential fixes to help rural communities amend their codes, ordinances, and development requirements
- Includes tools for:
 - right-sizing **rural roads**
 - using cluster development
 - implementing wastewater infrastructure practices
 - protecting agricultural and sensitive areas
 - many other “fixes” for planning, zoning, and development codes



Smart Growth Implementation Assistance



- Technical assistance to states, regions, and communities that want to implement smart growth approaches to development but are facing barriers
- Provides in-depth, long-term (18 months) assistance from national experts, usually including a multi-day workshop and a final report
- Accepting letters of interest in February 2013
- For more information and to apply:
 - Contact Abby Hall: hall.abby@epa.gov, 415-972-3384
 - www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/sgia

Building Blocks for Sustainable Communities



- Quick, targeted smart growth assistance to communities (1-day workshops) using a variety of tools that have demonstrated results and widespread application
- Provides access to technical experts who offer policy and implementation ideas, direct consultation with decision makers, and a memo recommending next steps
- Tools this year include: Bike Sharing, Parking Audits, Green Streets, among others
- Accepting letters of interest in October

More Building Blocks...



- Some of the technical assistance is being provided through grants with the following organizations:

- Forterra
- Global Green USA
- Project for Public Spaces
- Smart Growth America



- These organizations will offer direct technical assistance to 40-70 communities per year – apply directly to the organization
- For more information:
 - Contact Kevin Nelson: nelson.kevin@epa.gov, 202-566-2835
 - www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/buildingblocks

Greening America's Capitals



- Partnership between EPA, HUD, and DOT to help state capitals develop environmentally-friendly neighborhoods that incorporate green building and green infrastructure strategies
- Brings a team of designers to produce designs, illustrations, and implementation strategies for a pilot neighborhood and to inform changes to codes and ordinances

Charleston, WV – Slack Plaza



- Selected in 2010 – project purpose was to redesign Slack Plaza, in the middle of Charleston’s downtown
- Plaza serves as a pedestrian connector for two commercial areas in the central business district, but challenged by no sense of place, poor signage, and public safety issues
- Wanted to transform the Plaza into a multi-modal transportation hub that would incorporate green space and public art to foster a more beautiful and sustainable community





ART WALK

FestivALL

June 17 - 26



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Sustainable Communities in Appalachia



- **Joint project of:**
 - Appalachian Regional Commission
 - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
 - U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development
- **Purpose:** help rural Appalachian towns increase their capacity for actions that will improve economic viability and community well-being
- **Assistance:** 2-day workshop bringing together federal, state, and local partners to help the towns achieve their objectives
- **Setting:** seven rural communities in the 13-state Appalachian region
 - Brownsville, PA
 - Salamanca, NY
 - Connellsville, PA
 - Independence, VA
 - Uhrichsville, OH
 - Spruce Pine, NC
 - Williamson, WV

Williamson, West Virginia



- **Historic coal town**
- **Goal: become the leading sustainable community in Appalachia**
- **Position itself as:**
 - Regional hub for green jobs
 - Renewable energies
 - Tourism
 - Workforce training
 - Employment

Partnership for Sustainable Communities

- Formed in June 2009:
HUD, DOT, EPA
(+ USDA)
- Coordinate and leverage
housing, transportation,
and environmental
policies, programs, and
investments



HUD-DOT-EPA PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES GUIDING LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES

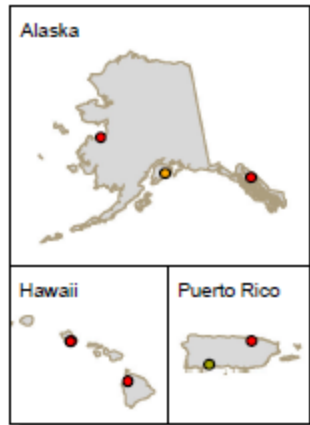
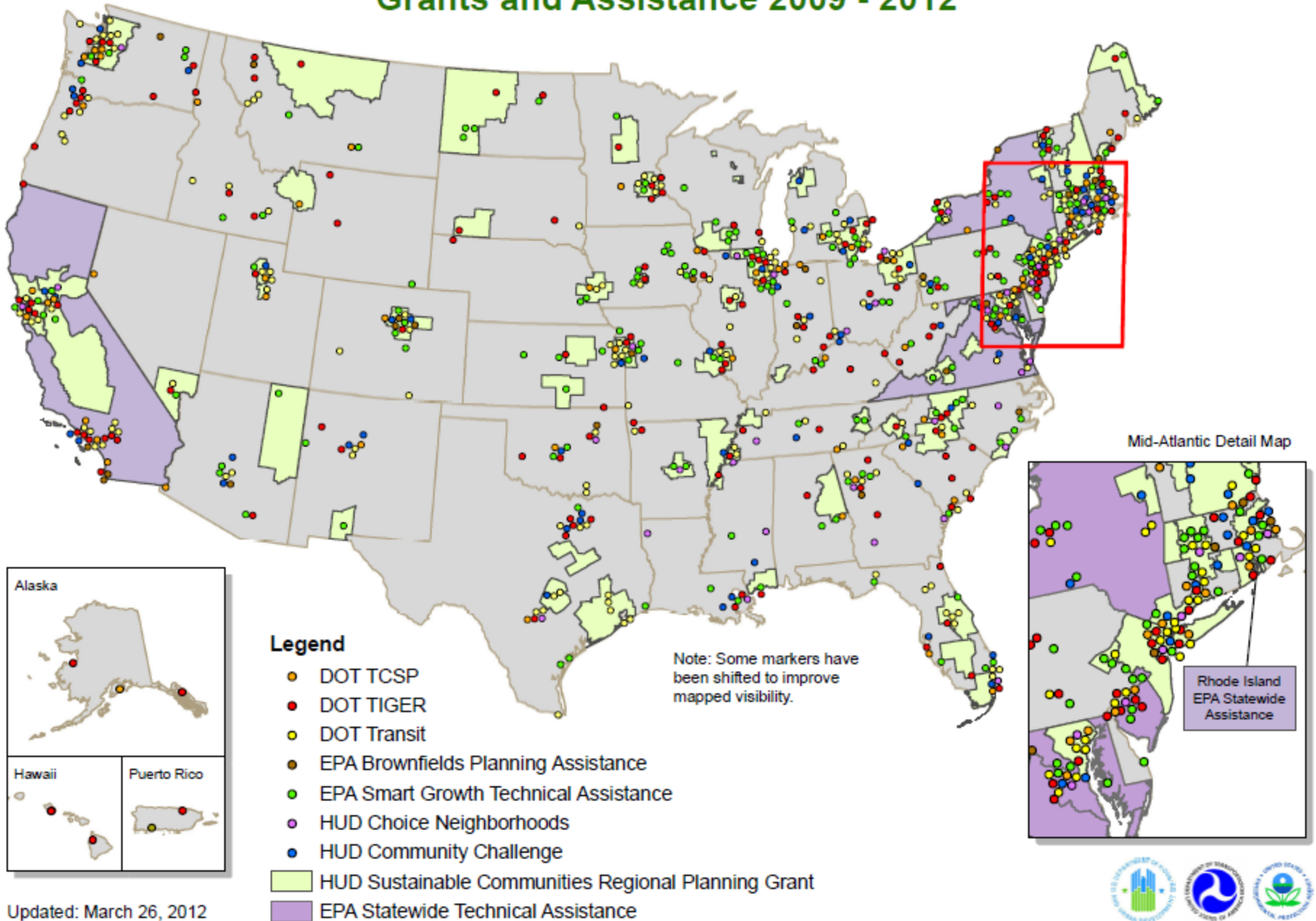
- ✧ **Provide more transportation choices.** Develop safe, reliable, and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation's dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote public health.
- ✧ **Promote equitable, affordable housing.** Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.
- ✧ **Enhance economic competitiveness.** Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.
- ✧ **Support existing communities.** Target federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit-oriented, mixed-use development and land recycling—to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.
- ✧ **Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment.** Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy
- ✧ **Value communities and neighborhoods.** Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban, or suburban.

Federal Investments in Communities



- Federal investments leverage other public and private sector investments – they serve as a **catalyst** for future development.
- The **location** of federal investments is important. Investing in existing places can:
 - build on previous investments,
 - save communities money, and
 - meet market demand.
- How can we ensure that federal programs and policies are coordinated to achieve better outcomes in communities?

HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities Grants and Assistance 2009 - 2012



Partnership Rural Reports

www.sustainablecommunities.gov

Supporting Sustainable Rural Communities

Partnership for Sustainable Communities



In collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture



Fall 2011



Partnership for Sustainable Communities

In collaboration with the U.S. Department of Agriculture



Federal Resources for Sustainable Rural Communities



Upcoming Training Opportunities



- USDA's Stronger Economies Together (SET) Program – creating an optional Smart Growth module
- Training module for local officials on how to implement smart growth approaches in a rural context
- Save the Date: New Partners for Smart Growth Conference February 7-9, 2013 in Kansas City



12th Annual
New Partners for Smart Growth:
Building Safe, Healthy and Livable Communities

February 7-9, 2013
Kansas City Convention Center • Kansas City, MO

Presented by the Local Government Commission.
Look for more details about the 2013 event in the coming months: NewPartners.org



For More Information

www.epa.gov/smartgrowth
www.sustainablecommunities.gov
bertaina.stephanie@epa.gov