

# The Planning for Results Guidebook

Practical Advice for Building Successful Rural Communities



*presented by the*

WESTERN COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP FORUM

A joint project of the National Association of Counties and the Sonoran Institute  
with financial support from the Henry M. Jackson Foundation

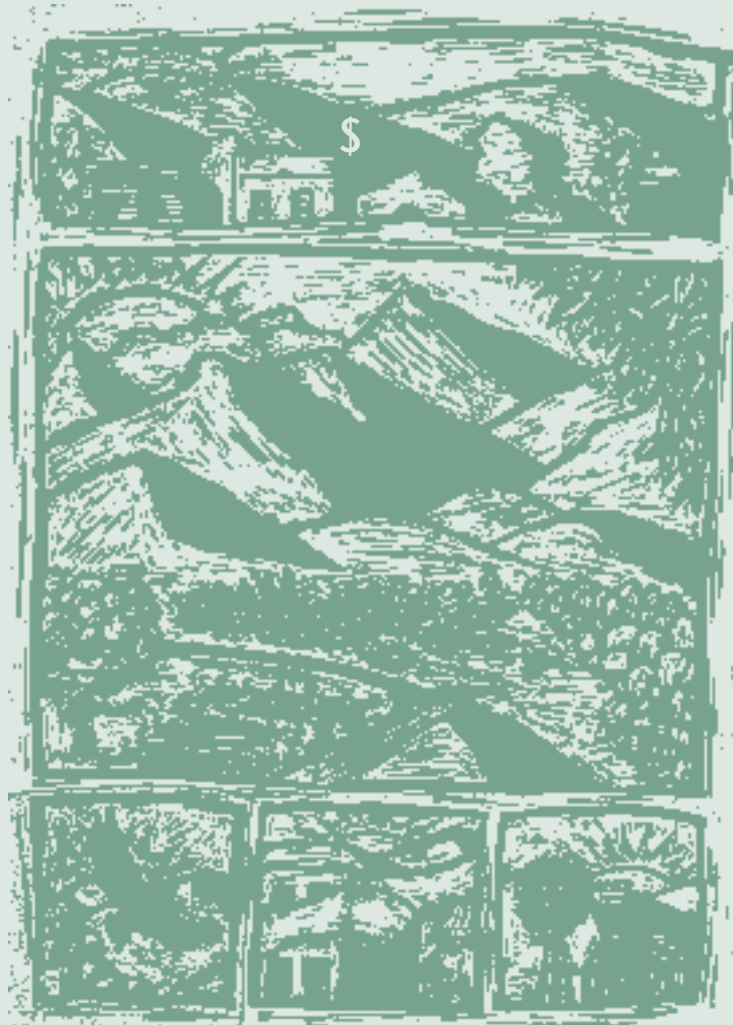
Lee Nellis and Karen Van Gilder  
2003

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFT = American Farmland Trust  
APA = American Planning Association  
APFO = adequate public facilities ordinance  
BLM = Bureau of Land Management  
BLS = Bureau of Labor Statistics  
CBM = coal bed methane  
CHC = Custer Heritage Committee  
COCS = cost of community services  
CRA = Community Reinvestment Act  
EMS = emergency medical services  
EPS = Economic Profile System  
FIRE = finance, insurance, and real estate  
GIS = Geographic Information System  
HUD = U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
LESA = Land Evaluation, Site Assessment  
MALPF = Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation  
NACo = National Association of Counties  
NEPA = National Environmental Policy Act  
NGP = nominal group process  
NIMBY = "Not-in-my-back-yard"  
NRCS = Natural Resources Conservation Service  
NTHP = National Trust for Historic Preservation  
O&M = operations and maintenance  
PBRS = public benefit rating system  
PDR = purchase of development rights  
RCAC = Rural Community Assistance Corporation  
REIS = Regional Economic Information System  
SCCF = Sonoita Crossroads Community Forum  
SHPO = State Historic Preservation Officer  
TCU = transportation, communications, and public utilities  
TDR = transfer of development rights  
TIF = tax increment financing  
UGB = urban growth boundary  
USDA = U.S. Department of Agriculture  
USGS = U.S. Geological Survey  
VHCB = Vermont Housing and Conservation Board  
VPS = visual preference survey  
WCSF = Western Community Stewardship Forum

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Photo by Dennis Click

*Vibrant downtown areas help communities keep their character and "sense of place."*

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This publication is printed on recycled paper.

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Finally, we want to express our deep appreciation to our funders, whose confidence over the years in the Sonoran Institute has made possible both the Western Community Stewardship Forum training programs and publication of this book: Peter Howell and Eric Holst at the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation; Ned Farquhar, Jeanne Sedgwick, and Jim Leape at the David and Lucile Packard Foundation; and Lara Iglitzin and Anna Yelk at the Henry M. Jackson Foundation. We sincerely appreciate these foundations’ support for community-based conservation and their confidence in the Sonoran Institute’s efforts to protect healthy landscapes, support vibrant economies, and promote livable communities.

## PREFACE

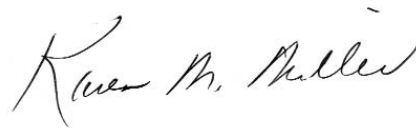
Throughout the United States, small towns in rural settings are experiencing unprecedented growth. Many of these are communities whose sense of place, natural beauty, historic legacies, and cultural heritage make them attractive to visitors and new residents alike. While growth can strengthen local economies, it can also create a new set of fiscal, social, and environmental challenges that county officials must be prepared to tackle.

To meet these challenges, county officials need information to help them understand local economic trends, the dynamics of community building, and the consequences of growth and change. The good news is there are proven strategies that people can use to preserve local identity, stimulate a healthy economy, and safeguard natural and cultural resources.

In 1999, the Sonoran Institute and the National Association of Counties created a partnership to address the increasing need for innovative community-driven solutions to land-use issues. The result is the Western Community Stewardship Forum, a joint initiative that provides training and assistance to county officials in the West who are working to manage growth in their communities. More than 150 people from 27 counties representing eight states have participated in the Forum, and the demand continues to increase.

While focused on the West, the Forum's hallmarks of success, tools and resources, and lessons learned can be applied to rapidly growing rural communities across the United States. Lee Nellis, the Institute's former Director of Land-use Policy, who has worked closely with many of the counties participating in the Forum, has distilled much of what we have learned in this guidebook. He also has drawn from county experiences in other regions of the country to illustrate key points. We hope the information provided serves as a catalyst and inspiration for county officials, community leaders, and others seeking to effectively manage growth in their communities.

Our thanks to the counties that have participated in the Forum, which have been a tremendous source of inspiration, demonstrating that with persistence and dedication a handful of people can make a difference in maintaining the high quality of life in their own communities. Our thanks also to the Henry M. Jackson Foundation for providing the funds to publish the guidebook, and to the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, which underwrote the Western Community Stewardship Forum, without which this guidebook would not have been possible.



Karen M. Miller  
President  
National Association of Counties



Luther Propst  
Executive Director  
Sonoran Institute

# Key to Icons and Boxes



The star icon stands beside a critical point in the main text. Pay attention!

## Remember

Boxes like this tell you more about helpful techniques or remind you of things to check.

## Case Study

Boxes like this refer you to case studies that illustrate the points made in the chapter or section you are reading. Case studies are numbered for easy reference.

## *General Principles*

Boxes like this highlight general principles that support the message of the main text.

Text like this contain quotations or “war stories” from someone who works in the trenches of community planning.

# AN INTRODUCTION to Planning for Results

## DO YOU KNOW HOW TO PLAN FOR RESULTS?

- Do you know how to design a local planning process that brings people together to address difficult issues in a constructive way?
- Do you know how to understand and address the economic changes that affect your community and its citizens?
- Do you know how growth and changing land use patterns will impact the natural and cultural assets that sustain your local economy and sense of place?
- Do you know what tools are available to help your community manage growth and change, and how to tailor those tools to your local needs?
- Do you understand the role of leadership in the planning process?

Answering these questions can be a great adventure. You will find out more about your community, help create a positive vision for its future, and decide what tools should be used to make it a better place to live and work. We hope you will come to share our conviction that planning is one of the most worthwhile endeavors in which any citizen or community leader can be involved.

## THE HALLMARKS OF SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES

This book offers practical advice about how to design and manage a local planning process that will produce on-the-ground results. It is structured around the *Hallmarks for Successful Communities* that appear on page 3.

A hallmark is a mark of quality, in this case a mark of a quality local planning process. The *Hallmarks for Successful Communities* were developed for the Western Community Stewardship Forum (WCSF), a leadership training program for officials and citizens from rural counties developed by the National Association of Counties and the Sonoran Institute. The *Hallmarks* and the WCSF are firmly grounded in the lessons learned from conducting hundreds of public meetings and workshops in many parts of the U.S., analyzing dozens of local economies and landscapes, drafting dozens of local plans and ordinances, and studying the efforts of communities that consistently meet their goals.

## WHAT IS SUCCESS?

What would success mean for your community? More jobs? Better schools? Less traffic congestion? Cleaner water? More open space? Just having a civil conversation about the issues?

Planning is a valuable tool that can inspire a community to become a better place to work and live.

Luther Propst,  
Executive Director, Sonoran Institute

Leadership by county officials is critical to developing action-oriented plans that ensure a balance of growth and quality of life in rural communities.

Karen Miller  
President, National Association of Counties

## Will This Book Help Me Write a Plan? I Have a Deadline!

You may have opened this book because you are involved in writing a plan, producing a document within a given budget and schedule. And now you are wondering how a book that talks about the community conversation will help you get that done. It will. Whether what you are tasked to write is called a comprehensive, general, or master plan, or is a plan for a specific purpose, like building a greenway or protecting an historic district, we suggest that you relax, read Section I, and begin. You will still have to set your fingers to the keyboard, but given a realistic deadline the process we propose will lead you to the policies your document should contain. It will also lead you to a plan that is unlikely to collect dust on a shelf. When a plan captures the community's vision, people want to know what it says.

The *Hallmarks* suggest that your community's success in meeting goals like these will depend on your ability to plan. You will envision the community's future, then link its intent and its knowledge to action.

The communities we identify as successful have realized some part of their vision for the future through the planning process and techniques described in this book. With good leadership, your community can do the same!

### HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

As the *Hallmarks* suggest, the essence of planning is to consistently share and use knowledge as a basis for action. This book tells you how to initiate and sustain a community conversation about local economic development, land use, infrastructure, and other issues, and about how to implement the vision and policies that conversation produces.

Most of our examples and case studies come from rural counties, but what we describe applies to any community, and may be applied by anyone who wants to design and conduct a local planning process.

- You can use this book as you would an experienced advisor. It attempts to directly and pragmatically answer the most pressing questions that have arisen in decades of planning experience. Flip through the "Contents" and find what you need.
- This book can also help you be systematic in your local planning effort. Begin with the *Hallmarks*, which will help you envision a successful planning process. Then move on to the main text, which is organized using numerous headings that can constitute a checklist for each part of the process.

### The Case Studies

Six case studies illustrate the points made in the main text. They come from communities like yours, where elected officials, other community leaders, and ordinary citizens are grappling with the issues raised by changing economies and land use patterns. None of the case study communities is a Utopia. All of them have much more to do. But they have each succeeded in achieving one or more important local goals. The case studies tell you how. A complete list of case studies is on page 14.

### The Resources

The **Resources** at the end of the book are organized by chapter and direct you to information about the communities discussed in the text and the case studies. They also suggest additional reference materials and examples you may want to learn about. Many **Resources** are on-line. Some will change as time passes, but the Internet provides a tremendous source of information about community planning. The sites we list should get you started in your own research.

# The Hallmarks of Successful Communities

## SECTION I

Successful communities develop a **broadly shared vision** of the future based on an accurate understanding of their local economy and assets. They build this vision by ...

### Chapter 1

- relying on an inclusive process that engages the diverse interests of the community and working with numerous partners to ...

### Chapter 2

- foster constructive, informed dialogue that allows the community to address issues on which there is substantial agreement before moving on to more difficult questions.

## SECTION II

Successful communities **understand their own economy** within the context of the regional, national, and global economies. They learn to understand their economy and to respond to economic change by ...

### Chapter 3

- finding data that describe local demographic and economic change, sharing that information throughout the community, then

### Chapter 4

- designing economic development strategies based on a realistic assessment of the community's possibilities in the evolving economy.

## SECTION III

Successful communities understand how local **natural and cultural assets** influence and are affected by population growth and development. Successful communities learn about their natural and cultural assets and respond to the impacts development can have on those resources by ...

### Chapter 5

- finding data that describe the local landscape and how it is changing, sharing that information throughout the community, and

### Chapter 6

- designing land use policies that will maintain local assets while accommodating population growth and economic change.

## SECTION IV

Successful communities **effectively manage growth and change** by ...

### Chapter 7

- using a wide variety of both regulatory and nonregulatory strategies and tools to protect or enhance local assets;

### Chapter 8

- promoting land use patterns that provide housing opportunities for all members of the community, preserve open space, and sustain viable central business districts and traditional neighborhoods;

### Chapter 9

- anticipating the infrastructure needs generated by population growth and land use change, and ensuring that the costs of growth are borne, to the extent reasonable, by those who benefit most directly from the development it sparks; and

### Chapter 10

- seeking additional authority or financial or technical assistance, as necessary.

## SECTION V

Successful communities **value leadership** and cultivate local leaders who can help realize their vision by ...

### Chapter 11

- making participation in local civic affairs a rewarding experience and supporting leadership development programs.



Photo by Steve Cornelius

*Successful rural communities use planning to ensure that people and wildlife both have room to live.*



SECTION I

A Broadly  
Shared Vision



Protecting both farmlands and the Chesapeake Bay are central to Kent County, Maryland's vision statement.

**Q.** Do you know how to design a local planning process that brings people together to address difficult issues in a constructive way?

**A.** Successful communities develop a broadly shared vision of the future based on an accurate understanding of their local economy and assets. They build this vision by:

- relying on an inclusive process that engages the diverse interests of the community and working with numerous partners to ...
- foster constructive, informed dialogue that allows the community to address issues on which there is substantial agreement before moving on to more difficult questions.

Sharing a positive vision for the future has helped many communities address divisive issues. Effective leaders know how the visioning process opens channels of communication and forges relationships that help people remember their common interests when facing difficult decisions.

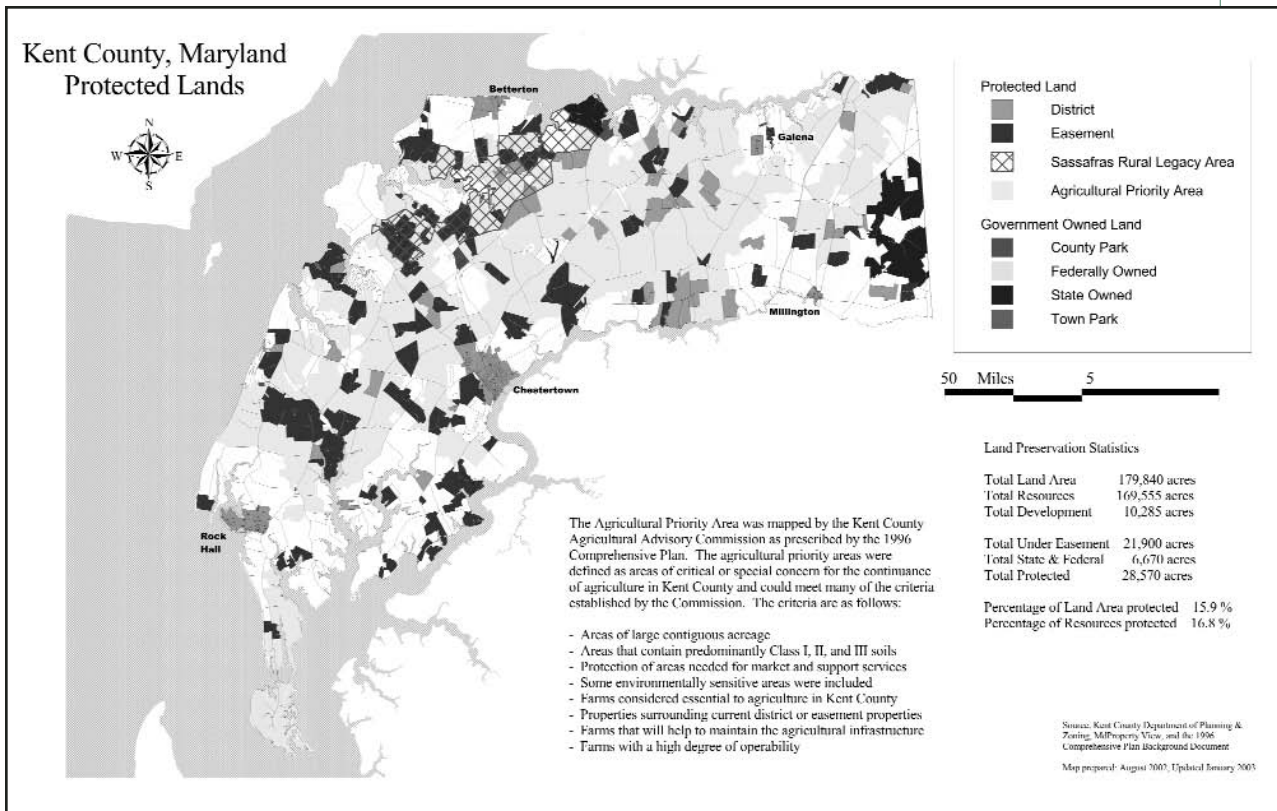
Building a shared vision is the best way to begin your local planning effort. You may refine that vision as the process continues, but it will be an excellent starting point. It will suggest the agenda for the community conversation you are initiating and tell you what research is needed to provide a solid factual background for that dialogue. The vision will also serve as common ground to which you can return when there is controversy about goals or when the planning process seems to lose direction. Revisiting your shared image of how things ought to be can help you regain focus. Ultimately, the decisions your community makes should be checked against the vision.

The vision itself should be a brief statement that describes the future toward which the people of the community want to work. Ideally this statement will be a single paragraph or page. An excellent example from Kent County, Maryland, appears on page 7. If your community hasn't gone through a visioning process, you may still find a useful starting point among the policies of the current local plan, or even in plans for specific facilities, like greenways or schools. Visions can include drawings, diagrams, or models, as well as words.

Present your image of how things ought to be in a way that captures the community's imagination. A vision should be:

- brief, so that everyone will take time to read it;
- general, so that most citizens can identify with it;
- fluid, so that it can evolve as the community conversation continues; and
- positive, focusing on what your community wants, not on what it doesn't.

It's okay for a vision to lack detail. Exactly what it means and how you are going to attain it will become clear as you set specific goals and identify the strategies needed to implement them. Chapter 1 tells you how to get people involved in building a shared vision and the rest of your local planning process. Chapter 2 describes techniques that can be used to make the discussion of your community's future a productive one.



### An Exemplary Vision Statement

This vision is from the *Comprehensive Plan for Kent County, Maryland*, adopted in 1996.

Kent County is rich in agricultural, natural, cultural, and human resources. Quality soils, topography, climate, woodlands, the Chesapeake Bay with its tidal tributaries, wetlands, and marshes create an environment rivaled by few other areas. These natural features enrich our economy and the lives of our citizens. Kent County is also steeped in historic tradition. Towns and villages have a strong sense of identity, retaining their original design as a framework for their continuous and steady development. From these singular resources and features emerged our local culture, character, and economy.

We are challenged, as we look to the future, to protect the quality of our environment and its inherent quality of life while meeting the needs of all our citizens. This special place has been purchased at a high cost, one of diminishing job opportunities, particularly for our young citizens. Although our economy has expanded from a chiefly farm-based and water-related one to one which includes industry, retail, tourism, and other service-oriented businesses, we must continue to seek innovative ways to diversify our economy and provide job opportunities for all Kent County citizens. Vigilantly safe-guarding those

precious and irreplaceable resources unique to Kent County and wisely planning for change, we look forward to the challenge of the future.

The following principles will serve as a guide to decision making in the future:

- A diverse, stable economy that provides economic opportunities for all of our citizens is essential to a healthy and balanced community.
- Stewardship of our lands and waters is a universal ethic.
- The County is committed to supporting agriculture.
- Growth is planned to occur in and around existing communities in a way that complements and enhances their character.
- Elements necessary to enrich the lives of our citizens and sustain a healthy community include a good system of public and private schools, opportunities for recreation and cultural activities, effective transportation systems, a variety of housing types, and a safe and healthy environment.

This document was prepared by Kent County citizens for Kent County citizens. It remains the responsibility of the citizens of Kent County, both present and future, to promote and protect this Vision of the future.



*Small groups at work at the Sonoita Crossroads Community Forum's 1996 visioning event.*



Photo by Josh Schachter

*The participation of residents in Sonoita, Arizona, was an important element in the creation of Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, pictured here.*

### *After A Detour, Positive Planning Gets Results in Arizona*

The Sonoita Crossroads Community Forum (SCCF) got off to a great start in June, 1996. Some 200 area residents participated in a full-day discussion of the issues raised by accelerating growth in the desert grasslands of southern Arizona. Unfortunately, the positive energy generated by this event was lost in a divisive controversy over a proposed development. It took SCCF months, until August, 1998, to re-focus the community's energy and begin moving toward its goal of developing a plan that would protect the open space resources of northeastern Santa Cruz County, Arizona, while encouraging compact and affordable development at the crossroads, the community's center.

The people of Sonoita learned that negative energy seldom leads to lasting progress in local planning. People who oppose a particular development may initiate the discussion of land use issues, but the actions that make a community a better place to live will be based on a positive vision and a shared understanding of what the future should be. Since beginning its citizen-driven planning process, SCCF and its members have played important roles in the establishment of Las Cienegas National Conservation Area and in influencing planning in Santa Cruz County.

# CHAPTER 1

## Engage Diverse Interests – Build Partnerships

A shared vision cannot simply be presented to the community. People from all walks of life and with differing interests, all those who are willing to seek common ground, must be engaged in its development. Having been involved, they will be more likely to understand and support efforts to implement the vision. They will also be more likely to continue participating in civic affairs and to believe that disagreements can be worked out in a collaborative way.

This chapter offers advice on how to get a wide variety of people involved in your community's planning process. It also points out the importance of forming partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions, state and federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations that may share your vision.

### GETTING PEOPLE IN THE ROOM

The first challenge in a local planning effort is to get people in the room. Use every effective means to let them know about events and meetings. Some suggestions follow, but first remember that no means of communication will bring people back to meetings where they are not comfortable or where they do not feel their voice will be heard. Making meetings constructive, as explained in Chapter 2, is the best way to ensure continuing participation.

#### Watch Your Timing

Blend your planning effort into the rhythms of the community. If you want to talk to farmers, try winter's "down season." If you want second home owners to be involved, meet in the summer. No date is perfect, but attention to timing will help maximize participation.

#### Meet in Many Places

Hold meetings in multiple locations throughout your community, county, or region. This accomplishes more than acknowledging the time it takes people to travel to a central location. It is an important affirmation of the unique character of different neighbor-

### Public Notice Requirements

State statutes impose specific requirements on the type of notice that must be given for public meetings. Successful communities go well beyond the minimum requirements, but it is important to understand and comply with the statutory direction.

### What could developing a shared vision do for your community?

See Case Study One (page 19) to check out how visioning efforts in Custer County, Colorado, helped raise over \$3 million for the purchase of development rights, Case Study Four (page 67) to see how Kent County, Maryland, is following up on the vision we use as an example in the introduction to this section, and Case Study Five (page 77) to learn how Grand County, Utah, responded to the key need identified at a visioning event by developing a capital facilities plan and adopting impact fees.

hoods or communities. In fact, defined neighborhoods or communities organized many of the most successful planning efforts we know about.

#### Use the Media

A legal notice in the official local newspaper will be required for some meetings, but is unlikely to reach many people. Display ads or newspaper inserts are more effective in persuading folks to attend your events. You should also use local radio and television. Many stations air public service announcements, and local radio talk shows can be great ways to communicate in smaller places. Some tips for working with your local media appear in the box on page 11.

### Put Up Posters

Posters in storefronts and at local gathering places are a good way of reminding people of upcoming meetings. Local artists can create memorable images for your posters.

**SONOITA CROSSROADS COMMUNITY FORUM**  
**PLANNING PREVIEW**



**Sonoita, Welcome Aboard!**

Join your friends and neighbors to discuss Sonoita's future and learn about community services & civic groups at the Planning Preview.

- Exchange ideas and concerns
- Explore Sonoita's planning efforts, and
- Hear speakers on local planning & conservation areas

The Preview will also include an opportunity to provide input on the possibility of creating a National Conservation Area (NCA) in the Cienega Creek Watershed area.

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1999**  
**11 AM - 3:30 PM**  
PIONEER HALL, SANTA CRUZ COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS  
Lunch will be served from 11:30 - 1:00

*Please join us for the next planning event on March 13, 1999.*

The Sonoita Crossroads Community Forum promotes community stewardship. For additional information, contact Shel Clark at 455-4711 or Chris Peterson at 455-9388.



SONOITA CROSSROADS COMMUNITY FORUM

## Use the Internet

Many communities post meeting notices and agendas on the Internet. You can also use an e-mail list to notify people of meetings. This will not reach everyone, even in prosperous places, but maintaining a Web site should be included in the budget for your planning effort. It may be especially effective as a means of communicating with partners who live outside the community and part-time residents, and posting documents on-line can save mailing costs.



### Issue Personal Invitations!

This is the most effective means of encouraging participation. Build a mailing list and use it, but go beyond direct mail whenever possible. Make a list of people you know who need to be involved. Make sure they get invitations, in person or via telephone or e-mail, from an elected official, planning commission member, or some other participant in the process, preferably someone they know. Once people are involved, a telephone tree is a good way to give personal reminders of upcoming events or meetings.

## GETTING OUT INTO THE COMMUNITY

A common complaint is that people don't turn out for meetings and that those who do are not representative of the entire community. The techniques described above will usually generate good attendance at an initial visioning event. They can also help sustain participation through a series of educational forums or the development of planning policies. People do have busy lives, however, and active participation in any civic activity will be limited. If you want more folks to be involved, you have to go to them.

### Have a Speakers' Bureau

Let members of local civic and service clubs know that you are interested in making presentations at their regular meetings. A 15-minute breakfast or luncheon talk is a great way to inform people about the planning process and encourage them to participate. You should also be available to speak to special interest groups, ranging from the Farm Bureau to the Audubon Society. These talks can be used to invite people into the process or to report on its progress. They usually are not good forums for discussion.

## Working with Local Media

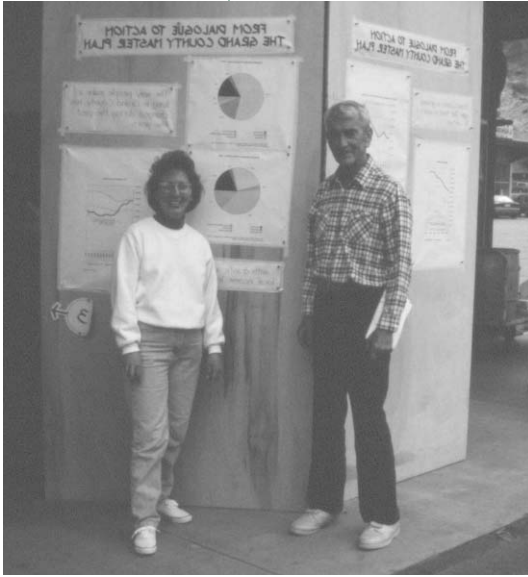
**Adopt a Communication Strategy.** Decide exactly whom you want to reach and the best way to reach them. Do you have money to pay for ads in the newspaper or on a local radio station? Sometimes a news story will get more attention, and it's FREE.

**Develop Message Points.** What do you want to accomplish? Why is it important? How will it affect those hearing or reading the story? Answer these questions in short, clear statements using everyday language. Practice repeating them so they flow easily. Think of different ways to deliver the same message. Deliver the message points consistently in interviews.

**Designate a Spokesperson.** Find a person who is comfortable talking with the media to be the "face" of your effort. He or she must be reliably available for interviews, well-prepared, honest, believable, and well-spoken.

**Say what you need to say – THEN STOP TALKING.** Don't ramble when answering reporters' questions. Be thorough, but be brief. Listen carefully to the questions you're being asked. Think about what you're saying and how you're saying it. Remember that news is created by events that affect PEOPLE.

**Build a relationship with the media.** Find out what media are available in your community and let them know they can count on you for good story ideas. Be open, but remember that nothing is "off the record." If you don't know something, say so. Then say that you will let them know and follow through on that promise. Respect deadlines. Think of ways stories can be improved, including what images could be used and what interviews would make the story better. If you appreciate a reporter's work, say so. Feel free also to correct errors in a positive way.



Volunteers pose with the display used at Grand County, Utah's, Listening Posts.

## Survey Research

Don't use polls as a substitute for getting people in the room. Using interactive techniques that get people talking to each other and sharing the results of their discussions in a public setting is more likely to yield a reading of a community's vision that can be used as a basis for action. A civic conversation reveals the complexities of issues in ways no survey can capture. If you want to poll the community, conduct a professionally designed, pre-tested, statistically valid survey. Even then, understand that it may not give a true reading on complex questions. If you can't afford professional survey research but want to reach large numbers of people, we suggest listening posts at popular community events. (See discussion below and Appendix A for descriptions of listening posts.) Informal polls are too easily subject to misinterpretation.

### Set Up Listening Posts

You can get people engaged outside of meetings. We often use "listening posts" or "drop-in centers" to encourage people to attend visioning events and solicit comment on local issues, draft policies, or plans for specific facilities.

- The Grand County, Utah, planning process (Case Study Five, page 77) began with listening posts at local grocery stores. Nearly 200 people who would not otherwise have been involved stopped at an interactive exhibit that told them how their community was changing, invited them to the visioning event, and gave them a chance to express their opinions, either quickly, by placing self-adhesive dots on posters to indicate which issues they felt should be addressed in the planning process, or in more depth, by setting their thoughts down on a form provided for that purpose. The results were posted for participants in the visioning event to review as they registered.
- Another example of how to use listening posts comes from the City of Twin Falls, Idaho, which presented alternative plans for a trail system along the Snake River Canyon Rim at a listening post. Those attending could view the alternatives and provide verbal or written comments to volunteers from the Canyon Rims Advisory Committee. Getting everyone involved helped build support for the construc-

tion of canyon rim trails in a community that now calls itself "The Most Overlooked Place on Earth."

More information on listening posts is provided in Appendix A.

### Appear at Local Events

Communities have conducted listening posts in shopping malls, outside the local post office, and in many other venues. An especially effective way of talking with folks you won't usually see at meetings is to participate in local events. Displays for local events should be designed both to inform and to involve. Tell people about what you are doing, give them a chance to express an opinion, invite them to participate in an upcoming event or meeting, and have volunteers available to answer questions.

## BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

Successful communities seek partnerships with other organizations and agencies that have similar goals. The partnerships you build should reflect the breadth of your vision. If public lands are an integral part of your community, work with the state or federal land managers. If water quality is critical, work with your state water quality agency and the other communities and interest groups who share the watershed. Cooperation with neighboring local governments is essential. Also, we are seeing a growing number of

partnerships between local governments and nonprofit organizations working in the community interest.

Building partnerships takes time, but it is often the best way to achieve your vision. Here we list some keys to recruiting and nurturing partners:

### **Start Early**

Recruit partners as early as possible in your planning process. Involving them in the design of initial events will bolster attendance and help ensure that all relevant questions are raised.

### **Look Beyond Your Borders**

Your community is part of a region, a state, and the nation. Accomplishing your goals may require finding partners at all those levels, ranging from regional councils of government to your state's land grant university and the local offices of federal agencies. All of these potential partners can add something—knowledge, grant funds, credibility—to your efforts.

### **Take a Broad View of Planning**

Too many local planning efforts focus solely on land use issues. Working with organizations that have different missions, but are also affected by the changes in your community, can help you see connections between issues and make your vision stronger. For example, concerns about growth spurred organizers in Red Lodge, Montana, to bring people together for a visioning event. When people sat down to talk, however, it was clear that one of the most important community needs (and one that was generated by the growing number of jobs in the local resort and services sector) was to find after-school activities for kids. Red Lodge's Beartooth Front Community Forum continues to work on growth issues, but counts the founding of a Boys and Girls Club among its major accomplishments.

## **What local events can you use to get people involved in your planning effort?**

**Case Study Three (page 49) explains how Ross County, Ohio, used the county fair as an opportunity to introduce people to its planning process and collect data about people's opinions.**

### **Sell Your Vision**

Finally, your vision can help in seeking new partners. It will show them what you are trying to accomplish and help them see how your efforts and theirs may be complementary.

The techniques presented in this chapter can help you fill the room. Once your citizens and partners are there, you have an obligation to make their discussion productive! Chapter 2 introduces some techniques for doing that.

**We aren't going to stop sprawl here without helping Detroit.**

Keith Charters of the Grand Traverse Bay [Michigan] New Designs for Growth program

## CASE STUDIES

*Which partners should be involved in your community's planning process?*

Every case study in this book features efforts to build partnerships:

CASE STUDY ONE (page 19) tells how community groups in Custer County, Colorado, worked with local government and statewide, regional, and national organizations to develop a shared vision and help local people understand how to work toward its implementation.

CASE STUDY TWO (page 33) explains how a program initiated by a local chamber of commerce coordinates the planning efforts of local governments in a five-county region in northern Michigan.

CASE STUDY THREE (page 49) shows how six different agencies and organizations, including the chamber of commerce and Farm Bureau, cooperated to start the Ross County, Ohio, Smart Growth Initiative.

CASE STUDY FOUR (page 67) shows how Kent County, Maryland, implements its vision by working with landowners and the state's agricultural lands preservation program.

CASE STUDY FIVE (page 77) offers an example of how local service providers, including Grand County, Utah, the City of Moab, and three special districts cooperated to prepare a capital facilities plan.

CASE STUDY SIX (page 85) features the partnership between Wallowa County, Oregon, and the Nez Perce Tribe, which are working with other agencies to protect and restore salmon habitat.

# CHAPTER 2

## Foster Constructive Dialogue

Shared visions, and the policies that give them life, are created in community conversations. This chapter offers ideas about how to facilitate those conversations, about how to get people listening to each other as neighbors and make them feel that their voices will be heard. Before talking about technique, however, we should acknowledge two reasons that people are reluctant to get involved in a local planning process.

- First, many people have participated in local planning only when they would be directly affected by a decision. Whether as applicants for a permit or neighbors of a proposed development, they have experienced a formal, adversarial process, with complicated rules and potentially unfavorable outcomes.
- Second, most of us have attended meetings that were dominated by a handful of individuals, or even one person. Whether their ability to dominate is due to their respected status or to their obstreperous behavior, everyone else leaves frustrated, not having had a chance to express an opinion or wondering if what they did say was actually heard.

If you want active, representative participation in your local planning process, you must confront these realities. You must keep the focus on policy, on community values and how to sustain them. You must design the process so that every voice has a fair chance to be heard.

### MAKING MEETINGS WORK

Good meetings do not just happen. They are designed by someone (or, more often, a group) who clearly understands both the purpose of the meeting and the character of the community. Here are some general guidelines for designing and conducting constructive meetings.

#### Set Clear Objectives

Good meeting design starts with a clear understanding of the purpose of the event. Why are you bringing people together? What do you expect to accomplish? How will you follow up on what happens?

### *How Do You Fit Public Hearings into the Community Conversation?*

Your community's discussion of growth and changing land uses should be designed to produce results, but be mostly informal. Before adopting a local plan or regulations, however, you will conduct public hearings. Be sure everyone understands the distinction between the ongoing dialogue and these legally required opportunities for anyone to put what they think on record for consideration by the decision makers. Hearings must follow formal rules of procedure. They are not the place for questions and answers (though it may be helpful to hold an information session for people who were not actively involved in the process before a hearing begins). They are not the place for discussion or debate. Decision makers should listen carefully to all that is said at public hearings, then feed what they have heard back into the community conversation, as necessary.

Put your objectives for the event in writing before thinking about the agenda or other details. Where many partners are involved, you should hold what we call a "same page" meeting, a meeting at which all parties sponsoring or assisting agree on the objectives of the event, the agenda, and their specific roles.



#### Engage People on Entry

Give people something to do as soon as they walk in. This sends a clear signal that they will be asked to participate and work together. Possible entry activities include the decades, dot voting, and photo



*Participants in the Sonoita Crossroads Community forum's planning effort discuss land use policies.*

gallery activities described in Appendix A. You can also have people prepare for small group discussions. Have brief factual handouts for people to read while waiting for the event to begin, including a handout that explains why the event is happening and how this event fits into the larger planning process. Also, post the results of any pre-event listening posts for everyone to see. Exhibits of maps or aerial photos can be helpful in informing people and stimulating discussion. Finally, don't forget to collect mailing and e-mail addresses so you can communicate with participants after the event.

### **Provide Facts, Briefly**

Use handouts, exhibits, and presentations to inform people and stimulate conversation. But limit presentations to no more than about 20 percent of a visioning event and no more than about 30 percent of a policy development meeting or workshop. You will need educational meetings or forums where people do more listening, but these are for later and should be designed to answer questions raised at an initial visioning event.



### **Get Them Listening**

The key to a successful public process is that people listen respectfully to what others have to say. The "master" technique for making that happen is the Nominal Group Process (NGP), in which people work independently, in small groups, and eventually in the larger group. Appendix A (page 89) provides a description of the NGP and how it helps ensure that all comments and questions are heard. Getting people around a table as neighbors helps them set aside the positions they feel obliged to defend in highly visible forums such as public hearings and instead focus on what they have in common.

**All comments and questions are valuable to the process.**

Pam Shellenberger, Chief County/Long Range Planning,  
York County, Pennsylvania

## **What techniques can help make your community's conversations constructive?**

Case Study One (page 19) explains how Custer County, Colorado, used many of the techniques described here in an initial visioning event and a series of public forums. Case Studies Three (page 49) and Five (page 77) offer additional examples of how communities have made public involvement constructive.

## Return to the Vision

Planning can be a lengthy and contentious endeavor. A vision that springs from an inclusive community conversation and the relationships forged during that process can sometimes be the glue that holds diverse members of a community together during difficult discussions. Remember to return to the vision when the process seems to falter.



Sonoita, Arizona, residents participate in an entry activity.

## Break Bread

Whether it's a barbecue the evening before (See Case Study One, page 19), continental breakfast while folks are registering and working on an entry activity, a buffet lunch, or a potluck, one of the best ways of encouraging informal conversation and setting a cooperative tone is to have people share a meal. It is also important to consider other basic needs. Would providing day care make it easier for young families or single parents to attend? Would providing transportation help some people be there?

## End on Time

Nothing is more frustrating than meetings that do not stick to the agenda and do not end on time. Have a realistic, written agenda. Designate a time keeper to enforce the schedule.

## Share the Results

Have people sign in so you will have mailing and e-mail addresses. Then mail a summary to all participants within six to eight weeks after the event. Disseminate it throughout the community, as well. The Keeping Custer County Special document described in Case Study One (page 19) is an example of a publication that summarizes a visioning event and shares its results with those who did not attend. Brevity and visual appeal are important, but be sure your summary is accurate. Too much editing will make people wonder if the event's sponsors had a specific outcome in mind. It is advisable to maintain a complete record of the visioning event, including everyone's comments.



## Follow Up, Promptly

Be prepared to tell participants what will happen next. You don't have to be ready with a date, time, and place, or even a specific topic. But you should be able to commit to staging follow-up events, whether they are educational forums or opportunities for further discussion, in a timely manner.

## Document Your Meetings

Recruit an event photographer. Images of the community conversation in action make great illustrations for follow-up publications or your local plan. We also recommend including a brief, but complete, chronology of the process in any follow-up document. This will help those who are new to the community or just to the conversation understand how your vision and policies were developed.

### **Build on What People Share**

In following up, it is important to start with areas of agreement and build capacity to address more difficult issues in the future. Case Study Five (page 77) describes an outstanding example of how focusing on what people share can lead to progress, even in a polarized community.

The chapters that follow tell you how to gather information and what tools you may want to use to help realize your community's vision. As you read, remember that getting people involved in a constructive community conversation is the seed from which all progress in planning stems.

### **About "A Few Facts"**

We have provided basic background facts on each case study community to help you compare it with yours. Population data come from the 2000 Census, as do the land area and income data. For comparison purposes, the national population growth rate during the 1990's was 13.2 percent, the 2000 national median household was \$41,994, and in 2000 12.4 percent of the nation's population lived in poverty. The landscape description is based on our work in the community or visits made while writing this book. The number of persons per square mile nationwide was 79.6. The sources of income data are from Regional Economic Information System (REIS) personal income data for 2000 provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis. For comparison, U.S. figures for each sector are as follows:

- Services – 21.36%
- Dividends, Rent, Interest – 18.29%
- Transfer Payments – 12.87%
- Manufacturing – 11.53%
- Government – 11.37%
- Finance, Insurance, Real Estate (FIRE) – 6.94%
- Retail Trade – 6.37%
- Transportation, Communications, and Public Utilities (TCU) – 4.98%
- Wholesale Trade – 4.54%
- Construction – 4.37%
- Mining – 0.62%
- Farm – 0.60%
- Ag Services, Forestry, Fisheries – 0.49%

(Note that there is essentially no net commuting sector at the national level, but that commuting is an important component of most rural economies.)



## CASE STUDY ONE Custer County, Colorado

### COMMUNITY VISIONING IN THE WET MOUNTAIN VALLEY

This case study shows how one community applied the hallmarks explained in Chapters 1 and 2.

### BACKGROUND

Custer County was “re-discovered” in the 1990’s. Its population nearly doubled between 1990 and 2000. Many residents realized that the community would need to assert its values as growth continued.

The San Isabel Foundation (the local land trust) and the Custer Heritage Committee (a group formed in the late 1990’s by five ranching families) knew something must be done. Some sought help from the Sonoran Institute, which helped stage a well-attended visioning event in Custer County in June, 1999. The San Isabel Foundation and the Custer Heritage Committee (CHC) sponsored the Custer County Successful Communities Workshop.

“Initially, there was suspicion from the ranching community about an outside group,” says rancher Randy Rusk, who is the first participant in a ranchlands protection campaign that also includes his father and son. “Ben [Alexander, the Sonoran Institute staff person who worked with Custer County] won our trust because he showed us Sonoran Institute was not here to preach, but to help us realize what options we have.”

The number of ranching families involved with the Custer Heritage Committee has now grown to 25.

### ACTION

The Custer County Successful Communities Workshop was organized by a steering committee representing interests including the chamber of commerce, ranchers, and environmentalists. CHC understood that diversity on the steering



### A Few Facts About Custer Country

County Seat: Westcliffe  
2000 County Seat Population: 417  
2000 County Population: 3,503  
Percent Change since 1990: +81.9%

Land Area: 740 sq. mi.  
Persons Per Square Mile: 4.7  
Landscape: high mountain valley

Median Household Income: \$34,731  
Percent below poverty: 13.3%

2000 Sources of Income:  
Dividends, Rent, Interest – 27.36%  
Commuting – 20.03%  
Transfer Payments – 15.63%  
Construction – 13.49%  
Government – 8.17%  
Retail Trade – 6.89%  
Services – 5.28%  
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate – 4.21%  
Transportation, Communications, and Public Utilities – 2.16%  
Manufacturing – 0.81%  
Mining – 0.25%  
Wholesale Trade – 0  
Agriculture – showed a net loss

*A small group at work at the Custer County Successful Communities Workshop.*



Opening session  
of the Custer County  
Successful  
Communities  
workshop.

While not everyone agreed with every point made during the day, there was significant overlap on key issues and how to address them. No attempt was made to steer workshop participants in any particular direction. Nor was any attempt made to find consensus on issues where there was disagreement. Instead, discussion focused on areas of general agreement.

*From the report Keep Custer County Special*

committee was a prerequisite for diverse participation in the workshop.

Initial workshop costs were underwritten by a \$10,000 grant from Great Outdoors Colorado, an organization that channels proceeds from the state lottery to land conservation. Sonoran Institute, the local sponsors, and partners that included the Stockgrowers Association, the towns of Silver Cliff and Westcliffe, the county commissioners, and the

chamber of commerce raised money to publish *Keep Custer County Special*, the document that reported the workshop results, and underwrite the costs of follow-up forums. Local funding was critical for “buy-in,” for the sense that local people were creating their own vision.

The Sonoran Institute shared a general template for a visioning workshop with the steering committee, which adapted it to local realities. A long list of logistical considerations goes into this type of event. The sponsors devised an advertising strategy using direct mail, telephone trees, and posters. They also brought the publisher and editor of the local newspaper into the process early, making advertising and press coverage easier to arrange. They found a venue that could house both a large gathering and small discussion groups. They found caterers and kickoff speakers from the community. They developed a slide show about the history of the county. They arranged day care. They enlisted and trained volunteer facilitators to moderate small group discussions. The list goes on, but these preparations proved manageable for an all-volunteer steering committee.

The Successful Communities Workshop began with a Friday evening barbecue attended by more than 400 people (remember that Custer County has only 3,500 residents). The sponsors wanted folks to know that being a part of a community is celebration AND work, an honor AND a duty. So, they threw a party and invited everyone! Besides food and music, a homespun documentary video featuring interviews with local people was produced for this event. When aging ranchers from pioneer families appeared on camera talking about the profound connection they feel to the land, many in the audience sat in silence with tears streaming down their faces.

The barbecue also helped build community. Old-timers and newcomers met one another. They talked about problems and opportunities, all informally. As CHC leader Sara Kettle put it, “We welcome everyone who has lived here all of their lives, and everyone who got here as soon as they could.”

On Saturday morning, more than 200 residents showed up to talk about the future of their chosen place. Welcoming talks and presentations were more than balanced with small group discussion and sharing the results of the groups' conversations. The structure allowed people to talk about the values that unite them, while making it virtually impossible for naysayers to disrupt.

At the end of the day, there was strong general agreement on two issues: protecting agricultural lands and open space, and improving the quality of education for area youth. There was also agreement on the need for new economic opportunities and a clean and adequate supply of water. The written report on the workshop, *Keep Custer County Special*, was sent to over 3,000 subscribers to *The Wet Mountain Tribune*, and is still given to people joining the dialogue.

## RESULTS

Before the workshop, Custer County lacked a safe place for people who care about the community to meet to discuss change and its impacts and find solutions. Now there have been five public forums, with at least 150 people participating in each. "Custer County residents know they have an opportunity to live up to the grandeur of this place, but preserving it won't work unless people come together," Ben Alexander of the Sonoran Institute says. "The best way for citizens to get to know one another in any community is to get them talking. When you do that, you gain a stronger sense of place

and people in Custer County realized how much they have in common."

Beyond helping build a sense of community, the Custer County Successful Communities Workshop and forums have had considerable influence on the county's planning process. They have also led to an impressive voluntary land conservation effort. More than \$3.5 million have been raised toward the purchase of

## LESSONS LEARNED

- partner with community groups to initiate and sustain the community conversation
- use media publicity and other room-filling techniques to attract participation from diverse interests
- structure meetings to create a safe space for dialogue
- use areas of agreement to move forward
- build your vision from your natural heritage and cultural assets
- use your vision to gain support for important projects
- continue to engage and educate through public forums
- take issues seriously, but also make it fun!

conservation easements on some 10,000 acres.





SECTION II

The Local  
Economy

**Q.** Do you know how to understand and address the economic changes that affect your community and its citizens?

**A.** Successful communities understand their own economy within the context of the regional, national, and global economies. They learn to understand their economy and respond to economic change by...

- finding data that describe local demographic and economic change, sharing that information throughout the community, then
- designing economic development policies based on a realistic assessment of the community's possibilities in the evolving economy.

Whether you are currently trying to keep up with a boom or enduring a bust, the fact is that every community's economy is constantly changing. How will your community respond to the changes it faces? In too many local coffee shops, bars, and public meetings, the response is to pit economic development against responsible planning and land use regulation.

But no economy grows and develops for long without a sound infrastructure or without offering the amenities that attract and retain investors and entrepreneurs. Building a healthy economy requires partnerships among citizens, entrepreneurs, developers,

and local government officials. Successful communities of the future will find ways to retain their identities and quality of life, while adapting to an ever-evolving definition of what they have to offer the larger economy.

Your local planning process should help citizens and decision makers build a clear and accurate understanding of the local economy and how it is responding to regional, national, and global forces. Based on that understanding, they can refine the community's vision and adopt economic development policies that make sense for your situation. Chapter 3 will help you document your community's current economic reality. Chapter 4 will help you explore economic development policies.

We know that it is difficult to accept changes that create a hardship in your community or that undermine a long-established sense of "who we are and what we do here." It is important to honor your heritage, not just at the rodeo or fair, but by helping people sustain traditional ways of making a living, when that makes sense. It is equally important that your community's vision and policies anticipate economic change and provide the necessary framework for a healthy economy in the future.

### *The Old Economy Bumps Into the New*

*"Even without the test wells being drilled, just the rumor and possibility of the drilling and development of CBM [coal bed methane] has in fact lowered the value of some properties near the proposed sites. Yes, right here and right now in \_\_\_\_\_ County!"*

Is this quotation from a rabid environmentalist or a not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) activist? Neither. It is from a real estate agent's column in a local newspaper. At the time this book was being written, citizens of his county were debating a proposal to develop coal bed methane (CBM) resources, and the impacts that could have on their homes and communities. Such debates have traditionally been framed in terms of economic development versus environmental quality. This time, real estate brokers and organic farmers found themselves on the same side, agreeing that much of the damage from CBM development would be to the local economy. They contended that CBM development would reduce property values by making the county less attractive to retirees and other prospective residents, and that it could undercut efforts to market organic produce from the area.

Stories like this are repeating themselves throughout rural America. The transition from local economies based on the export of raw materials to participation in a complex global economy has resulted in considerable confusion about what role communities and their resources will play in the future. It even raises the basic question: "what is a resource?" In successful communities citizens and decision makers are willing to unlearn what they think they know about the local economy and confront what the numbers tell them..

# CHAPTER 3

## Describe Demographic and Economic Change

Every community is constantly changing in response to regional, national, and global economic forces. Whether that change comes to your community in the form of businesses opening or factories closing, new homes springing up or young folks leaving town to seek work, you need an accurate description of how the local population and economy are changing. That description will be an essential basis for designing appropriate economic development policies, which we discuss in Chapter 4.

Because rural communities are in a constant state of flux, residents who understand the changing make-up of their economies stand a better chance of capitalizing on both new opportunities and preparing for potential problems associated with economic change and growth.

Ray Rasker, Economist, Sonoran Institute

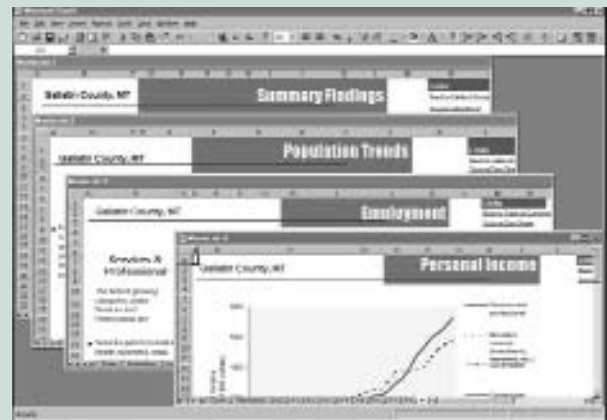
An accurate understanding of your local economy should also inform discussion of other issues. Every economic activity uses land, if only enough to support a desk. Every local business is rooted in the community's endowment of natural and cultural assets. Chapter 5 will help you learn how to inventory the resources on which your local economy is based and understand the economic consequences of land use change.

### FINDING THE INFORMATION

The Internet has made it easy to find data describing your local population and economy. The real work is in learning which data are most useful and how to analyze that information, how to make connections between the statistics you download and your local knowledge.

### Sonoran Institute's Economic Profile System

The Sonoran Institute has created a computer-based resource called the Economic Profile System (EPS) that allows users to automatically produce a detailed socioeconomic profile of their county or multi-county region. The finished product is 26 pages long and contains long-term trend data on population, economics, and demographics, including employment and income by industry, as well as trends in agriculture, cross-county commuting patterns, and business activity. The program automatically produces tables, line graphs, bar charts, pie charts, and summary bullet points. All dollar figures appear in real terms, adjusted for inflation. The profile is formatted and ready-to-print in black and white or color. The EPS can inform your community conversation in many ways. Putting the numbers in front of people can dispel myths about the local economy and encourage them to identify previously unseen opportunities for economic development. The EPS was developed with the support of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and can be accessed, free-of-charge, at [www.sonoran.org](http://www.sonoran.org)



Fortunately, you can find help in obtaining, analyzing, and updating demographic and economic information. The Sonoran Institute's Economic Profile System (EPS) can help you find and organize data into a detailed socioeconomic profile of your community, as explained in the accompanying box. You may also be able to obtain assistance from state universities and agencies. The Center for Business Research and Services at Idaho State University, for example, responds to numerous requests from small communities in that state. There is a link to a list of potentially helpful contacts in all 50 states in the **Resources** for this chapter.

## DESCRIBING YOUR POPULATION

Information needs vary from place to place, but we can list some basics you will want to collect as part of your planning effort.

### Start with Demographics

The **Resources** for this chapter provide links to the Bureau of the Census and other sources of demographic information. You will need to know:

- the size of your local population and how it is changing. You also need to know why it is changing, and whether the change is due to migration or natural increase. The Bureau of the Census supplements its decennial data with current population estimates. You can also monitor population change by tracking school enrollments, building permits, and similar indicators.
- the geographic distribution of the local population and how it is changing. You can find out what is happening in different parts of your community by consulting the Census and by conducting a build-out study, as described in Chapter 5. Shifts in where people live affect many decisions. For example, population growth in formerly rural areas may require your community to expand water or sewerage systems or improve roads.
- the age structure of your community and how it is changing. You can't anticipate the need for local schools, parks, or health care facilities without understanding the age structure and other population characteristics that affect the demand for public services. You can find data describing the age structure, racial and ethnic make-up, and many other characteristics of your community in the decennial Census.

- the housing types and conditions in your community. The Census will show you the number of dwelling units by type: attached, detached, and manufactured. You can update this with building permit records. The Census also tells you how many dwellings are owner-occupied and rented, how many dwellings are substandard, and how many are vacant, including the number of units held for seasonal use. Vacancy rates can be updated by surveying local landlords and real estate firms. This information will help you assess the need for housing in your community.

### Make Projections

Beyond documenting current demographic trends, you should project population growth and distribution into the future. The University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research offers a good introduction to population projection methods in the publication listed in the **Resources** for this chapter. You should understand that population projections are usually more accurate in communities with larger populations. Less populous places, especially small communities with a potential for rapid change, should monitor land divisions, building permits, utility hookups, and other indicators, and adjust their projections accordingly. We also recommend that all growing communities conduct a build-out analysis, as described in Chapter 5. This will help you think beyond short-term trends and projections that may not be accurate in your community to the ultimate impacts of growth.

## Data Limitations

When gathering demographic and economic data, you should be aware that they are not always timely or complete. Many demographic details are available only from the decennial Census. The most current economic information available is two to three years old. Economic data for small communities are also affected by rules that prevent disclosure of information about a single firm. You may have to fill in blanks and update trends with local knowledge. You can, for example, update the Census number of dwelling units using building permit records. The EPS will help you fill in the blanks created by disclosure rules. You can also talk to local employers about the number of jobs in industries for which data are not disclosed.

## DESCRIBING YOUR ECONOMY

Now let's talk about how to describe and analyze a local economy. This analysis will be a critical part of the factual basis for economic development, land use, and public investment policies and decisions.



### Follow the Money

Many economic profiles and plans describe local economies almost exclusively in terms of employment: how many jobs there are and in what industry; how many people are unemployed. This is important, but incomplete. **In many rural counties, a significant portion of personal income (sometimes a majority!) comes from non-labor sources.** Non-labor sources include government transfer payments, dividends, rent, and interest. If you think of the local economy as being based only on jobs, you could be seeing less than half of the picture.

## Find Economic Data

For an accurate understanding of your local economy, you will need:

- **income data.** Personal income data derived from tax records and other sources are provided by the Regional Economic Information System (REIS) maintained by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce. REIS data are organized by county, the smallest geographic unit for which economic data are generally available, and found on the Internet at the addresses listed in the **Resources** for this chapter. When tracing income (or any data expressed in dollars) through time, remember to adjust for inflation!
- **employment numbers.** The REIS data also include employment in the 10 major sectors of the economy. Your state employment security agency can provide employment data that are more detailed, though less complete (they exclude the self-employed and farm workers). These data include the size of the local labor force (the number of people seeking work), employment (the number of people who have jobs), and unemployment (the number of people seeking work who have not found it). They will also include employment by industry and wage data. The REIS data are for place of residence and employment agency data are for place of work, so be careful in comparing them.
- **commuting patterns.** These are a major feature of most rural economies, but not always easy to analyze. In eastern Idaho, for example, blue collar workers from the city of Pocatello heading toward potato processing plants in a nearby small town pass professionals heading toward the city. The REIS data for your county include an “adjustment for residence” that tells you how much net income flows into, or out of, your county. See the Sonoran Institute’s EPS for further explanation. The Census provides “journey to work” information, and planners with your state transportation agency may also be able to answer questions about commuting patterns.
- **trade patterns.** People in small towns are always concerned about the “leakage” of dollars from the local economy to nearby cities that offer a wider variety of goods, services, and entertainment. Simple techniques for mapping retail trade areas and estimating the leakage of retail dollars to trade centers are explained in the

## Use Multipliers Cautiously

Many economic development organizations like to cite multipliers, saying for example that every job created in a certain sector of the economy supports X additional jobs in other sectors. *Community Economic Analysis* explains how these multipliers are calculated. It also cautions you to use them advisedly. We echo that warning. The results of location quotient or input-analysis — the techniques that produce multipliers — can be useful, but ONLY when used with a full awareness of the limitations of these methods.

North Central Regional Center for Rural Development's *Community Economic Analysis: A How To Manual*. The Resources for this chapter tell you how to obtain a copy of this manual.

### SHARING THE INFORMATION

The best way to build community insight about economic change is to get local people involved in finding and generating basic demographic and economic information. The Sonoran Institute's Economic Profile System can be used as the basis for a hands-on workshop that stimulates discussion of questions such as:

- What are the implications of an aging population?
- Why is one industry failing while others are growing?
- What skills and education does it take to get higher paying jobs?
- What is the relationship between the health of the land and economic development?

Chapter 1 of the *EPS User's Manual*, listed in the **Resources** for this chapter, offers more details.

A well-written, well-illustrated demographic and economic profile can be a local best seller, as valuable to business people as it is to elected officials and planning professionals. The Sonoran Institute's EPS can help you generate a basic profile, and a wealth of additional information about your community and region is readily available on the Internet. Remember also that university and state data centers are charged with providing socioeconomic information to communities like yours.

If you take full advantage of the available resources, citizens and decision makers will be well informed about how the local population and economy are changing. They can then tackle the challenge of creating economic development policies that are tailored to your community and its vision.

# CHAPTER 4

## Design Economic Development Policies

Successful communities provide a framework in which individual enterprise and economic diversity thrive. They celebrate their heritage in traditional industries, but their vision goes well beyond the conventional view of rural economies as exporters of raw materials. Chapter 3 told you how to document change in your local economy. Here we talk about how communities can respond to economic change.

### THE CONVENTIONAL VIEW OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

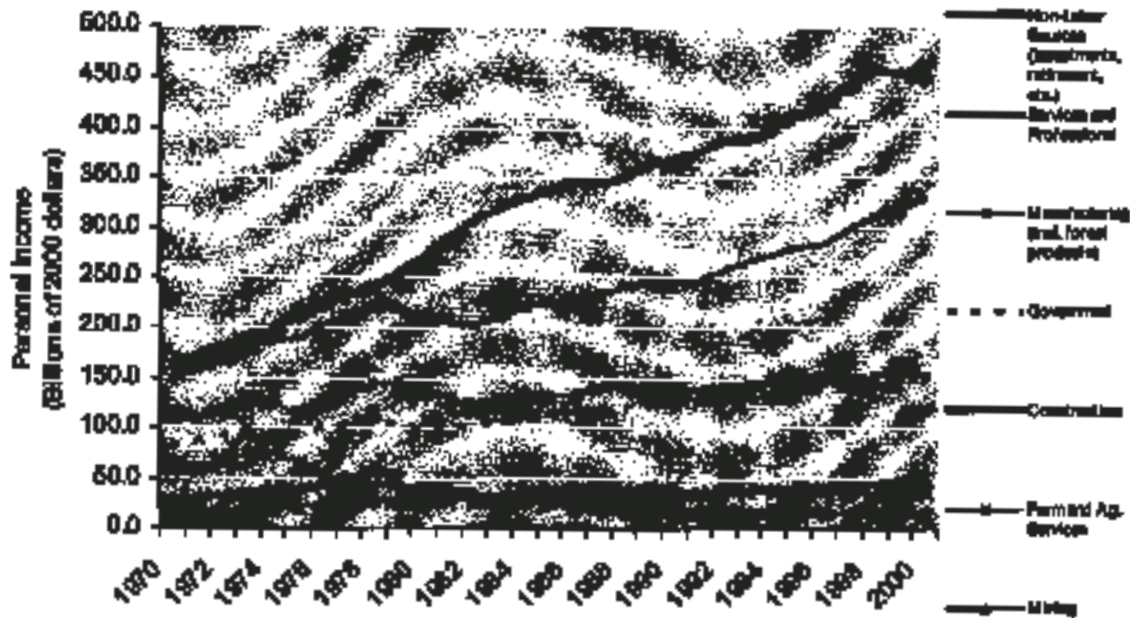
The conventional view of rural economies is that they export raw materials or manufactured products, then use the earnings from doing so to purchase goods produced in other communities. The multiplier effect of export earnings supports local retailers and services. This simple model has become the basis for the prevailing approach to economic development.

The chart below shows how vulnerable this approach has left rural communities. There has been little growth in traditional export industries for years! Rural people wanting to share in the growth of the larger economy need to think differently about economic development.

### A NEW VIEW OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We suggest an approach to economic development that acknowledges that there is no one prevailing sector that will lead to successful economic development. This approach recognizes that most new jobs generated over the last decade – nationally and among rural communities – have been among businesses that hire 20 or fewer employees. Finally, it anticipates the tremendous impact of “baby boomer” retirees with significant disposable income seeking

**Growth in Personal Income  
U.S. Non-metropolitan Areas  
1970-2000**



For America's rural communities, growth in income over the past thirty years is overwhelmingly due to non-labor sources, such as investments, and in the services and professional industries.

communities with significant amenities. This requires a new, diversified and entrepreneur-based economic diversification strategy.

This strategy begins by clearly understanding a community's role in the global economy. The hallmarks of success described in earlier chapters—defining a community's vision, conducting an inventory of its assets, and understanding the economic and demographic trends influencing local growth and development—are essential steps toward articulating a community's economic niche. However, there are other factors that will help a community determine its relative position in attracting small business and entrepreneurs. Here are some things you should consider in developing a long-term economic strategy.

### THINGS TO CONSIDER

While there is no recipe for economic success, the most vibrant, diverse, and resilient communities share a number of characteristics. Underlying these tenets for development is an understanding that:

- Rural America no longer holds a comparative advantage as a low-cost producer of food and fiber. Agriculture and resource industries will continue to be a component of diverse economies, but they will not be the source of new jobs.
- Most of the job opportunities are in adding value to raw materials (engineering, design, marketing, etc.) or in activities where few raw materials are used (e.g., about 8 percent of the value of an automobile is raw materials; the rest is engineering, design, marketing, sales, patents, and copyrights). Invariably, these types of occupations are recorded in official employment statistics as “services.”
- In the past the rule was “people follow jobs.” In other words, a large mine, lumber mill, or factory had to open, and workers would migrate to the jobs. Today, the rule is “jobs follow people.” Because of increased mobility, the Internet, delivery services such as FedEx and UPS, and because of local airports and a well-developed road system, people are more often deciding where to live first, and then creating their own jobs. People are attracted by quality of life – an historic downtown, spectacular scenery and recreational opportunities, low crime rate, and good schools. Entrepreneurship follows.

If there is a single rule, it is to **create (and protect) the setting for entrepreneurship to flourish.**

This includes the natural and built environments, transportation infrastructure, schools, and social networks. It includes seemingly mundane amenities such as coffee houses where business partners can meet. It also includes social capital. Communities that can protect open space and cultural and historic assets send a message to would-be business owners that this is a community that “gets things done.” This is exactly the sort of social cohesion and civic involvement sought after by business leaders.

Given these and other considerations, how can effective planning contribute to successful economic development?

#### Provide a Sound Infrastructure

Entrepreneurs need access via road and air, utilities, and other public facilities and services, including an educational system for their children, their own enrichment, and to provide a work force. They also need amenities: pleasant, affordable residential neighborhoods where one can have a home office or studio; well-designed shopping areas; facilities for cultural events; and trails, parks, and larger open spaces in which to seek recreation and inspiration. Chapter 9 describes an infrastructure planning process to sustain and enhance your community's economic vitality.

#### Enforce Sensible Land Use Regulations

A sound regulatory framework is an essential basis for local economic development because it protects investments from conflicting land uses and preserves the natural and cultural assets that make your community attractive. Make sure your regulations are consistent with your vision. If you are encouraging small enterprises, for example, make it possible for people to start up businesses in their home or garage. Adopt performance standards that protect the neighbors while allowing people to work at home, rather than arbitrarily restricting home-based businesses. Chapters 6 and 8 will help you decide what strategies are needed to ensure that land development is consistent with your community's economic health.

#### Maintain Natural Assets

Successful communities know that economic health stems from environmental quality. This is true whether your local economy is based on traditional resource development, on the appeal your landscape has to people looking for a place to live or invest, or both. Good stewardship of natural resources is a value that is embedded deeply in many agricultural communities. It is equally important in places that depend on

## Eco-Industrial Parks

Some communities are trying to find ways to make industrial production more ecologically sound. One interesting example comes from Massachusetts, where the Devens Enterprise Commission is overseeing a large mixed-use development, including an eco-industrial park, on the site of former Fort Devens. A link to the Devens Enterprise Commission appears in the **Resources** for this chapter. That link describes the Fort Devens project and provides useful general information on industrial ecology.

forest products or tourism. Your community's vision and policies should embody its commitment to stewardship. While there are many factors in their decisions to relocate, the age of the Internet, fax machines, and express services has made it possible for many business people and retirees to live where they choose. Those who can will choose places with clean air and water, scenic views, historic sites, and lots of recreational opportunities.

### Maintain Cultural Assets

Historic sites, museums, art districts, and local events and celebrations all attract people to visit your community and shop at local businesses. The **Resources** for this chapter direct you to information on Heritage Tourism, which capitalizes on these and other cultural assets. A strong central business district where diverse local businesses thrive is also an important cultural and economic asset. The National Main Street Center, a part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, is the best source of information and advice on how to revitalize and sustain a central business district. A link to the National Main Street Center is provided in the **Resources** for this chapter. Many states also have Main Street programs. The Main Street principles—organization, marketing, economic restructuring, and physical design—are used by communities from Puyallup, Washington, to Newkirk, Oklahoma, to Milford, New Hampshire. Chapter 8 describes downtown revitalization efforts in Evanston, Wyoming.

### Foster Economic Diversity.

If your community is weary of the “boom to bust” cycle that comes from depending on just one commodity, your vision will probably include diversification of the local economy. Too often, economic development strategies seek to replace one commodity with another, but in the grassroots view of economic development, diversification happens one farm, ranch, or firm at a time.

- The Sonoran Institute's publication, *The New Frontiers of Ranching: Business Diversification & Land Stewardship*, tells how ranchers are diversifying in ways that will help stabilize and strengthen their operations (and thus their communities) in an adverse economy. Similar stories of diversifying agriculture come from across the nation. See the **Resources** for this chapter.
- A great example of local economic diversity is Otra Vuelta, a small business that recycles tires into flowerpots, doormats, and other products in Los Ojos, New Mexico. Otra Vuelta is part of Los Ganados del Valle cooperative, which began producing and marketing local woolen goods in 1983 and has since expanded into other enterprises.
- “Big box” stores sometimes seem to put an entire business district under one roof. You can address the impacts these national retailers have on your community through a Main Street program, which will help small business people understand how to respond. Some communities also adopt regulations intended to mitigate the impact of “big boxes” on the local economy and community character. See the **Resources** for this chapter for more information.

## How is your community's economy tied to environmental quality?

**Case Study One (page 19)** tells the story of a community that has successfully relied on the connection between environmental quality and economic health for decades.

## Support Local Businesses



Many rural communities are concerned about the leakage of dollars to larger communities with more services and amenities. Chapter 3 identifies some methods to determine whether the people of your community are shopping locally. Supporting local businesses helps create local employment opportunities. Buying local can also help retain your community's traditional industries. Homestead Beef, a retail outlet for a cooperative of local ranchers raising natural beef in Paonia, Colorado, has this sign in its window:

Protect Your Open Space:  
BUY LOCALLY

## Retain Traditional Industries

As the example above shows, there are new opportunities in traditional industries. Instability in these industries does not mean that your local crop, range, and timberlands can carelessly be converted to other uses. Many families and firms have found ways to make a living farming, ranching, and working in the woods as conditions change. Others will follow them in finding a niche in the evolving economy, IF there is still a land and water base for them to use. One example is the Catron County [New Mexico] Citizens' Group, which is working with county government, the U.S. Forest Service, and other partners to re-establish a local wood products industry on a sustainable scale.

Besides continuing production, working landscapes offer important values, like scenery, wildlife, flood abatement, and water quality protection, that are not reflected in the prices paid for the commodities produced there. As Chapter 9 explains, working landscapes also tend to make a positive contribution to the public treasury. We will talk more about tools that can be used to encourage continued private stewardship in later chapters. Here we say simply that there are sound economic reasons for policies that protect working farms, ranches, and timber operations from conflict with incompatible development, and for policies that protect open space in private ownership.

The leadership and contributions of many partners will be needed to help your community build the framework for a healthy, diverse local economy. That framework will include investments in infrastructure and supportive land use policies. It will include actions that help maintain your natural and cultural assets, diversify local enterprises, and support local businesses, including the industries upon which your community has historically relied. Chapters 6 and 9 will tell you more about what you can do.



## CASE STUDY TWO

# Grand Traverse Bay Region, Michigan

### THE PROOF IS IN THE PUDDING

This case study shows how one community applied the hallmarks explained in Chapters 3 and 4.

### BACKGROUND

In Michigan's Grand Traverse Bay region, the local Chamber of Commerce has taken the lead in managing growth through a unique voluntary program called New Designs for Growth (New Designs). For over 80 years, the goal of the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce has been "to preserve and enhance the quality of our natural resources and environment as the basis for a healthy economy." New Designs grew out of this ethic and the understanding that good design will be a critical part of the area's future economic viability.

The Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce serves five counties: Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, and Leelanau. It is a bucolic, hardworking, hard-playing region of small towns, orchards, farms, and forests surrounding Lake Michigan's Grand Traverse Bay. Including the five counties, 92 different units of local government play some role in land use planning in the region. Keith Charters, New Designs Program Coordinator, reports that 77 of these jurisdictions have participated in some aspect of the program.

The Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce relies on three principles: (1) growth is inevitable; (2) growth is desirable; and (3) growth must be managed. The New Designs program responds to the fact that land development patterns reflect local land use regulations, and that changing the regulations can change the way growth impacts the community. It strives to educate local officials and citizens, as well as realtors, developers, and builders, about better ways to regulate and develop.



### A Few Facts About the Grand Traverse Bay Region, including Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, and Leelanau Counties

Trade Center: Traverse City  
2000 Trade Center Population: 14,532  
2000 Region Population: 154,452  
Percent Change since 1990: 21–28%

Land Area: 2,229 sq. mi.  
Persons Per Square Mile: 69.29  
Landscape: waterfront, wooded and farmed rolling hills

Median Household Income: \$30,783– \$41,624  
Percent below poverty: 7.6%–12.9%

2000 Sources of Income  
Dividends, Rent, Interest - 24.88%  
Services - 18.46%  
Transfer Payments - 14.75%  
Manufacturing - 9.36%  
Government - 8.73%  
Retail Trade - 8.04%  
Construction - 6.34%  
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate - 3.96%  
Transportation, Communications, and Public Utilities - 2.96%  
Wholesale Trade - 2.33%  
Mining - 1.89%  
Agriculture - 0.62%  
Commuting - 0.50%

*Woodwinds is one of many developments that have been reviewed by the New Designs for Growth Peer Site Review Committee.*

## ACTION

### The Development Guidebook

New Designs' first attempt to influence local growth management was the 1992 publication of the first of three editions of the *Grand Traverse Bay Region Development Guidebook*, a nicely illustrated explanation of fundamental site selection and design principles. The Guidebook was distributed to all units of local government. The Chamber soon discovered, however, that copies were sitting on shelves around the region collecting dust.

### New Designs Workshops

Realizing that it needed to do more to educate the people and officials of each town, township, village, and county, New Designs initiated a series of workshops, held at the request of individual communities. Participants use blocks to design an ideal community on large topographical maps. The principles illustrated on their maps are then compared to existing plans and ordinances, and the discrepancies noted. If the community is interested, New Designs will provide funding and technical assistance to help revise local planning documents.

### Peer Site Review

New Designs also created the Peer Site Review Board, a volunteer subcommittee of the Chamber of Commerce made up of architects, landscape architects, engineers, contractors, surveyors, realtors, planners, and two citizens at-large. The Peer Site Review Board reviews development proposals that could have community-wide impact. Each proposal is evaluated using the principles found in the *Grand Traverse Bay Region Development Guidebook* and general professional standards. The Board does not make determinations about whether the proposals meet the given local code, simply whether they are well-designed. Russ Clark, a landscape architect who has had several projects come before the Board, says the main benefit is "free advice" from other professionals. In addition, peer site review taps the knowledge of local

experts to simplify the sometimes overwhelming task of project review by elected officials. Clark feels that gaining Peer Site Review Board endorsement before presenting projects to elected boards saves time and money for the development community.

### Intergovernmental Planning

Building on the respect it has earned as a nongovernmental entity, New Designs has taken the lead in funding corridor studies and developing master plans for major transportation routes. These plans are used by different jurisdictions to make land use decisions that incorporate the big picture and show developers the desired open space network. The Garfield Township planner says the corridor studies are a success because New Designs can communicate with every unit of government.

## RESULTS

Many people have asked Keith Charters whether developers and real estate agents fight the New Designs program. In reality, these are the very groups that started the program through their membership in the Chamber. The area's longstanding understanding of the link between a healthy economy and a healthy environment is the basis of the program's success.

Since New Designs began working with jurisdictions on planning issues, there has been greater inter-jurisdictional coordination. The adjoining townships of East Bay and Garfield have worked together to adopt similar regulations for access management, sign control, landscape buffers, and residential development. This will help make development consistent in the rapidly growing part of the region.

Well over half of the jurisdictions that have participated in the educational workshops have changed their regulations to reflect a better understanding of their vision. For example, many communities have adopted the concept of zero lot line development, which helps protect open space.

Every year the Peer Site Review Board reviews around 20 proposals of regional importance. Elected officials in many communities

look to see the Board's stamp of approval before reviewing proposals. Many projects have been significantly altered as a result of the review, and members report that the quality of proposals has increased over the years as professionals learn from each other and get the message that poor design is not acceptable.

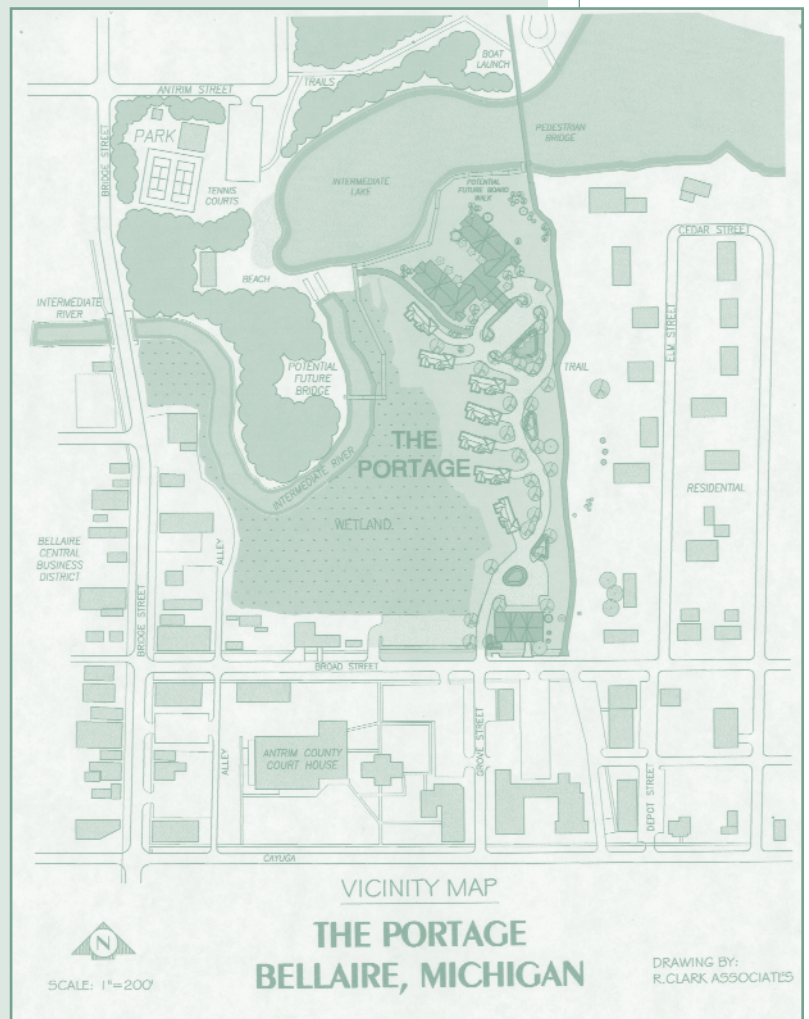
New Designs has also assisted in model design projects. It helped the town of Bellaire write a planned unit development ordinance to facilitate redevelopment of a brownfield site near an old railroad depot. The site was cleaned up by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. The completed development includes much-needed senior housing.

New Designs for Growth has found success in fostering good design, and as Charters says, "the proof is in the pudding." The economies of the region's counties have found a stable rate of growth over the last decade, and despite a 20 percent population increase, the region retains its rural character and local governments remain solvent.

New Designs has now reached a level of success that forces Charters and other local leaders to think about its role in the future. Charters thinks the next challenge will be finding ways to encourage well-designed affordable housing.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- the business community can be a valuable ally in planning efforts when it understands the positive connection between economic health and environmental quality
- educating citizens, local officials, and developers can result in better regulations and better development
- encourage intergovernmental cooperation
- take a positive approach!







SECTION III

Natural and  
Cultural  
Assets



*A winter view of eastern Fremont County, Idaho.*

- finding data that describe the local landscape and how it is changing, sharing that information throughout the community, and
- designing land use policies that will maintain local assets while accommodating population growth and economic change.

Why is your community located where it is? And why does it look the way it does? People and the land have interacted over many years to shape your local economy, land use patterns, and built environment. Your awareness of the interrelationship between people and the land should be reflected in your vision and in the local policies that guide land use decisions.

Every community's identity and economy are tied to its natural and cultural resources. Without good stewardship of these assets, there can be no enduring sense of place or prosperity. Your planning process should identify natural and cultural resources, explain how they have shaped the community in the past, and anticipate how changes in land use will affect them. It should also help you understand the critical relationship between natural and cultural assets and your local economy. Based on this knowledge, your community can decide what policies it can adopt to protect and manage its assets as times change.

Chapter 5 tells you how to describe your local landscape and anticipate the impacts of land use change. Chapter 6 explains how to use this knowledge to draft land use policies that are rooted in respect for both the land and your community's history.

**Q.** Do you know how growth and changing land use patterns will impact the natural and cultural assets that sustain your local economy and sense of place?

**A.** Successful communities understand how local natural and cultural assets influence and are affected by population growth and development. Successful communities learn about their natural and cultural assets and respond to the impacts development can have on those resources by ...

### The Costs of Not Planning Catch Up with an Idaho County

Fremont County, Idaho, adopted an award-winning plan in 1992. You will read more about that effort in the introduction to Section IV. We tell just one part of the story here: how the county's success in planning stemmed, in part, from a past failure to understand how development would impact the local landscape.

Fremont County experienced extensive land division and resort home development during the 1960's and '70s. More than 5,000 lots were created. Increasing use of on-site sewage disposal in areas that a sound planning process would have identified as vulnerable to groundwater contamination (areas with a high water table, shallow soils, and fractured bedrock) necessitated the construction of two public sewerage systems.

The costs of building those systems, as well as other costs of development in remote areas, were fresh in everyone's mind when the county's planning process began. It cost more than \$2 million to build the sewerage systems, but Fremont County learned what all successful communities know: Development that does not respect the limitations presented by the local landscape can have a profoundly adverse impact on both environmental quality and the public treasury.

# CHAPTER 5

## Describe the Local Landscape and How It is Changing

Whether fertile farmland, sparkling lakes, leafy woods, or mountain views, every community has a natural endowment. Every community also has reminders of its past, ranging from the classic red barns of the Midwest to the cottonwood-lined acequias of New Mexico. Both the local economy and residents' sense of place are rooted in these natural and cultural assets. This chapter will help you learn how to build a complete picture of your local landscape and the changes that are occurring.

### GATHERING INFORMATION

Every community needs certain basic information about its natural and cultural assets. You also need to understand how natural and cultural amenities and constraints channel development, and how development will impact your community. Here we describe a few of the many available methods to gather information:



#### Use Local Knowledge

There are good ways to involve people in gathering data. In a small place, planning commission or advisory committee members may be able to map current land uses, interview service providers, and collect other data. Their local knowledge is invaluable. There are also interactive ways in which the people of the community can help generate information.

- Some years ago, for example, Montana's Alternative Energy Resources Organization and the City of Helena enlisted the help of hundreds of citizens in a visual preference survey that had an immediate influence on the city's landscaping standards and, later, on its growth policy. A link to the City of Helena is provided in the **Resources** for this chapter. Also, Appendix A explains the basic visual preference survey technique.
- Residents of Hamilton County, Iowa, Silver City, New Mexico, and many other communi-

ties have participated in workshops that helped them identify and define the elements of local character and understand how that character is changing. See the description of the character mapping activity in Appendix A. These workshops also helped folks learn what actions could be taken to maintain the landscape they cherish.

#### Conduct a Land Use Inventory

Every community should develop maps showing general land ownership (private, state, federal) and current land uses. These maps will help you anticipate where there is potential for future development.

- In the West, general ownership maps are usually available from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. Outside the public lands states, you will probably have to obtain this information from your local tax assessor.
- General land use and land cover maps are available from the U.S. Geological Survey, but those maps are not current and do not provide the detail about urban and suburban areas you will need. Genuinely useful and up-to-date land use maps must be generated locally. The property tax roll is a good source of local land use information, but is not yet tied to maps in many jurisdictions. Perhaps the best starting point for land use mapping in most rural communities is to obtain the most recent aerial photographs of your jurisdiction. Sources are listed in the **Resources** for this chapter.
- It is also important to show how land use is changing. Illustrate local trends by mapping recorded lot splits and subdivisions as they occur. You may also be able to show where new building, on-site sewage disposal, or well permits have been issued.

#### Conduct a Natural Resources Inventory

Your natural resources inventory should mirror your local landscape, describing your community's particular endowment of natural resources and the natural hazards that may affect development. The basics of making a natural resources inventory include:

## What resources can you use in making natural and cultural resources inventories?

Case Study Three (page 49) offers examples of how one community mapped natural assets and hazards. Ross County, Ohio, had limited resources but used its staff, grants, and students from a nearby university to create a sound informational basis for planning. Other communities have received substantial assistance from state and federal agencies. As Case Study One (page 19) indicates, you may also get help from nonprofit organizations.

- Find out what your state geological survey and the U.S. Geological Survey can offer. These agencies often have useful information on geologic history (how your landscape came to be); mineral resources; geologic hazards, like avalanches, earthquakes, and landslides; and water resources.
- Use the soil survey produced for your area by the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service. The soil at a given site reflects the climate, geologic history, and the actions of plants, wildlife, and human beings over many years. Paying attention to this sensitive indicator can help your community channel development to the most suitable locations (remember the Fremont County, Idaho, story that introduces this section).
- While the natural resources inventory is more technical than some parts of the planning process, citizens can be involved. The Sonoran Institute's publication, *Landscapes, Wildlife, and People*, describes one way of using both scientific and local knowledge to identify and map local wildlife habitat.

### Conduct a Cultural Resources Inventory

A cultural resources inventory should identify those reminders of local history and those elements of your community's current character that must be preserved to maintain your vision.

- Your State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) is usually the starting point for a cultural resources inventory. The SHPO can provide a list of archeological and historic sites that are on the state and national registers of historic places and other information about specific historic sites.
- Looking at the broader context of those sites,

the historic landscape, will require local research and discussion. Talk to your local historic society and librarians. Look for old photographs. Tap local knowledge by getting people involved in defining and mapping their community's character.

A good example of how understanding local natural and cultural assets can lead to successful community action comes from Fauquier and Loudoun Counties, Virginia. Citizens there organized in response to a Virginia Department of Transportation proposal to widen the stretch of Route 50 that passes through the John Mosby Singleton Heritage Area from two to six lanes. The result is the Traffic Calming Plan for Virginia's Route 50 Corridor, which was supported by both counties and the Town of Middleburgh. That plan maintains a two-lane highway in most of the corridor and incorporates design features which ensure that highway improvements are compatible with the historic landscape. Links to more information on this project are found in the **Resources** for this chapter.

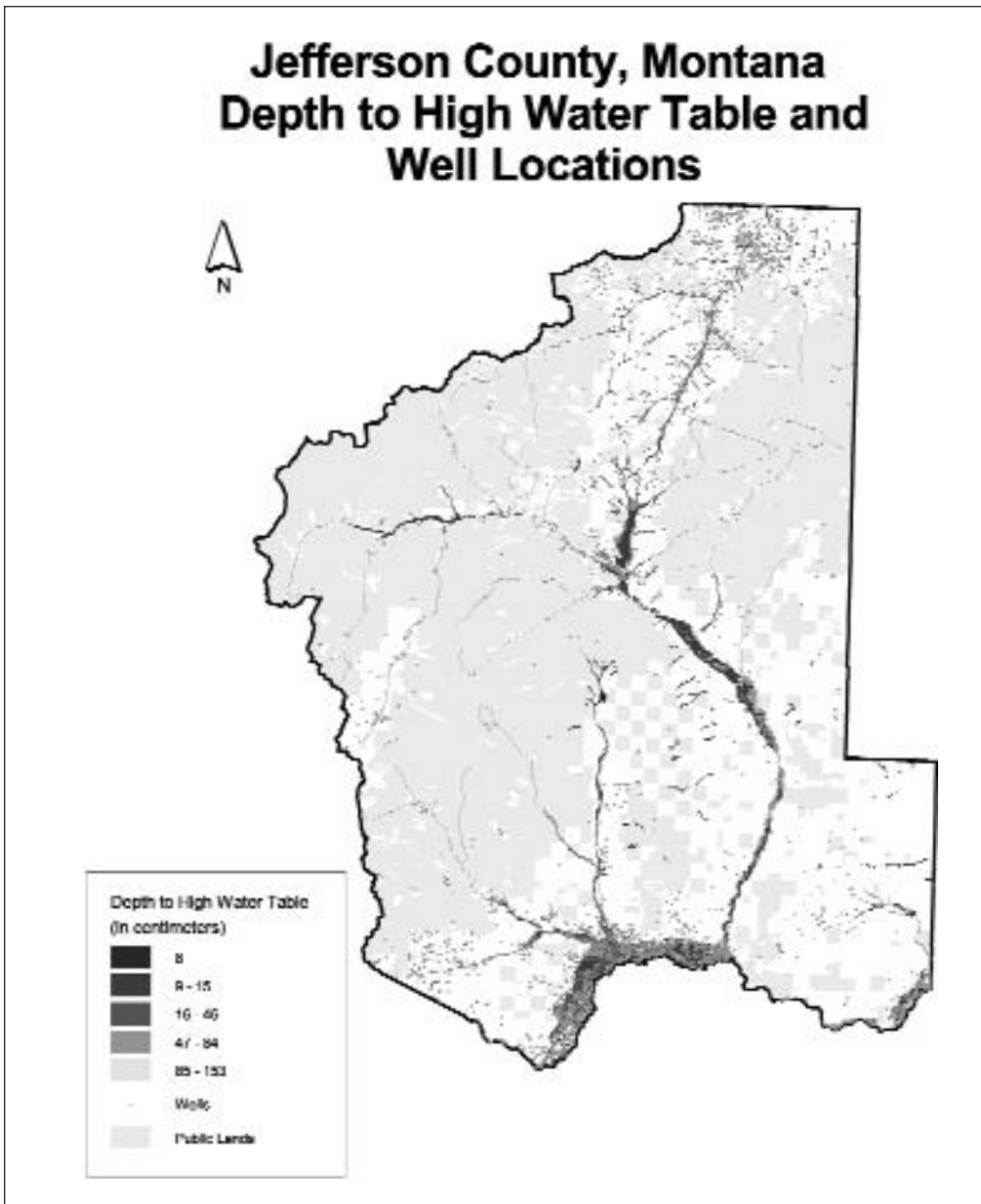
Gathering the information needed to support a local planning process can be expensive. Use all the resources you can identify! A strong foundation in the facts is essential to the usefulness and credibility of your planning effort. Chapter 6 explains how to build land use policies on that foundation.

## ANALYZING INFORMATION

Information alone is not a sufficient basis for planning. Citizens and decision makers need to know what it means and how to use it.

### Connect the Facts

Go beyond inventories to help people connect the facts. Don't just map rapid soil permeability; combine that map with a map of areas that have a high water table and a map showing where permits are being approved for wells or on-site sewage disposal systems. An example from Jefferson County, Montana, appears on the facing page. This is just one example of the many connections you can make to help people see how land use change is affecting resources.



*A geographic information system (GIS) helped Jefferson County, Montana, residents understand how development is affecting their water supply. GIS makes it easier, but the same analysis can be done using simple map overlays.*

#### Develop Analytical Tools

You may need tools to help answer questions local people and decision makers will confront as they work to implement the community's vision. Some of the most useful tools communities have developed for this purpose include the following.

- Many jurisdictions have created Land Evaluation Site Assessment (LESA) systems to help citizens and decision makers understand how future development will affect the local crop, timber, or grazing land base. A LESA system provides a systematic way of ranking

## Measuring Development for Build-Out Analysis

How do you measure the extent of development in a build-out analysis, or in any description or discussion of land use?

Dwellings per acre, for residential development, and total square feet, for commercial and industrial projects, are usually adequate for build-out analysis. But, depending on your goals, other measures may also be helpful. Many communities use building coverage (how much of a lot is occupied by buildings) to reflect the visual character of neighborhoods. If you are concerned about bulky buildings that may be out of scale with their neighbors, you might also want to describe development in terms of floor area ratio (the total floor area, on all stories, of a building as a percentage of the total area of its lot). If protecting water quality and limiting the costs of storm drainage are among your goals, site disturbance (how much will be cleared of vegetation and graded) or impervious cover (how much of the site will be under paving or rooftops) are directly related to the health of nearby lakes and streams. These measures can be linked to a suitability analysis, which might suggest that the extent of development the community permits on a given site should vary with slope, soil characteristics, and other natural features.

parcels based on their productivity, the threat of development, and other community values. The **Resources** for this chapter refer to some examples.

- Build-out analysis is an essential basis for public facilities planning as described in Chapter 9. It can also help decision makers understand how a proposed policy change or zoning map amendment will affect future facilities needs and the surrounding neighborhood. Build-out analysis calculates how much development is possible given the supply of suitable land and current land use policies and regulations. Examples appear in the **Resources** for this chapter.
- Suitability analysis will help you discover what parts of your local landscape have the most (and the least) capability to accommodate development of different types. This technique begins with your land use, natural resources,

and cultural resources inventories. Maps from those inventories are combined to show where natural hazards may affect development, where certain types of development might conflict with established uses, and where development will be most desirable. Information on how to use this valuable tool can be found in the **Resources** for this chapter.

### Conduct Corridor Studies

As the controversy over Virginia's Route 50 showed, the relationship between roads and communities is a critical one. People need to understand how traffic will move through their community in the future, and how it will affect the economy, land use, and natural and cultural resources. As Case Study Two (see page 33) indicated, the New Designs for Growth Program has helped townships in the Grand Traverse Bay region of Michigan undertake corridor studies. Such a study begins with the land use, natural and cultural resources inventories described above, and a build-out analysis, all of which are applied to the area—the corridor—that will be served by a major road. Traffic flows along the corridor are projected using modeling techniques that you can learn about from your regional council of governments or state transportation agency. The need for additional lanes, signals, and other improvements is estimated based on those projections. Citizens and decision makers can then evaluate the impacts of the projected traffic and improvements, and devise appropriate land use policies, which may include finding ways to reduce or slow traffic.

We will spend more time on the connection between facts and land use policy in Chapter 6. We end this chapter by emphasizing the importance of sharing the information your planning process has generated throughout the community.

### SHARING INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY

Your community's conversation about the future should be based on good information. Here are some principles for sharing that information. They apply just as much to the demographic and economic data you learned how to find in Chapter 3, and to the inventory of public facilities called for in Chapter 9, as they do to information on natural and cultural assets.

### Offer Many Learning Opportunities

A planning effort should feature frequent opportunities to learn about the issues and the tools that address them. The Sonoita Crossroads Community Forum (SCCF), mentioned in Section I, followed its visioning events with monthly educational forums, each of which dealt with issues raised during the visioning process and featured local experts or speakers from state and federal agencies. Research and education continued during the policy development process. Meetings to discuss rural residential development began with a visual preference survey that helped set priorities for the acquisition of scenic easements. Those who were interested in the future of Sonoita's business district learned about infrastructure development at a forum co-sponsored by the local chamber of commerce.

### Answer Questions from the Visioning Process

As the example above suggests, a well-designed visioning event can provide a starting point for an educational process that both answers people's immediate questions and broadens their understanding of the community and its issues. People will return to hear answers to questions they raised.

### Present Information Clearly

Most people won't dig through stacks of paper for the answers to their questions or sit still through lengthy, dry presentations. Don't drown your vision for the community in a sea of facts! Present the key findings of your research in a paragraph or two, or a 10-minute presentation. Use aerial photographs, maps, drawings, and graphs to help people understand.

Learning about your community is a rewarding activity! One high point of the planning process can be watching people stand in front of a map you have produced or provided and see something new about the place they live. But the point of planning—of developing a vision statement and gathering all the facts we have listed in Chapters 3 and 5—is to guide decisions your community will make about economic and land development. Chapter 6 tells you how to connect your intent and the facts you have found with policies your decision makers can use.

## Use Supporting Documents or Appendices

Present the bulk of the informational basis for your plan in supporting documents or appendices. Remember to use maps and graphics, as well as words. Too many plans consist primarily of an "encyclopedia" of facts about the jurisdiction. In one Montana community we found a plan of more than 120 pages, only two of which presented policies to guide future development. Such a plan may occasionally serve as a reference for a staff person preparing a grant proposal or a student writing a paper, but it is not a useful tool for decision makers. The purpose of a plan is to provide concrete guidance for land use decisions and to set the agenda for future actions, including major public investments.

## *How Successful Communities Use Geographic Information Systems*

An increasing amount of geographic information system (GIS) data is available to use in land use, natural resources, and cultural resources inventories. Much of this information, and sometimes GIS services, are available from regional councils of government and state or federal agencies. Aerial photographs, soil maps, wildlife habitat, flood plains, roads, and historic properties, to name a few, can be mapped and layered to give the community accurate information. Also, many cities and counties have, or are in the process of obtaining, digitized property boundaries for use in a GIS. Given these resources, a GIS can be used, for example, to map development trends that may impact wildlife by layering maps showing land divisions or building permits and wildlife habitat. A caution: When using a GIS to support your planning effort, remember the questions you are trying to answer. Don't let your planning process be guided by what information is or is not available in a convenient electronic format. Knowing what to map and how to map it requires knowing the terrain. Be sure that your GIS staff or consultants do not see the community only on a computer monitor.

# CHAPTER 6

## Design Land Use Policies

The essence of planning is to use knowledge as a basis for action. In Chapters 3, 4, and 5, we saw how successful communities help their citizens and decision makers understand the impacts of economic trends and changing land uses. In this chapter, we will show you how land use policies grow out of that understanding.

### WHAT IS A LAND USE POLICY?

A policy is a statement of intent or direction. Land use policies add substance to your community's vision by explaining how you will sustain or improve the local economy, protect cultural and natural resources, provide a sound infrastructure, and achieve other goals. We will offer some examples later in this chapter. What's important now is to understand the central role of policy in the planning process.

Land use policies should grow directly out of your shared vision and the information you have gathered. They should be specific enough to serve as a basis for implementing that vision through land use regula-

tions, capital facilities plans, and specific decisions about proposed developments and public investments. The value of the policies will be measured by their utility to decision makers.

### GROUND POLICIES IN YOUR VISION

Policies that are genuinely useful to decision makers will result from a well-designed visioning process. Whether it stems from budget constraints or reluctance to open discussion of controversial issues, some communities attempt to substitute a photocopy machine for a planning process. If you hear someone saying, "we don't need to reinvent the wheel," remind them that a land use policy is not a technological product like a wheel or a microchip. It is important to learn from the experience of others, but policies are a social institution: a result of your community's continuing conversation about itself. You can't have useful policies without having that conversation.

### Planning is More Important than Plans

Most communities will want their process to lead to adoption of a plan, whether it is the general or comprehensive plan that many states require local governments to adopt, or a plan for specific capital improvements, to protect a particular resource, or to redevelop a particular neighborhood. But the results of your community conversation can be influential whether or not they are part of an adopted document. The visioning process may inspire citizens and their organizations to act, as it has in Custer County, Colorado (see Case Study One, page 19), and even a draft plan can affect decisions, as it has in Ross County, Ohio (see Case Study Three, page 49). Grand County, Utah, budgeted for its facilities planning effort several months before adopting its new general plan (see Case Study Five, page 77). A plan is a valuable document if it captures the spirit of the community conversation. But encouraging that conversation and acting on its results is more important than adopting a document.



### Be Specific

Vague policy statements, like the one that follows, fill many local plans: *Plan and facilitate land use and development that is consistent and compatible with the natural and man-made environment to promote a progressive, vibrant, scenic, and safe community.*

Such policies are ineffective because they provide little useful guidance to decision makers and little reassurance to citizens or prospective developers who want to know what the community expects.

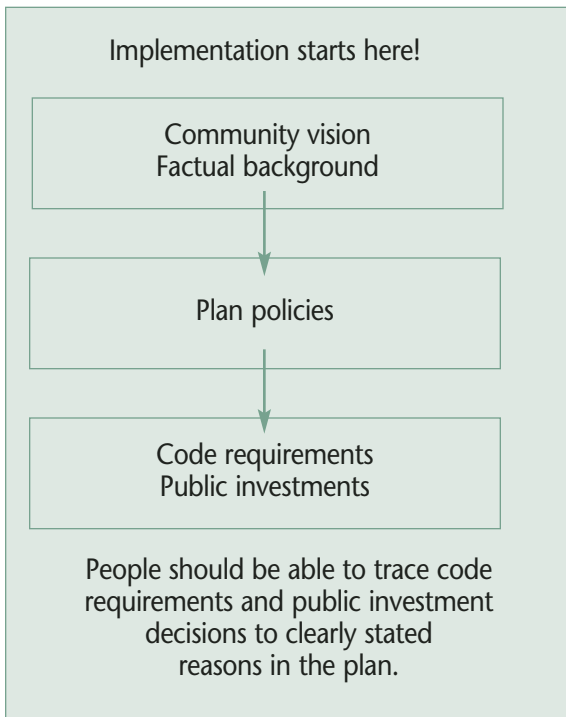
## Aim at Implementation

Effective land use policies are written by people who are always looking ahead to how those policies will be implemented. In fact, some of the most successful planning efforts with which we have been involved took one part of a general vision for the community, secured agreement about what tools should be used to implement that part of the vision, put that agreement in writing, then repeated the process for other facets of the general vision.



### Connect Policies to the Planning Process

Effective land use policies exhibit a one-to-one correspondence between the major steps in the planning process. Policies should grow directly out of your visioning efforts and the research and education you conduct. They should also reflect your discussion of what planning tools should be used to implement the vision. The chart illustrates this principle:



## FROM VISION TO POLICY: TWO EXAMPLES

We will illustrate the points made above with examples from two communities that have quite different landscapes, economies, and land use issues, but that share a similar approach to converting their local vision into land use policies.

### A Policy from a Lakeshore Village

The first example comes from the rural lakeshore village of Hauser, Idaho. After a series of visioning and educational events, the Hauser Planning and Zoning Commission sponsored a three-month series of work sessions, each of which focused on a particular part of the community's vision. One result of this planning process is that Hauser requires a large buffer between development and streams. Let's see how that requirement is based on the one-to-one principle of policy development.

Policy statements in the Hauser plan have two parts: a goal, and a series of strategies for the implementation of that goal. Taken together, the goals compose a detailed vision statement. Here's an excerpt from Hauser's Water Quality goal:

Hauser Lake is the visual focus and center of activity in our community. Protecting the quality of its waters is the greatest single concern addressed by this comprehensive plan ... Water quality protection was also the principal criterion used in delineating critical open space areas. As the Water Quality Plan map ... shows, most of the critical open space areas are wetlands, which serve an essential filtering function for water entering Hauser Lake. More information is provided in the planning background document ...

Note the goal's references to a map and to a "planning background document." As this brief excerpt suggests, the Hauser planning effort featured extensive research on water quality.

Hauser Lake Landscape Unit: Description. The Hauser Lake landscape unit is the most complex in the planning area, including the approximately 625 acre lake itself, the associated wetlands, and uplands that are transitional both to the Upper Watershed and the Rathdrum Prairie.

Hauser Lake supports warm and cold water fisheries (species include ...) and provides thousands of hours of angling recreation. The lake is shallow with a maximum depth of 40 feet and a mean depth of 21. Different studies have reached different conclusions about the trophic status of Hauser Lake, but agree that



*Small groups at work during Ross County, Ohio's, kickoff of its Smart Growth planning effort.*

the quality of its waters is highly vulnerable to upstream land disturbance or other sources of additional nutrients. Interested readers can find more information on the lake in ...

At this point, the plan clearly demonstrates two things: the importance of Hauser Lake to the community, and the connection between the health of the lakeside wetlands and tributary streams and continuing water quality in the lake. This Water Quality implementation strategy expands the connections to a particular planning tool.

Protect Streams and the Lakeshore. The *Hauser Development Code* should establish corridors that remain undeveloped, except for necessary road and utility crossings, along Hauser Lake and all streams, intermittent and perennial. These corridors should include the stream, associated wetlands, and a buffer that serves as a vegetated filter strip ...

Finally, here is a brief excerpt from the portion of the *Hauser Development Code* that implements this strategy:

**Sensitive Areas: Lakeshore and Stream Corridors.** The lakeshore or stream corridor includes the 100-year floodplain or special flood hazard area, all wetlands adjacent to the lake or stream, and the additional buffer area required by Table 1.

When someone considers building on a lakeshore lot in Hauser, it is easy to explain not only the buffer requirement, but also how that requirement is based in the plan and how the plan is firmly rooted in both the community's vision and the facts.

### **A Policy from a Midwestern County**

Our second example comes from Ross County, Ohio (See Case Study Three, page 49). Just months into the process, the county's Smart Growth Task Force wrote a vision statement that incorporated concerns voiced at the public forums and insight from the reports prepared by Ohio State University students. One of those concerns was about providing safe and adequate public facilities as rural residential development spread throughout the county. We will follow that thread throughout this example. Note the bold type.

Ross County will continue to grow and prosper as the center of a regional economy with continued availability of a variety of housing choices. The community will plan and direct growth to the extent that it can fairly balance the rights of landowners with community needs. As part of this planning effort, the entire community must work together for growth that stresses conservation of farmland and open space in rural areas as a way to preserve the local economy and to preserve our high quality of life. **In areas where housing and other development occurs, roads, sanitary sewer, recreational facilities, fire/EMS service, and other public services and facilities will be adequately and fairly provided.**

The task force then began developing the *Ross County Smart Growth Plan*. One of the three themes that emerged from the public forums and is reflected in the vision was "Fair and Smart Provision of Public Facilities."

A member of the Public Facilities Subcommittee of the Smart Growth Task Force told us that some of the most enlightening information they heard came from fire departments and emergency medical services (EMS) providers. Fire engine and ambulance drivers could not go full speed down main roads for fear of hitting someone backing out of a driveway. One fire department lost an engine into a ditch trying to pass oncoming traffic on a narrow, rural road. These concerns and technical information the task force gathered about road capacity led them to recommend the following policies:

#### 4. Public Facilities and Services

The county will put guidelines in place to help ensure that proposed development includes adequate public facilities ... development in rural areas will be expected to minimize its impact on public facilities and services, as well as to offset taxpayer costs of improvements ... Development guidelines should provide for review of road access ... and the overall quality of roads serving the site. **The ability of fire and EMS service to serve the area should also be considered ...**

##### Policies:

I. In order to minimize the various costs of serving new development, this development should be directed to designated growth areas where centralized wastewater treatment and system management, **improved road networks**, and urban services are available.

III. The intensity of rural development on a site shall be dependent upon the capacity of the soils to safely provide sewage treatment and **upon the capacity of the rural road network to safely accommodate additional traffic.**

VI. Lot and subdivision access shall be designed to promote the **safe and efficient flow of traffic on the county's roads.**

Following the principle of one-to-one correspondence will help you explain your policies to people who were not involved in their development. If someone has a question about a code requirement that applies to a proposed development, you will be able to point out why that requirement exists and how it is consistent with community values, as expressed in your local plan, and the facts at hand. Having one-to-one correspondence in a plan can also help local decision makers explain the need for particular public improvements.



*Ross County, Ohio, residents learn about rural planning techniques at the initial forum sponsored by the county and its partners.*

Well-documented plans are also defensible. To take just one example, Boone County, Illinois, used a Land Evaluation Site Assessment system in its review of proposed zoning map amendments. When its decision not to permit development of a productive farm was challenged, the Appellate Court of Illinois upheld the county's action, saying, "To begin with, it is quite clear that Boone County has undertaken careful, comprehensive planning of its development, which bolsters the presumption of validity of a zoning restriction."

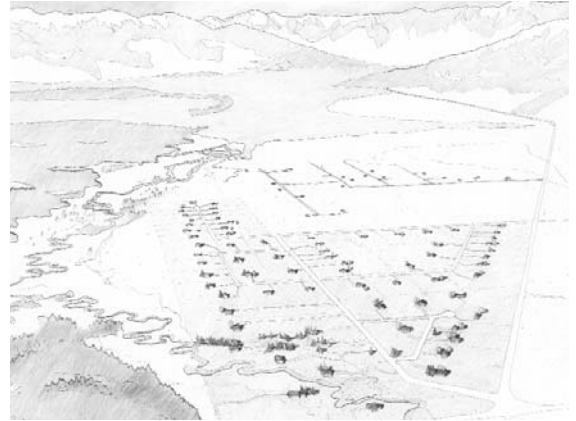
The next three chapters tell you what growth management tools might be used to implement your policies. As you think about which tools will be most suitable for your community, remember that all of them must be based on well-designed land use policies.



These three illustrations show alternative patterns of residential development around Hebgen Lake, Montana, shown above, resulting from different zoning proposals.

### Visualizing Policies

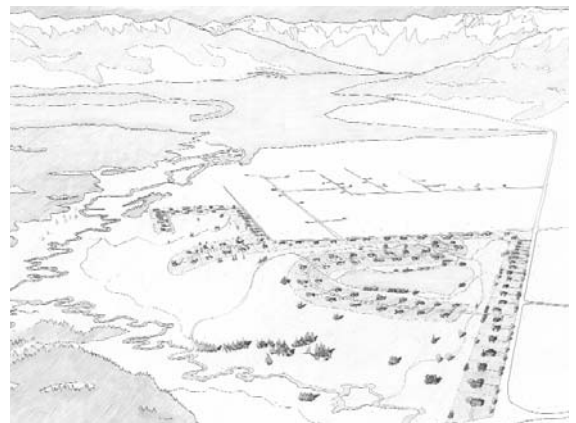
Many communities put land use policies into visual form. A future land use map may be the most common element in local plans. Such a map can effectively summarize a community's vision, but only if it reflects and is accompanied by written policies that provide more specific and detailed guidance for future land use decisions. There are also other ways to visualize policies. Drawings or computer simulations showing what type of development will result from proposed policies can help people understand their choices in ways that words sometimes cannot.



Status quo grid land-use pattern



50 percent open space



70 percent open space



## CASE STUDY THREE

### Ross County, Ohio

#### GETTING ALL THE INFORMATION

This case study shows how one community applied the hallmarks explained in Chapters 5 and 6.

#### BACKGROUND

By 1999, Ross County was experiencing unprecedented growth. Dispersed rural development was overwhelming water, sewer, and road systems. Longtime residents were concerned about the loss of productive farmland and the fragmentation of the historic landscape that is encouraged by an antiquated Ohio law which exempts lots over five acres from subdivision review.

Beginning in January, 1999, concerned organizations sponsored a series of Smart Growth Forums to discuss the county's growth. This coalition included the Ross County Farm Bureau, the county planning commission, the Chillicothe-Ross County Chamber of Commerce, Ohio State University Extension, the Board of County Commissioners, and the county's Township Clerks and Trustees Association.

The first meeting attracted more than 100 participants. After a presentation about planning in rural communities, the group chose issues to discuss at the next meeting. These included farmland preservation, roads, property rights, and development regulations. The next forum was equally well attended. The three main issues identified at these events—infrastructure, rural issues, and development—guided the activities of a Smart Growth Task Force for the next two years.

#### ACTION

The Task Force was formed to determine which growth issues should be addressed and to recommend ways of doing so. Over the course of two years, the 17 members pored over the ideas and opinions collected at the Smart

#### A Few Facts About Ross Country

County Seat: Chillicothe  
2000 County Seat Population: 21,796

2000 Population: 73,345  
Percent Change since 1990: 5.8%

Land Area: 688 sq. mi.  
Persons per square mile: 106.6  
Landscape: rolling farmland in the NW,  
Appalachian foothills in the SE

1999 Median Household Income: \$33,580  
1999 Percent below poverty: 14.6%

Sources of Income:

- Government (prisons) – 18.63%
- Transfer Payments – 17.55%
- Manufacturing (paper) – 17.28%
- Dividends, Rent, Interest – 15.34%
- Services – 13.05%
- Retail Trade – 6.62%
- Transportation, Communications, and Public Utilities – 5.41%
- Commuting – 3.11%
- Construction – 2.74%
- Wholesale Trade – 1.72%
- Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate – 1.55%
- Agriculture – 0.10%
- Mining – Not disclosed

Growth Forums and other sources of public input, and combined them with facts about the local economy and landscape. They met regularly for four- to five-month periods, then took two-month breaks to keep energy and enthusiasm from flagging.

The Smart Growth Task Force—which included real estate agents, lawyers, farmers, builders, chamber of commerce members, and the county extension agent—prepared a vision statement and goals for what would become the *Ross County Smart Growth Plan*. That plan will

be further discussed in Chapter 6. Here we concentrate on how the county gathered information as a basis for its plan.

### **Background Reports**

Students in the Department of City and Regional Planning at Ohio State University prepared initial background reports covering housing and economic development, population, infrastructure, and the environment. These were followed by the more detailed studies described below.

### **Survey**

The Task Force distributed a survey at the 1999 county fair. A total of 150 completed forms were returned. Respondents were asked to rank five attributes—schools, rural atmosphere, quality of life, closeness to shopping/entertainment/retail, historical character—and a series of issues, including the protection of natural resources and farmland. In addition, they were asked to place themselves on a property rights scale, ranging from “I should be able to do whatever I want” to “The community should have a say in what happens.” The top ranked attribute was “rural atmosphere.” The top ranked issue was “protection of farmland.” More people placed themselves on the community end of the property rights scale than at the other. These results gave the Task Force added support.

### **Mapping**

The county’s GIS specialist produced colorful maps to help Task Force members visualize critical areas. These included the Relative Corn Yield for Ross County based on Soil Productivity, Existing Roads by Number of Lanes, Suitability for Individual Wastewater Treatment Systems, and Water Lines. These maps helped the Task Force make recommendations for future growth areas that would meet their goals of conserving prime farmland and guiding growth to the existing system of roads and utilities.

### **Cost of Community Services (COCS) Study**

Ross County retained a consultant to prepare a COCS study, which focused on the two

fastest growing townships and compared what different land uses (residential, industrial, commercial, and agricultural/open) consume in public services to the amount they pay in property taxes. It found that, in 1998, commercial, industrial, and agricultural/open uses consumed less in services than they paid in property taxes. Residential uses consumed roughly the same amount they paid in taxes. The group concluded that this showed a good mix of uses, but also reflected a rural level of service that will have to change as more homes are built in rural areas.

### **Land Evaluation Site Assessment (LESA) System**

In order to provide a systematic tool to rank individual parcels in agricultural importance, the county obtained a grant from Ohio’s state farmland protection program and retained a consulting firm to develop a LESA system. This system is based on the 1996 NRCS *LESA Guidebook*, which allows communities to address specific goals and local landscape features, rather than following a national model. LESA systems have two components, as follows:

- The Land Evaluation (LE) component evaluates the physical characteristics of croplands, such as soil type and, in Ross County, corn yield. In Ross County (this varies from place to place), the LE makes up one-third of the total score for a given parcel.
- The Site Assessment (SA) component makes up the remaining two-thirds of the score, and accounts for such factors as parcel size, the use of surrounding parcels, zoning, drainage, the presence of critical resources such as wetlands and riparian areas, and proximity to water and sewer lines. Some SA factors measure a site’s agricultural potential (parcel size), while others reflect development pressure.

The LESA system will help landowners decide which parts of their holdings to develop in an open space pattern. It can also be used to prioritize parcels for the state’s purchase of development rights program, which requires

participating counties to have a farmland protection plan.

## RESULTS

Writing the *Ross County Smart Growth Plan* required Task Force members to analyze seemingly endless material. The end result, however, is a studied plan based on the facts and reflecting a thorough understanding of the challenges facing the county.

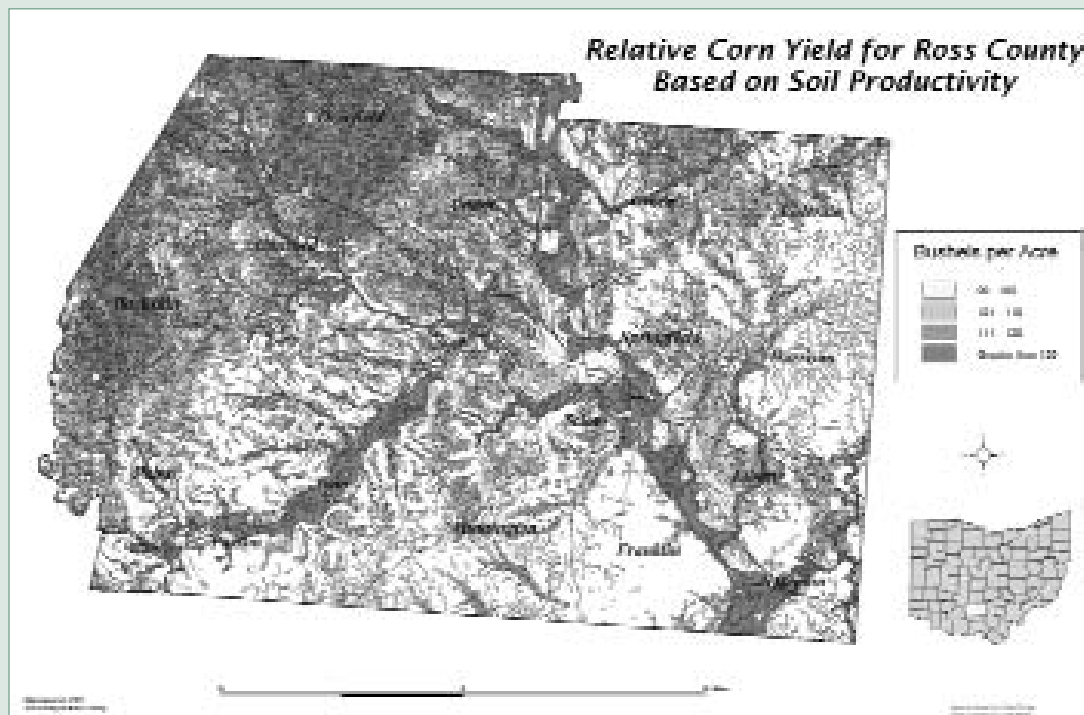
Task force members report that at least half of their group began the process skeptical of the need for planning. However, once they came up with their vision, “there was a purpose,” and skeptics began to see the potential for a win-win solution. The *Ross County Smart Growth Plan* has already been used to guide decisions at the town and township level, but while they initiated and supported its development, the Board of County Commissioners has not yet adopted the plan. Task force members are working to market it to the people of the county.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- use a variety of techniques to involve diverse interests
- develop a shared vision and use it to guide the planning process
- tailor tools to fit your community
- having good information makes a difference to citizens who are involved, especially if you ...
  - answer the questions people ask;
  - use a variety of media to present information; and
  - continue to educate the public.

It’s a beautiful plan.  
Beautiful work.

Carl Jones,  
Task Force Member and former skeptic







SECTION IV

Strategies and  
Tools for  
Managing  
Growth and  
Change



*Protecting irrigation works from conflict with development is an important part of Fremont County, Idaho's, planning efforts.*

**Q.** Do you know what tools are available to help your community manage growth and change, and how to tailor those tools to your local needs?

**A.** Successful communities effectively manage growth and change by ...

- using a wide variety of both regulatory and nonregulatory strategies and tools to protect or enhance local assets;
- promoting land use patterns that provide housing opportunities for all members of the community, preserve open space, and sustain viable central business districts and traditional neighborhoods;
- anticipating the infrastructure needs generated by population growth and land use change and ensuring that the costs of growth are borne, to the extent reasonable, by those who benefit most directly from the development it sparks; and
- seeking additional authority or financial and technical assistance as necessary.

Having learned about your local economy and its roots in the community's cultural and natural assets, it is now time to return to your vision, finalize your policies, and decide what strategies and tools you can use to implement them. Every community will need to select a variety of strategies and tools that reflect its unique vision.

As you investigate the strategies and tools available to help your community work toward its vision, be sure to include voluntary approaches and incentives, as well as sensible regulations. Successful communities find positive ways to direct the change they know is coming.

### *The "Off-the-Shelf" Approach Costs an Idaho County 10 Years*

Managing growth can be controversial. The extensive subdivision activity documented in the introduction to Section III led Fremont County, Idaho, to attempt to adopt a comprehensive plan and zoning in the late 1970s. Local planning and zoning commission members sought help from the Idaho Department of Commerce, which provided a model plan and ordinances. This "off the shelf" approach failed. The resulting controversy actually led the county to disband the planning and zoning commission. A new commission was not appointed for nearly a decade.

The costs of development led Fremont County back into a planning process in the late 1980s. This time the county tailored a four-year effort to fit its landscape and people. A series of educational sessions with the planning and zoning commission was followed by the appointment of citizen advisory committees for each of the county's three distinct geographic areas. These committees worked with the county's consulting planner to develop plan policies and performance standards for land division and development in their areas. The county also coordinated its planning effort with those of the Targhee National Forest, the Medicine Lodge Resource Area of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and several small incorporated cities.

It took dozens of public meetings, but the resulting plan and development code were adopted without one person speaking in protest at the final hearing. Like other successful communities, Fremont County achieved its goals by developing its own unique approach to public involvement and finding the implementation tools best suited to its needs.

Chapter 7 introduces growth management tools. Chapter 8 shows how communities have used those tools to promote healthy land use patterns. Chapter 9 explains how communities anticipate and address the need for new or improved public facilities and services. Chapter 10 reminds readers that state law limits the list of tools communities can use to regulate land use and to finance the costs of growth. The chapters in this section will help you make that linkage by introducing you to some of the strategies communities can use to implement their plans.

# CHAPTER 7

## Link Policies with Growth Management Strategies and Tools

A compelling vision may influence decisions, but consistent implementation requires the adoption and use of a variety of growth management strategies and tools. This chapter introduces the most important possibilities.

When most people hear about growth management tools, they think of land use regulations, or maybe impact fees, but the slate of tools is much wider than that. Your community can influence and direct growth using education, incentives, and the investments it makes in public facilities, as well as land use regulations.

### *Voluntary compliance is the best kind*

Earlier chapters emphasized the importance of sharing information during the planning process. Education is also an implementation strategy. There are many ways to keep people informed about your local planning process and to encourage their support and cooperation in implementation. We have found that most people who actually understand your community's vision will gladly help work toward it.

### SHARING INFORMATION - EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR REALIZING YOUR COMMUNITY'S VISIONS

#### Let People Know What You're Doing

Your local planning commission or department should consider distributing a quarterly newsletter or, at least, an annual report to the community. See Chapter 9 for more on annual reports. It may also be helpful to hold an annual or biennial review of your plan and its implementation.

#### Explain It in Plain English

Many communities publish brochures explaining the most commonly applicable parts of their land use regulations. Straightforward, well-illustrated explanations of the rules governing accessory buildings, fences, home occupations, and similar common structures and uses can save staff time and reduce frustration for residents who have basic questions.

#### Inform Newcomers

Some rural communities and university extension services have produced guidebooks to help urban newcomers understand the realities of country living. Perhaps the most interesting is the "Code of the West" distributed in Larimer County, Colorado. The **Resources** for this chapter direct you to that and similar examples. Helping people understand the place to which they have come encourages willing compliance with right-to-farm, water quality, and other policies.

#### Show People What Good Development Looks Like

Encourage good development by guiding people to examples. The Sonoran Institute's publication, *Building From the Best of Tucson*, highlights local examples of good development. Many communities also produce handbooks for developers. See the **Resources** for this chapter for a link to one example: the *Rural Development Handbook* from Muskego, Wisconsin.

#### Continue the Conversation

Local governments or respected community organizations can sustain the civic conversation begun during the planning process by sponsoring educational forums that prepare people to address local issues.

### INCENTIVES: VOLUNTARY LAND CONSERVATION STRATEGIES FOR REALIZING YOUR COMMUNITY'S VISION

Many communities want to sustain farming, ranching, fishing, logging, and other traditional rural enterprises, not just for their contribution to the local economy but because experienced stewardship of private lands is often the best way to protect scenic open

## How can you help citizens of your community visualize good development?

Case Study One (page 19) describes how the Custer Heritage Committee in Custer County, Colorado, has sponsored discussions of voluntary land conservation tools, the costs of growth, and the planning process. Case Study Two (page 33) shows the tremendous impact education had on development in the Grand Traverse Bay region, Michigan; see *New Designs'* development guidebook, educational workshops, and model development program. *New Designs'* peer site review and model development programs (Resources, Chapter 4) are also excellent examples of how to illustrate good development.

space and community character. Voluntary action has provided protection “in perpetuity” for thousands of acres of open lands throughout the U.S. There are also less permanent voluntary tools that can help communities manage land use change by working cooperatively with landowners.

### Use the Tax System

It may seem incongruous to list taxation under “Voluntary Tools,” but the programs described here are voluntary in the sense that a landowner may elect to participate. Most states provide for the differential assessment of productive farm and, sometimes, forest and other open lands. Participating landowners pay property taxes on the value of their land in its current use rather than on its full fair market value.

- Differential assessment comes in two forms: preferential assessment and deferred taxation. Preferential assessment simply subsidizes continuing agricultural or forest production. The tax break ends when the land is converted to another use. Deferred taxation requires payment of some portion of the taxes that would have been paid on the property’s full fair market value if the property is converted out of production. More about differential assessment can be found in *Saving America’s Farmland: What Works* and *Holding Our Ground*, listed in the **Resources** for this chapter. Your local tax assessor should be able to explain your state’s program.
- Counties in the State of Washington can link taxation and local planning goals by offering differential assessment to the owners of other open lands, including wetlands and shorelines.

To do so, the county must adopt a public benefits rating system (PBRS) to determine which lands are eligible open space. The PBRS will be based on the county’s land use policies. As an example, San Juan County currently assesses more than 660 parcels and 17,000 acres as open space, providing a helpful incentive for landowners to maintain scenic shoreline and other resources.

- Instead of using differential assessment, Michigan provides income tax credits against property taxes paid to farmers who agree not to convert their land to other uses for at least 10 years. A link to more details on the Michigan program is provided in the **Resources** for this chapter.

### Encourage Agricultural Districts

California, Wisconsin, Maryland, Utah, and several other states allow farmers and ranchers to voluntarily form agricultural districts. Each state’s agricultural districting law is unique, so your first step in exploring this tool should be to read the statute. A summary and citations are provided in the American Farmland Trust’s *Saving America’s Farmland: What Works*. In general, forming an agricultural district protects farmers from government actions, such as the creation of special assessment districts that would adversely affect their ability to operate. Being in an agricultural district may also qualify a landowner for benefits like participation in a state-funded purchase of development rights program.

### Encourage Conservation Easements

A conservation easement is an interest in real property that limits the use of the land in specific ways and that can be enforced by a land trust—a nonprofit land conservation organization—or a government agency. Landowners who are committed to continuing agriculture on their farm or ranch, or to maintaining the open lands that are part of their lifestyle and the character of their community, have sold or donated thousands of acres of conservation easements throughout the nation. Each conservation easement is tailored to fit the land and the needs of the family that owns it, but generally the owners agree to remove most of the “development rights” from the property (it is common to retain a few building sites for family members) and leave it in agricultural production or open space. There are two ways conservation easements happen:

- Donating a conservation easement to a

qualified nonprofit organization is a charitable gift that can result in significant federal and, in places, state tax benefits, if the landowner is able to take advantage of those benefits. The **Resources** for this chapter direct you to the Sonoran Institute's publication, *Preserving Working Ranches*, which provides an overview of landowners' options. There are also links to the American Farmland Trust, the Land Trust Alliance, and the Trust for Public Lands in the **Resources** section.

- Not every landowner can afford to donate a conservation easement. Several states and numerous local governments have established and funded purchase of development rights (PDR) programs, in which they fund the acquisition of conservation easements from willing sellers. Two of the best known state programs are Maryland's and Pennsylvania's, which provide significant state funding for local PDR. There are also local PDR programs. Routt County, Colorado, offers an example from a rural place, as does Peninsula Township in the Grand Traverse Bay region of Michigan. The **Resources** for this chapter guide you to more information on PDR programs, including an annual list of new open space programs. Note that any community considering a PDR program will want to have a way to set priorities for purchases. This need should be anticipated in your planning effort, possibly through the development of a Land Evaluation Site Assessment system, as described in Chapter 5.

## INCENTIVES: VOLUNTARY REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES FOR REALIZING YOUR COMMUNITY'S VISION

Land conservation is not the only local goal that can be advanced through voluntary means. You may also be able to offer incentives for downtown revitalization, the rehabilitation or construction of housing in older neighborhoods, and other private sector actions that help realize your community's vision. It is important to remember that redevelopment is growth, too!

### Offer Appropriate Tax Incentives

Many communities can use the tax system to encourage development consistent with their vision. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is one way to do so. TIF allows a community to direct some portion of the

## Get to Know Your Local Land Trust

From the Marin Agricultural Land Trust in California to the Great Auk Land Trust in Maine, there are more than 1,200 land trusts working to help landowners protect the productivity and character of their communities. Few local plans take notice of land trusts and their ability to help landowners explore options other than development. But if the donation of conservation easements on croplands, shorelines, or other special lands would advance the goals of your plan, let landowners know that they may have options other than development.

## How can your community encourage voluntary land conservation?

A local application of Maryland's PDR program, including agricultural districts, is described in Case Study Four (page 67).

property taxes collected in a designated redevelopment area to projects in that area, rather than to the general fund. TIF is often used to improve streets, sidewalks, and utilities, and to install amenities such as trees in areas where a community is encouraging private sector investors to restore buildings or open businesses. Be sure to check your statutes before deciding you can use this tool, as the ability to offer tax incentives varies considerably from state to state. You should also ensure that the use of TIF or other tax incentives truly is consistent with your community's vision and policies.

### Revitalize Existing Neighborhoods

Channeling development into existing neighborhoods is often the best way a community can grow. Redeveloping a central business district or a residential neighborhood does require many tools, however. It can feature a Main Street program, as described in Chapter 4; the use of tax increment financing; the use of public housing programs; investments in new infrastructure; and changes in land use regulations to make redevelopment a more appealing investment. Chapter 8 describes a downtown revitalization effort in Evanston, Wyoming.

## Can You Do It All With Incentives?

No. Education, voluntary land conservation, and other non-regulatory strategies are appealing ways to ensure that a place retains its character into the future. But their use is almost always limited by their cost. Communities must also acknowledge that some people will never share, or even respect, your community's vision. Without adequate regulation, unilateral decisions—which may be made by people who have never even visited your community—will determine your course into the future, regardless of how much you invest in building a shared vision or in voluntary approaches and incentives. Note also that sensible regulations encourage voluntary land conservation. Landowners who might donate or sell a conservation easement will know that the community is serious about maintaining the landscape their gift or sale of an easement would help protect.

### Offer Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is critical to the health of every local economy. It is an asset some communities can market, and a challenge some are struggling to meet. Keith Charters of the New Designs for Growth program told us that housing affordability is the greatest challenge in the Grand Traverse Bay region of Michigan; this is true of virtually every community in the nation. The **Resources** for this chapter direct you to USDA's Rural Housing Services and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, as well as the *Housing and Community Development Knowledgeplex*, which offers a wealth of information on housing affordability and finance.

Using incentives like PDR and the redevelopment programs described here builds on what we said in Section 1: Your community's vision must be a positive one. You can also encourage the type of development you want with strategic investments in public facilities, as described in the next section.

### PUBLIC FACILITIES PLANNING - A KEY TO REALIZING YOUR COMMUNITY'S VISION

Every community's planning effort should result in a clear understanding of what new or improved public facilities will be needed to support a viable

local economy and healthy quality of life, while accommodating anticipated growth. It should also address the critical question of how those new or improved facilities will be paid for. Chapter 9 describes the public facilities planning process and some of the tools used to finance the costs of growth.



### Protect Property Rights with Land Use Regulation

Land use regulation is the most common and effective way in which counties, towns, and cities protect citizens' property rights. Without an appropriate level of regulation, people's investment in a farm, home, or business may be severely damaged or diminished by the actions of thoughtless neighbors, or even by people miles upstream or upwind. Note that not every regulatory tool described here is available to local governments in every state; check your statutes.

### REGULATORY STRATEGIES FOR PROTECTING NATURAL AND CULTURAL ASSETS

Land use regulation may be the most common source of controversy for local governments. The controversy can be ideological. Americans have such a strong attachment to property rights that some of us forget that the use of our land must be balanced with others' enjoyment of theirs. More often, however, we find that controversies about land use regulation stem from practical frustrations: from local regulations that are hard to understand, from local development reviews that take too long, and from a failure to tailor regulations to fit the community. Taking time to build the one-to-one correspondence between facts, policy, and regulations explained in Chapter 6 is one of the best ways to minimize controversy about your local land use regulations. The educational strategies listed earlier in this chapter may also help.

### Right-To-Farm Laws

A right-to-farm law insulates agricultural operators from claims that their lawful operations are nuisances. Most states have such laws; see the American Farmland Trust's *Saving American Farmland: What Works* for a list. Many local governments also address the right to farm. Fremont County, Idaho, for example requires new developments to manage weeds (perhaps the most common local right-to-farm provision) and respect the irrigation systems that support most of its

crop production. The county also requires anyone building a new home in a rural area to explicitly acknowledge the right of neighboring farmers to continue lawful operations. Local “right-to” regulations can also offer some protection for logging operations. In considering this tool, remember that it has very limited scope. It does not protect rural landowners from liability claims, trespass, illegal dumping in fields or ditches, or many of the other conflicts that occur when residential development moves into agricultural areas.

### Land Use Regulations

The purpose of land use regulations is to guide development in harmony with the community’s vision. A few states, such as Colorado, authorize local governments to adopt any reasonable type of land use regulation. Most states still authorize only “zoning.” We will use the term “zoning” from this point forward, but keep in mind that zoning is not so much a specific tool as it is a strategy that can employ a variety of tools, including zoning districts, performance standards, conditional or special use permits, and site plan or design review. The combination of these tools your community adopts should flow directly from its vision and land use policies. We can only make some basic points here.

- Defensible regulations are based on a sound visioning and policy development process. As Chapter 6 explained, try to maintain a one-to-one correspondence between your regulations and your vision and policies.
- Focus on what’s important! Much of the resistance to local land use regulation little to do with important community goals. It is a reaction to detailed standards governing things that affect people’s everyday lives like outdoor storage and keeping livestock on residential lots.
- Good procedures are essential! Your local development code should give everyone involved in the process of development review—the applicant, the neighbors, and the decision makers—a clear, step-by-step understanding of how decisions will be made and enforced. Use flowcharts, checklists, and similar aids to keep development review on track.
- Be positive! Discussions of land use regulations usually focus on the restrictions they impose. Reframing the discussion by showing people examples of what type of development proposed regulations will permit can be helpful. Chapter 8 briefly explains how some communities promote open space development as a way



American Farmland Trust

*This ranch is part of Routt County, Colorado’s, open space program.*

### *You’re Taking My Property!*

Land use regulation has been part of American history from the beginning. Rules about how to build a town came to what is now New Mexico in 1598 and with the settlers of New England a few years later. An abundant new world and a small population fostered a mythology of unfettered property rights that has persisted into more crowded times. The notion that one may do precisely as he or she pleases with one’s land has always been counterbalanced, however, by our law of property rights. State and federal courts have consistently upheld reasonable land use regulations; very few local regulations have ever been found to “take” private property. You should be aware of how any regulation you propose impacts property owners, and avoid depriving a landowner of any reasonable use of his or her property. If you find that very strict regulations will be required to achieve your goals, you should consult with an attorney who specializes in land use law. Basic references on land use law are offered in the **Resources** for this chapter.

of protecting resources, while allowing landowners to take advantage of the demand for building sites in attractive landscapes.

- Use incentives! It is possible to build incentives for good development practices into zoning. These usually come in the form of density bonuses, which allow a developer to build additional dwelling units or more square feet of commercial space in exchange for protecting open space, providing affordable housing units, providing amenities like landscaped buffers between different uses, or providing infrastructure that benefits the entire community.

### Subdivision Regulations

Subdivision regulations set standards for the division, platting (platting creates an official map of a parcel, showing lots, streets, and other features) and development of land. Every community should have them, but remember that subdivision regulations do not work well alone. Subdivision regulation is intended to be a technical review that ensures a development is properly surveyed and has streets, utility rights-of-way, and other functional features that meet the community's adopted standards. Use it in combination with land use policies and regulations that let landowners and developers know what pattern of development is consistent with the local vision and values before they make a significant investment in a plan for their property or acquire a site for development.

### Transfer of Development Rights

The transfer of development rights (TDR) is an alluring but complicated growth management tool. The goal of TDR is to mitigate the impact of a restrictive regulation by allowing affected owners to transfer a right to develop that they cannot use on their property to another location. TDR has been used to protect farmland and sensitive areas such as wetlands in New Jersey's Pinelands. The lands on which development is restricted are called "sending areas," while places where transferred development rights can be used are called "receiving areas." Mandatory TDR will work only where there is both a strong market for more development rights and the political will to designate receiving areas where intense development will be permitted. TDR can also be used as a voluntary option. This would allow, for example, a landowner who has a parcel of sensitive or productive land to transfer development rights to another, noncontiguous parcel he or she also owns. The **Resources** for this chapter guide you to more information on TDR.

### Growth Boundaries

Urban growth boundaries (UGBs) are part of Oregon's and Washington's statewide land use programs and have been used by communities in other states. Pennsylvania communities are authorized, for example, to identify Designated Growth Areas, Future Growth Areas, and Rural Resource Areas, resulting in a series of growth boundaries. A growth boundary is a line beyond which the community will not extend "urban" services such as central water or sewerage. This policy may be reinforced by zoning that allows only very low-density development outside the growth boundary. Growth boundaries may also be used only as a capital facilities planning tool.

### Adequate Public Facilities Ordinances (APFO)

Rather than drawing a line on a map, some communities require that development of a parcel of land wait until adequate road capacity, sewerage, and other facilities are available. To be defensible, such an ordinance must be linked to a capital facilities planning process, as described in Chapter 9. The **Resources** for this chapter direct you to more information about growth boundaries and APFO's.

You now understand how many different strategies and tools can be used to help your community protect its natural and cultural resources and, by doing so, enhance its economy. Linking facts, policy, and the strategies you need will require a lot of discussion—remember the four-year planning process in Fremont County, Idaho—but a patient, inclusive planning process can make it happen. Chapter 8 provides some specific examples of how communities have realized their goals.

## ***Performance Zoning - A Better Approach for Rural Communities?***

Author's Note: *I will remember the planning workshop (just where isn't important) where a farmer stood up and said, "If you draw this zoning boundary down this road, my neighbor will become a millionaire, and I, I will still be raising onions."*

To repeat a point, zoning is not just one tool. It is a package of techniques you adapt to local needs. Many rural communities have found that the conventional approach does not, at least not entirely, suit them and have turned to what we call the performance approach to land use regulation.

Communities that use the performance approach evaluate proposed developments using a checklist of standards. The standards on the checklist list reflect the community's vision and land use policies and may address any topic of concern from wildlife habitat and wildfire hazards to road capacity and sewage disposal. The performance approach often incorporates maps, but the lines through the landscape are based on terrain features or the varying character of neighborhoods within the jurisdiction. The advantages of this approach include:

- it is easier to maintain a correspondence (remember Chapter 6) between your policies and your regulations;
- it is easier to be positive, telling prospective developers what the community DOES want, as much as what it doesn't;
- it is easier to accommodate or even encourage mixed-use development, where that is appropriate; and
- it is easier to incorporate density bonuses or other incentives for development that helps the community provide affordable housing, protect open space, or achieve other goals.

Setting up performance-based regulations requires some effort and professional expertise, but the result will be regulations that are more accurate in reflecting your community's landscape, needs, and vision. The Resources for this chapter direct you to more information.

## CHAPTER 8

# Promote Healthy Land Use Patterns

The land use policies your community implements will play a major role in determining its future livability and its prospects for prosperity. The policies you adopt and the strategies you put into action should reflect the unique history of how people have used the land and lived together in your community and the vision that builds on that history.

This means that each community will need its own combination of the strategies and tools described in Chapter 7. Still, certain issues arise in almost every planning effort. Chapter 9 addresses what is probably the most common: providing adequate public facilities and services. In this chapter, we briefly explore three others: providing affordable housing, maintaining open space, and sustaining or restoring the vitality of central business districts. All of these examples show how communities combine incentives, appropriate regulations, and public investments to channel entrepreneurial energy in ways that benefit everyone.



*In Colorado, Gunnison County's Rock Creek Village will eventually provide 58 units of affordable housing.*

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Housing is the least tractable of the issues discussed in this chapter. Federal, state, and local agencies, as well as nonprofit groups, administer numerous housing assistance programs. Yet millions of America's working families are paying more than half their

income to rent or buy a home. Some of the **Resources** listed at the end of this chapter document this reality at the national level.

Local governments address the need for affordable housing with two basic strategies:

- encouraging the private sector to build affordable units, either by reducing the costs of development or providing incentives, and
- where the private sector does not create enough affordable housing, providing housing, either by building units or helping families afford existing units.

In thinking about affordable housing strategies, remember that decent, affordable shelter for people with low and moderate incomes is not the only goal of such strategies. There will be no labor force for local businesses or institutions without affordable housing. Many communities also want to maintain social diversity. Having residents from all different walks of life and with many different backgrounds and opinions means having many different types of housing.

### Start With Some Facts

Assess your local housing situation using Census data, as suggested in Chapter 3. The Census will tell you how many and what type of housing units your community had in 2000 and how many of those units were vacant. It also provides information on housing conditions, including crowding and costs. The Census can be updated, to some extent, using building permit and property tax records, but the best way to track housing supply and costs through time is to work with local real estate people. They can tell you how many units are available for rent, how many homes are on the market, and current rents and prices.

### Compare Costs and Incomes

One of the best ways to assess the need for affordable housing programs is to compare current housing costs with current local income levels. The **Resources** for this chapter tell you how to find the area median household income data the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) publishes for use in determining eligibility for its programs.

## Encourage Affordable Housing

Community land use decisions affect the cost of housing. If your local land use regulations require excessively wide streets or other improvements that add more cost than function, changes may be in order. Likewise, regulations should not unduly restrict housing choices. Does your community have ample areas for smaller lots and multi-family housing? Beyond ensuring that your regulations don't add unnecessarily to costs or restrict housing choice, you may want to offer incentives for the construction of affordable housing. Some communities grant a density bonus—permission to build more units than the regulations would otherwise allow—for affordable housing. It may also be possible to alter building height, setback, and similar requirements to encourage construction of affordable units. Regulatory incentives must be thoughtfully designed to be effective. You will want to seek experienced professional help.

## Provide Affordable Housing

If its vision includes adequate, affordable housing for all citizens, your community may well have to get involved directly in providing housing. You can learn more about government housing programs at the Web sites listed in Chapter 7. The best way to implement these programs is often through nonprofit organizations. Most people know about the work of Habitat for Humanity. Another example is the Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), which is involved in projects throughout the West. RCAC also provides a four-page “Affordable Housing 101,” which you will find useful if you are not familiar with housing programs. RCAC projects demonstrate the partnerships between local agencies, nonprofits, and federal programs that are typically required to get affordable housing built. Rock Creek Village in Gunnison County, Colorado, for example, involved the Gunnison County Housing Authority, the City, RCAC, USDA's Rural Housing Service (which provided financing through its self-help housing program), and numerous volunteers who assisted the self-help families in building homes.



### Be True to Your Vision!

It is often argued that policies protecting natural and cultural assets or requiring developers to pay for

## The Community Reinvestment Act

Congress passed the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) in 1977 to encourage financial institutions to be responsive to the credit needs of low and moderate income residents of their communities. Banks are periodically examined for compliance; you should be able to find a report on your local banks at one of the web sites listed in the **Resources**. CRA has stimulated financing of affordable housing projects. One example is the creation of the Washington Community Reinvestment Association (WCRA), a consortium of banks that finances affordable housing projects throughout its state. WCRA's revolving loan funds currently total some \$105 million.

infrastructure will make housing unaffordable. **But experience shows that there is no inevitable conflict between housing affordability and the reasonable implementation of other community goals.** The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) amply demonstrates this fact. The Vermont legislature created this unique organization in the mid 1980's in response to the impacts of vacationers and new residents on both the cost of housing and the loss of open space. VHCB supports reinvestment in older housing in small towns and village centers, while protecting open space and wildlands. It has awarded more than \$142 million to local governments and nonprofits, creating 6,000 affordable housing units and conserving more than 300,000 acres. These investments have leveraged more than a half billion dollars from other public and private sources. Vermont's experience makes it clear that when a state or a community has sufficient breadth of vision, it can promote land use patterns that effectively balance its citizens' needs.

## OPEN SPACE

Every community is concerned with the way development changes the landscape. Homes pop up in hay meadows. Quiet country roads begin to hum with traffic. We all know that some change in land use is desirable. People need places to live, work, and shop. We also need space for outdoor recreation and inspiration, and a land base for the traditional rural industries that embody our local heritage and help support our economies.

## How can your community protect its open space assets?

Case Study Four (page 67) shows how the people of Kent County, Maryland, use a PDR program and other tools to keep croplands in production and protect their historic Eastern Shore landscape. Case Study Six (page 85) offers an excellent example of how Wallowa County, Oregon, uses local land use regulations to protect water quality and fisheries.

### *Quantity versus Quality in Public Lands Counties*

We occasionally run into westerners who ask, “Why protect more open space, our county is already ‘X’ percent public land?” It’s easy to understand why someone from a county that has limited private land would pose this question. But the old adage about real estate values—“location, location, location”—applies to open space, too. If a community needs a soccer field, that facility must be on level ground, near the homes of the children who will play there. It probably won’t be on public lands. Public rangelands provide forage for cattle or sheep and mule deer, and sweeping views. But they won’t produce alfalfa, protect water quality by filtering runoff, or offer habitat for yellow warblers like the streamside corridors that are mostly in private ownership. Public lands make major contributions to local quality of life and prosperity, but we know of no place where they are sufficiently diverse to meet a community’s open space needs.

Successful communities balance development and open space in accord with their vision. They acquire land, as necessary, to ensure that their residents enjoy neighborhood parks and trails linking their homes with regional parks or public lands. They sustain healthy working landscapes of crop, range, and forest lands by encouraging the donation of conservation easements and buying development rights. They also use well-designed land use regulations to guide development to suitable locations and encourage the preservation of open space.

### Invest in Open Space

The best way to protect open space is to buy it—if you need it for trails, parks, or other community uses—or to buy development rights. Chapter 7 and Case Study Four (page 67) explain conservation easements and Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs.

### Respect Natural Limitations

The character of your community’s landscape should be determined by the amount and intensity of development you permit. Base your regulations on the inventories called for in Chapter 5, and the use of suitability analysis to determine how much (or how little) development a particular landscape can accommodate. If yours is an agricultural community, a Land Evaluation Site Assessment system will be helpful.

- The most common approach is to limit lot sizes. The Milligan Canyon Zoning District in Jefferson County, Montana, for example, requires a minimum lot size of 640 acres. Unless you can make them large enough, however, minimum lot size is not the best tool for protecting resources. The exact location and extent of development on a parcel is often more important than the parcel’s size. The use of minimum lot sizes can also result in a monotonous development pattern that consumes more land than necessary for the amount of development permitted.
- If resource protection is your goal, it is often more effective to control the overall amount of development with an average density, but limit development to small parcels. Grant County, Washington, for example, limits residential development in its Agricultural Resource Lands Zoning District—which encompasses more than a million acres—to one unit per 40 acres, but allows building on as little as an acre. Kent County, Maryland (see Case Study Four, page 67), uses a similar approach, allowing one dwelling unit for every 30 acres in its Agricultural Zoning District, but confining development to 10 percent of the parcel.
- Open space ratios are another alternative to minimum lot sizes that can be useful. Open space ratios are more directly related to resource impacts. It has been found, for example, that there is reasonably direct relationship between impervious cover and the health of a watershed (see the **Resources** for this chapter for documentation). They also give landown-

ers more flexibility in design than minimum lot sizes. To cite one example, Rio Arriba County, New Mexico, protects its historic agricultural landscape by limiting development to no more than 30 percent of an irrigated parcel.

- Overlay zoning districts are often used to identify naturally hazardous and sensitive areas. Overlays do not alter the uses permitted (or prohibited) by the underlying zoning, but can add standards for resource protection. Overlays are also useful in protecting historic districts.
- The performance approach described in Chapter 7 allows you to most directly address the concerns expressed in your vision and land use policies. Fremont County, Idaho, sets average densities for different land types (stream corridor, productive cropland, etc.) and neighborhoods, then uses performance standards to discourage development of wetlands and stream corridors, areas where there is a risk of groundwater contamination, steep slopes, and productive croplands. The use of performance standards also allows the county to encourage open space development with density bonuses.

### Encourage Open Space Development

Open space development is a pattern of land use in which rural residential development is consciously balanced with open space protection. The **Resources** for this chapter direct you to two interesting examples from Minnesota—Jackson Meadow and The Fields of St. Croix—and to more general explanations of how open space development works, and how your local land use regulations can promote it. Encouraging open space development can help many communities implement their land use policies. Be sure to note, however, that it is NOT always an appropriate response to concerns about vanishing open space. Scattering clusters of homes throughout a commercial farming area may help preserve part of the cropland resource but ultimately result in serious conflict between the new residents and continuing farm operations.

### Economic Benefits of Protecting Natural and Cultural Assets

Open space protection and economic health are complementary goals. The **Resources** for this chapter list a summary of research on the economic value of open space from the Lincoln Institute for Land Policy. They also steer you to Alaska's Copper River



*Homes are carefully tucked into the landscape in Casas Arroyos, an open space development in Santa Cruz County, Arizona.*

Watershed Project, another example of a community that understands the connection between environmental quality—especially water quality—and economic health. Protection of cultural landscapes also yields substantial economic benefits to communities and the larger economy. The National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) has published a series of reports documenting these benefits in several communities and states. To give just one example, NTHP found that building preservation and Main Street projects generated hundreds of millions of dollars of economic benefits in North Carolina alone.

### CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS

Successful communities have healthy “Main Streets.” Most of them also have strip malls and big box stores, but have found a way to sustain their central business district even as the nature of retailing changes. The **Resources** for Chapter 4 include a link to the National Main Street Center and examples of Main Street programs. Here we briefly tell the story of a small town revitalization effort that you may find helpful and even inspiring.

#### Revitalization on the High Plains of Wyoming

Evanston is a city of some 11,000 in the southwestern corner of Wyoming, about 90 miles from Salt Lake City, Utah. This story begins in the 1980's, when



*Evanston, Wyoming's, downtown revitalization efforts revolve around Depot Square.*

development of nearby natural gas fields sparked explosive growth: Evanston's population leapt from 4,460 in 1970 to 10,903 in 1990. There were two catalysts for the city's revitalization efforts: a proposal to build a new post office outside the central business district and the gift of an historic passenger depot from the Union Pacific Railroad.

Political action kept the post office downtown, but retailers, restaurants, and bars began moving to the "strips" near the interstate exchanges. In response, the city established an urban renewal agency in 1985. The director attended a training conducted by the National Main Street Center in 1988 and returned to apply the four principles mentioned in Chapter 4: marketing, organization, design, and economic restructuring. With a downtown base provided by the post office, movie

theater, and city and county offices, the development of Depot Square and other renewal agency efforts paid off. New dining places were established and the old town hall was renovated for retail and office space (by a private developer, with financial assistance from the renewal agency). Depot Square is now a central gathering place that includes not only the depot, but other land the city acquired for parking, restrooms, a restored Chinese joss house (Evanston once had a sizeable Chinese population), and other meeting spaces and amenities. Downtown Evanston is visibly healthy today.

The city has used every possible source of funding for its revitalization efforts, including its own revenues, grants, and donations. Perhaps the most interesting is the annual "Renewal Ball," which requires the efforts of 80–100 volunteers, but has raised as much as \$41,000 in one night.

Evanston's efforts in the central business district have been complemented by habitat restoration and trail projects in the abandoned railroad yards along the nearby Bear River. Evanston also recently passed an ordinance regulating (though not eliminating) "big box" retail development. Revitalization will continue with the restoration of the old Union Pacific machine shop and roundhouse over the next several years.

The success of your planning effort will reflect your ability to tailor policies, strategies, and tools to fit the needs of your community. We hope this chapter has given you some ideas about how that is done. Your success will also mirror the breadth of your vision. Too many local planning processes are dominated by debates about "preservation versus development" or "open space versus jobs." The examples given here, which note how even a downtown revitalization effort can be supported by open space protection and development, make it clear that these debates say more about the combatants' lack of vision than they do about the possibilities for their communities.

Success has taken nearly 20 years, but people supported the city's efforts because they could see incremental progress. Citizens were involved both in building a consensus about what should be and raising funds to do it.

Jim Davis, City of Evanston, Administrative Assistant/Clerk



## CASE STUDY FOUR Kent County, Maryland

### PERPETUATING STEWARDSHIP

This case study shows how one community applied the hallmarks explained in Chapters 7 and 8.

### BACKGROUND

Kent County is the second oldest county in Maryland. Many colonial land grants predate the county's creation in 1642, and some of those are still owned by descendants of the original grantees. Over the years, there has been some anxiety about giving up any measure of control over something that has been a part of one's family for so long.

Anne Wilmer Hoon's farm, for example, has been in her family for more than 300 years. Still, she applied for her 307 acres to be placed under easement through the state purchase of development rights program and convinced her cousins to do the same with other portions of the original grant. "How do you keep a farm in the family for 300 years? You understand that you do not own the land. You are stewards of the land," Mrs. Wilmer Hoon says.

Kent County has incorporated that same ethic of stewardship into its planning process to achieve the lowest rate of farmland conversion in Maryland. Its planning strategy is firmly based in an agricultural ethic, with an eye toward a diverse economy. The vision statement, which was highlighted in Section I, describes the county's quality soils, topography, climate, woodlands, and tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay as elements that enrich the county's economy and quality of life and states very simply, "the County is committed to supporting agriculture."

### ACTION

In the years since the Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1996, Kent County has been steadily making good on its vision. In 2002, it



Kent County Dept. of Planning & Zoning

### A Few Facts About Kent County

County Seat: Chestertown  
2000 County Seat Population: 4,746

2000 Population: 19,197  
Percent Change since 1990: 7.6%  
Persons per square mile: 68.8

Land Area: 279 sq. mi.  
Landscape: Bayside of Eastern Shore of Maryland.  
Slightly rolling prime farmland, rarely exceeding 80 feet above sea level.

1997 Median Household Income: \$36,391  
1997 Percent below poverty: 10.7%

Sources of Income:  
Dividends, Interest, Rent – 38%  
Transfer Payments – 17%  
Services (hospital, college) – 14%  
Manufacturing – 6%  
Government – 6%  
Retail – 5%  
Agriculture – 4%  
Construction – 4%  
Transportation, Public Utilities – 4%  
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate – 2%  
Fishing – 0.2%

*One of the many farms protected under easement in Kent County, Maryland.*

## Kent County Easement Priority Formula Factors

- I. Soil Capability - 30 points
- II. Tillable Acreage - 20 points
- III. Development Pressure - 20 points
  - A) Proximity to existing developments - 15 points
  - B) Proximity to waterfront - 5 points
- IV. Proximity to District/Easement Properties - 15 points
- V. Size of Contiguous District/Easement Properties - 15 points
- VI. Size of Farm - 10 points
- VII. Number of Contiguous District/Easement Properties - 15 points
- VIII. Date of Application - 5 points

adopted new zoning regulations for the Agricultural Zoning District (AZD). It is the county's intent that "the sum of these areas consists of enough land to help maintain a market for the necessary agricultural support services in the County. In addition, the District is to provide for farm, home occupations, and cottage industries that are compatible with agriculture as a means to further diversify the County's economy."

The AZD applies to contiguous areas predominantly devoted to agriculture or forestry and principally composed of Class I, II, and III soils. Planner Carla Martin estimates that it encompasses 70 percent of the county's land area. When combined with the Resource Conservation District, which includes the Critical Areas (all land within 1000 feet of mean high tide), the total is closer to 85 percent. These areas are all slated for a very low level of development. The new regulations for the AZD specify that only 10 percent of a parcel can be developed. In addition, landowners are encouraged to form voluntary agricultural districts that will enable them to qualify for the state-supported and county-supervised purchase

of development rights (PDR) program.

Participation in the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program, which makes funds available to purchase conservation easements throughout the state, is further evidence of Kent County's commitment to supporting agriculture. The program is funded through state real estate transfer taxes. It is completely voluntary on the part of both landowners and counties, but has resulted in the protection of nearly 200,000 acres of farmland statewide. Each county is responsible for determining which lands will be recommended to the program.

The Kent County Planning Commission has appointed an Agricultural Land Preservation Board to review all applications and actions related to Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF). These include applications to establish agricultural preservation districts, sell easements, create lot exclusions, and subdivide properties in the program. In this way, decisions about the protected lands are coordinated and streamlined. The Board is composed of five members representing different parts of the county and is mainly made up of individuals who have some relationship to agriculture or forestry.

To qualify for the program, landowners must first form an agricultural preservation district. A district may include only one landowner, but must include at least 50 acres. Fifty percent of the soils must be Class I, II, or III or, if wooded, Class I or II. The landowner must sign a five year commitment not to develop before applying to have the land evaluated for easement purchase.

The Kent County Agricultural Land Preservation Board evaluates between 16-22 applications for easement purchase each year using a locally developed Easement Priority Formula. This is essentially a LESA system, as described in Chapter 5. The factors in the Easement Priority Formula are listed in the box below. Ties are broken by longevity of program participation.

The applications are then sent to the state and prioritized statewide. About 80 percent of

the applications Kent County approves and sends to the state result in offers for easement purchase, which landowners have the right to refuse. Because 33 percent of the county's soils are Class I, II, or III, land in Kent County is a high priority for agricultural land preservation. Price per acre is conspicuously absent from both the state and county prioritization formulas, because the program's goal is to preserve the best land under the most pressure. The state contracts for two independent appraisals of each property in order to make a fair offer.

When applying to sell an easement in Kent County, landowners have the option of creating lot exclusions, which are often reserved for existing or future building lots or farm building areas. This is an option particular to Kent County and is different from simply recording permitted future uses in the easement document. These exclusions are reviewed by the Kent County Agricultural Land Preservation Board. In addition, that Board reviews all future subdivisions of both the land included in the easement and the excluded lots.

Easement purchase by MALPF requires a 40 percent county match for the state funds. Kent County funds its program from the statewide Agricultural Transfer Tax, which is collected when farmland is sold or converted to any other use. Certified counties, including Kent, retain 75 percent of the tax collected in their jurisdiction. The county also accepts tax deductible donations to the program and sends out a donation form out in the real estate tax billings.

## RESULTS

Kent County has spent a lot of time informing the public about its actions to support agriculture and to reach other goals outlined in the vision. The Planning and Zoning Department issues annual reports on its activities: subdivisions, variances, and conditional uses approved; site plan reviews; and the latest numbers on farmland preservation. Requests for donations to support the county's participation in MALPF also include information about the program.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- use available authority and programs to their fullest
- start with a shared vision of the future
- understand and foster the relationship between a healthy economy and healthy environment
- support traditional industries when appropriate
- understand your natural and cultural assets
- use a variety of regulatory and nonregulatory tools to reach your goals

As a result, more than 12 percent of Kent County's land area is protected by some form of conservation easement. About half—10,370 of nearly 22,000 acres—is held by the MALPF, the land trust created by the Maryland General Assembly to hold easements purchased or donated through the agricultural land preservation program. Other easements are held by the Maryland Environmental Trust (also a state agency), the Eastern Shore Conservancy, and the American Farmland Trust.

Kent County's agricultural lands program has been well received. Landowners have applied for consideration for district formation and easement purchase at a steady pace since the first district was formed in 1984. In the past five years, the number of acres protected has averaged around 1,200 per year. Board members say the most common use of the money is the purchase of additional farmland, which often comes through the program in a few years. They say that the most frequently asked question about the program is, "How fast can I get my money?"

# CHAPTER 9

## Anticipate Infrastructure Needs

### *If You Build It, They Will Come*

Public investment has a powerful impact on the shape of a community. When you decide to make major road improvements, install water or sewer mains, or build a school, you are also deciding, consciously or not, where land will be developed. Public investment decisions should be consistent with the land use policies that are based in your community's vision.

Growth can bring many benefits to our communities: job opportunities, a wider variety of places to shop, even interesting new neighbors. Growth also has costs, including the costs communities incur in providing new and improved roads, water and sewer systems, schools, parks, fire stations, and other public facilities.

Your planning effort should help local officials and citizens understand what new and improved facilities and services will be required to support anticipated growth, while realizing your vision for the local quality of life. Everyone should also understand what impact providing that infrastructure will have on the local budget.

You can reach this understanding using the facilities planning process described in this chapter. That process often begins with an analysis of the fiscal impacts of growth. You then determine what new or improved facilities your community will need, estimate how much those facilities will cost, and decide how to pay.

### FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS - ACCOUNTING FOR THE COSTS OF GROWTH

Fiscal impact analysis calculates the public costs of accommodating a specific development, or type of development. We will describe two methods here.

- American Farmland Trust and others who are interested in protecting open space have completed hundreds of Cost of Community

Services (COCS) studies. COCS studies respond to the claim that replacing a cornfield or other open space with a residential subdivision will result in a net gain in revenues for local governments. COCS studies balance the increase in tax revenues that accompanies development against the expenditures that will be required to provide services to that development. Although there are exceptions, the answer is usually that agricultural and open space lands and commercial and industrial uses generate surplus revenues, while residential uses demand more in services (schools, fire-fighting, and police, etc.) than they generate in revenues. A typical COCS study would show farmland receiving roughly 25¢ in services for every \$1 in revenues it produces, while residential development requires about \$1.15 in services for every \$1 in revenues it generates. COCS studies have been subject to criticism, but as long as the research is carefully done, these studies provide a useful response to the question they are intended to answer. Problems can arise when the results are interpreted too broadly. The **Resources** for this chapter provide a link to the American Farmland Trust, which offers more information on COCS studies.

- Communities that are experiencing or anticipating significant growth should use a case study approach to fiscal impact analysis. This approach requires both a thorough understanding of the existing capacity of local public facilities and services, and a detailed dissection of the local budget. Using that information, you can (probably with the help of an experienced consultant) build a model that tells you how much a given type of development—residential, commercial, industrial—can be expected to generate in revenues over a period of years, and how much it will cost your community to provide the new or improved facilities and services the occupants of that development will require. The **Resources** for this

chapter include a link to an example from Archuleta County, Colorado. This fiscal impact case study, which was provided by the Rural Planning Institute, provides a detailed analysis of the impacts of a proposed 140-unit residential development on the county and the local fire, school, library, and water and sanitation districts (intergovernmental cooperation is essential for this kind of study). Each jurisdiction can see how the proposed development will contribute to demand for its services, whether it has adequate capacity to meet that demand, and whether the anticipated revenues will be sufficient to provide any additional capacity that will be needed.

As with other information gathering tasks, it is important to share what you learn from fiscal impact analysis throughout the community. Credible figures about the costs of development can be quite influential in community conversations about growth.

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMS

Fiscal impact analysis helps you understand and anticipate the costs of growth. It does not provide you with a plan for improving or building the specific facilities your community will need. You also need a capital improvements program (CIP). A CIP is a prioritized list of needed improvements and facilities, their estimated costs, and the proposed means of meeting those costs. Given its level of detail, a CIP usually extends only five or six years into the future, but is updated every year as part of the budgeting process. The steps in developing a CIP are listed below.

### Find Partners

We know of no community where a single agency or organization provides all of the facilities and services upon which people rely. Your CIP process will be stronger if you involve as many local service providers as possible, including both county and city governments, town, and special districts that provide school, fire protection, water and sewer systems, or other facilities.

### Project Demand

How do you estimate future demand for public facilities and services? As explained in Chapter 5, a build-out study tells you how much development is possible given the local land supply and current planning policies. It can also be coupled with a geographic analysis of building trends to help anticipate where new or improved facilities will be needed first.

## How can your community anticipate future infrastructure needs?

Case Study Five (page 77) shows how one rapidly growing rural community used the facilities planning process described here both to anticipate facilities needs and to provide a basis for impact fees that have helped build some of those facilities.

## Monitor Land Divisions and Construction Activity

Whether you use a GIS or pins stuck in a map on the wall, it is important to know where land divisions and construction activity are taking place in your community. One of the best ways to help people track local growth trends is for your local planning commission or planning department to issue an annual report that shows the extent and location of land division and building activity. The **Resources** for this chapter direct you to examples from Kent County, Maryland (See Case Study Four page 67), New Berlin, Wisconsin, and other communities.

### Determine Capacity

The current stock of public facilities and services should be described in a detailed inventory. Some information may be gleaned from existing documents—there are usually useful written descriptions of water and sewerage systems, for example—but making this inventory will require in-depth interviews with your fire chief, librarian, sheriff, public works director, and other local service providers. You should also expect to spend considerable time finding and studying unpublished data such as summaries of incident reports from the local law enforcement agency and traffic counter records. The experience of Grand County, Utah (described in Case Study Five, page 77), shows how having good basic information contributes to forward-looking decisions. Recall also Case Study Three (page 49): citizens serving on the Smart Growth Task Force in Ross County, Ohio, found information on the capacity of local public facilities especially helpful.

### Set Level of Service Standards

Once the build-out study and facilities inventory

## Don't Forget O&M!

Every community should have a capital improvements program. But don't forget about annual operating and maintenance (O&M) costs. Building a new station doesn't improve fire protection unless the community can also equip and staff it! Requiring a developer to install a road doesn't mean that the community can afford to grade or plow it. Your infrastructure planning effort should include an analysis of O&M costs.

are complete, local officials must make some important policy decisions about the level of service the community will provide to residents and visitors. Planners and engineers can help by explaining level of service standards adopted by state agencies and by professional and trade associations. For example, most states require that a central water system be able to produce a certain volume of water for each resident or household each day. These rules of thumb are well-tested in practice, but are not always appropriate. For example, the level of service definitions used by transportation planners and engineers are based on observations of traffic flow. Those standards will not be helpful to a rural county that has little congestion but many miles of road to maintain. Such a county may want to adopt a level of service standard that simply calls for all roads to meet certain physical standards (right-of-way and lane width, shoulder width, surface type, etc.).

### Apply Level of Service Standards

Adopting level of service standards makes it possible to compare the anticipated demand for facilities and services (based on the build-out study) with the community's existing capacity to provide those facilities or services (which is established by the inventory), and determine what new or improved facilities are needed. For example, Grand County, Utah (Case Study Five, page 77), adopted a level of service standard that it would need 800 square feet of library space for each 1,000 residents. The facilities inventory found that the existing library was 4,900 square feet. Given the existing population of 9,156, there was already a deficit of 2,425 square feet of library space. At the projected build-out population of 27,400, the county will need a total of almost 22,000 square feet of library space.

### Conduct Cost Studies

How much will the needed improvements and facilities cost? Architects or engineers often make cost estimates, but for needs such as routine road or drainage improvements a community can make estimates based on the actual costs of its own recent projects. You may be able to base cost estimates for large facilities such as libraries or jails on the experiences of neighboring communities that have recently built them.

### Decide How to Pay

A capital improvements program should include a proposed means of financing for each proposed improvement. See the next section on "Paying for Public Facilities."

### Set Priorities

Your community's vision should play an important role in this final step. Which improvements will contribute most to its attainment? Developing and updating the CIP offers a major opportunity to get citizens involved in refining and implementing your vision and land use policies.

Too many communities find themselves reacting to new demands for facilities and services almost as if they were surprised to learn that growth adds more students to the schools or puts more cars on the road. The infrastructure planning process we have described here can help your community anticipate and prepare for the future.

## PAYING FOR PUBLIC FACILITIES

For most communities, regular tax revenues cover only routine operating and maintenance expenses. The user fees collected for water, sewerage, and solid waste service may support small capital reserve funds, but most new facilities and major improvements must be financed using one of the tools described here. In reading these descriptions, remember that your community's choices may be limited by state law. There are also important state-to-state differences in how and for what each tool can be used. See Chapter 10 for more on the impact of state law on local growth management.

Let's begin with tools that require the developer or consumer to provide or improve facilities: exactions, dedications, and impact fees.

### On-Site Exactions

New or improved facilities that directly serve a particular development should be provided by the

developer. Requirements for on-site exactions often appear in local subdivision regulations, but should also be written into any other regulations that ask the developer to provide improvements. Your zoning regulations, for example, may require that landscaped buffers be planted between certain uses. The community should set design standards for roads, water and sewer lines, and other facilities a developer may be required to install. You should also require an effective guarantee that the required facilities will be installed either before the project is offered for sale or occupied or in approved phases.

### **Off-Site Exactions**

An off-site exaction requires a developer to build or improve, or provide funds for the building or improvement of, a facility that is not within the development. For example, this might include improving a nearby intersection to help accommodate the additional traffic the development will generate. Requirements for off-site exactions are especially helpful where impact fees will be ineffective (see the discussion of “Impact Fees” below).

### **Dedications**

Some communities require developers to dedicate land for public use, usually for schools or parks. As the box explains, all exactions and dedication requirements must be defensible.

### **Impact Fees**

Where a need for new or improved facilities cannot be directly attributed to a single development but is a result of growth, a community may (if state law allows) charge impact fees. An impact fee is a one-time charge assessed at the time a building permit is issued. The fees collected are deposited in special funds and used only for specific improvements that are identified in the local CIP or the facilities element of the local plan. Unused fees must be returned, with interest. Many states limit the use of impact fees to certain types of facilities and improvements. Your state may also impose procedural requirements on the calculation and adoption of impact fees. These requirements are usually a variation of the essential nexus test. The infrastructure planning process we have described here can easily be adapted to fulfill them.

Communities can fairly and defensibly assign many of the costs of growth to developers and consumers. But growth will also generate needs for new facilities and services that benefit everyone, or that cannot lawfully be funded through exactions or

## ***The Essential Nexus Test***

Asking developers to install streets, water mains, and other on-site facilities is seldom controversial, but off-site exactions and dedications can be. Such exactions and dedications must meet a demanding legal test. You may hear this test described in slightly different terms, but we’ll call it the “essential nexus” test. Nexus is just a fancy word for a relationship. The Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that your community must be able to show that there is an “essential” relationship between any exaction or dedication it requires and the impacts of the development from which that exaction is required. How do you demonstrate this relationship? By using the infrastructure planning process. Though it has not had to, Grand County, Utah (see Case Study Five, page 77), can tell a court what new facilities and improvements are needed to maintain the adopted level of service as growth continues, what those facilities and improvements will cost, and what share of the demand for those facilities a particular proposed development is responsible for. A sound planning process will give your community an equally defensible basis for on- and off-site exactions, dedications, or impact fees.

impact fees. Bonds are often used to finance these major community investments. It may also be possible to address some of your local infrastructure needs through two types of special districts

### **Special Assessment Districts.**

Special assessment districts are defined geographic areas within which a local government can levy an additional property tax for specific purposes. They are often used for sidewalks and similar neighborhood scale improvements. Business Improvement Districts—a specific type of special assessment district—are often used to help make a central business district more attractive by providing parking, improving sidewalks, or installing plantings. Creation of a special assessment district usually requires approval of a majority of affected property owners.



*Grand County, Utah, had to increase emergency medical services to keep pace with growth in the county.*

### Special Districts

A special district is usually a separate political entity with its own elected governing body and the power to levy property taxes. Fire protection districts may be the most common, but there are also numerous water and sewer, emergency medical service, and park and recreation districts providing services that general purpose local governments—cities, towns, and counties—cannot afford to offer. As the Grand County, Utah, Case Study Five (page 77) shows, it is critically important to involve special districts in your community's planning process.

A sound infrastructure is a critical foundation for the local quality of life and prosperity. Successful communities use their planning process to create a clear understanding of what must be done to provide new and improved facilities and services as they are needed.

# CHAPTER 10

## Seek Additional Authority

State laws limit the tools local officials can use to manage growth and change. At the same time, many communities fail to use all of the authority available to them. It is essential that you understand what your state constitution and statutes allow, so that you can either use the growth management tools you need or go to your legislature seeking new authority.

### KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS

While there are differences among the states, many local governments can take only actions that are specifically authorized or necessarily implied by state law. This legal principle is called Dillon's Rule. In Iowa, where Justice Dillon established his rule in 1896, county commissioners cannot adopt zoning regulations that prohibit or restrict confined animal feeding operations because the state has not given them that authority. Similarly, your state legislature may have limited your community's ability to finance the costs of growth. Virginia, for example, does not authorize the use of impact fees. Even where Dillon's Rule does not apply, state tax structures can influence development patterns in unintended ways. In Colorado and other states where the sales tax is one of the few significant sources of local revenues, cities often feel driven to annex land with commercial potential, whether doing so is consistent with their vision or not.

### KNOW YOUR POSSIBILITIES

There are limitations, but many communities do not use the range of tools they are authorized to adopt. For example, many jurisdictions that have clear state enabling laws still do not assess impact fees.

### *Justice Dillon and Wildcat Subdivisions*

The most notorious example of Dillon's Rule at work is the limitations state legislatures have imposed on the local regulation of land division. Exemptions allowed by state subdivision laws have a serious negative impact on the ability of counties in Colorado, Michigan, Ohio, and several other states to manage growth. In Ross County, Ohio, for example, only about 15 percent of all new lots created are part of a platted subdivision. These exemptions allow landowners to avoid the responsibilities imposed on platted subdivisions by selling lots in small numbers or selling lots larger than a specified size. Large numbers of exempt lots (which people in Arizona call "wildcat subdivisions") will eventually have large cumulative impacts on local governments' ability to provide safe roads and other services, on water quality and wildlife, and on the character of rural landscapes.

### Be Aware of State Requirements!

It is essential to understand the procedural requirements state law imposes on your local planning effort. These will include requirements for public notice of meetings and public hearings prior to the adoption of plans and regulations. Several states also have statutory or court-made requirements that local land use decisions (subdivision approval, zoning map amendments, etc.) be generally consistent with your adopted plan. It is important to know the law in your state, but consistency with your community's plan is critical to the credibility of your land use decisions, whether that consistency is mandatory or not.



Photo by Jennifer Read

*Planning helps preserve natural areas and quality of life in the Northern Rockies region.*

### SEEK ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY, AS NEEDED

Depending on your goals, you may need to find partners in efforts to change state enabling laws. In 1993, for example, the Montana Association of Planners and others persuaded that state's legislature to reduce the number of exemptions from the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act. The exempt lot size went from 20 to 160 acres, and other loopholes were closed. Before those changes a majority of new lots in rapidly growing Gallatin County were created through exemptions, with no public review. More recently, a broad coalition of interests including the state associations of towns and counties helped secure passage of Wisconsin's "Smart Growth" legislation, which has provided significant state funding and technical assistance for local planning efforts.



## CASE STUDY FIVE Grand County, Utah

### BUILDING ON AREAS OF AGREEMENT

This case study shows how one community applied the hallmark explained in Chapter 9.

### BACKGROUND

Grand County is the gateway to Arches and Canyonlands National Parks. Rapid growth in both the local population and the number of visitors led the county to write a new master plan in 1994. Developing the new plan was a contentious process, but virtually all residents agreed on one thing: developers, new residents, and tourists should bear the brunt of costs associated with increasing service needs. Given this public support, and a projected five percent annual growth rate, Grand County enacted impact fees for new development.

The County, the City of Moab, the Grand Water and Sewer Service Agency, and the Moab Valley Fire Protection District undertook the complicated task of preparing a capital facilities plan: making an inventory of existing facilities, conducting a build-out study, establishing acceptable level of service standards, determining what new or improved facilities would be needed, and exploring financing alternatives. The result is a community served by well-informed public officials, who are cooperating across jurisdictional lines and better able to meet the needs of a rapidly growing population. From 1997 to 2002, Grand County collected \$501,255 in impact fees for its road, drainage, and parks projects, and acting as a fiscal agent for the fire protection district. During this period, the Grand Water and Sewer Service Agency collected \$860,573.

### ACTION

The process leading to adoption of the *Grand County Master Plan* began in 1995 with listening posts at the two local grocery stores



### A Few Facts About Grand County

County Seat: Moab  
2000 County Seat Population: 4,779

2000 Population: 8,485  
Percent Change since 1990: 28.2%  
Persons per square mile: 2.3

Land Area: 3682 sq. mi.  
Landscape: Canyons of the Colorado Plateau surrounding irrigated Colorado River valley  
Median Household Income: \$28,801  
Percent below poverty: 17.8%

Sources of Income:  
Dividends, Interest and Rent – 23%  
Services (hotels, motion pictures, amusement)– 20%  
Transfer Payments – 16%  
Government – 15%  
Retail Trade – 14%  
Construction – 9%

*Arches National Park is a main attraction for visitors to Grand County, Utah.*



A small group at work at Grand County, Utah's, From Dialog to Action event.

Setting the Level of Service standard for a public facility is the single most important decision a jurisdiction makes for its citizens. Level of Service standards significantly affect the overall quality of life of a community.

*from the Grand County Public Facilities Analysis*

and a visioning workshop entitled *From Dialog to Action*. The county conducted these events with the assistance of the Sonoran Institute. Nearly 200 residents, who may otherwise have been absent from the process, participated in the listening posts. Seventy-six percent of those who stopped to record their opinions wanted to change the tax and fee structures so that tourists and developers contributed a fair share to the costs of new and improved facilities and services. Long-term residents still reeling from a steep

decline in mineral extraction and other traditional industries and newcomers who benefited from the budding tourism and second home industry both shared this concern.

The issue of the costs of growth, along with many others, was echoed in the visioning event, and became one of the policies in the *Grand County Master Plan* completed later that year. The public facilities analysis was completed the next year, with the assistance of consulting engineers and planners. It set levels of service and determined future facilities needs for law enforcement, city and county administration, fire protection, parks, the library, drainage, county roads, and water and sewer systems.

## RESULTS

Impact fees were adopted only for the facilities listed in the list below. It is important to note that the fees alone are not intended to cover all the projected facilities' needs.

### Detailed Impact Fee Collections between May 1997 and March 2002:

Law Enforcement	\$28,500
Parks and Recreation	\$5,194
Drainage	\$74,400
Roads	\$379,000
Moab Valley Fire Protection District	\$14,161
Grand Water and Sewer Service Agency	\$860,573

The county road department has used all of the fees collected for drainage to address serious flash flooding problems. The fees for road improvements have been used to build the first traffic circle in southern Utah, at an increasingly busy intersection of county roads south of Moab. They are also being used as the 7 percent match to federal transportation funds required to make other, more costly, improvements.

The Moab Valley Fire Protection District has the authority to collect its own impact fees, but prefers to have them collected by the county when it issues a building permit. The fire district plans to spend the funds it has received to help build an additional fire station in the

sprawling unincorporated area south of Moab. Unlike the fire district, the Grand Water and Sewer Service Agency collects fees separately at the time a home or business is connected to its systems. The district uses the fees it collects to supplement and leverage grant funds.

The Grand County impact fee system has firm foundations in an inclusive public process and a comprehensive and systematic facilities analysis. It has also served as an opportunity for intergovernmental cooperation. Because their budgets and plans are tied directly to it, department heads know and understand the contents of the master plan and the public facilities analysis. These documents have mostly eliminated discussions about individual projects. Department heads know what they need to do to serve the public and how they are going to pay for it.



## LESSONS LEARNED

- go out to the community for input with listening posts and other activities
- use small groups to foster safe dialogue
- build from areas of agreement and a shared vision
- keep implementation in mind from the start
- base action in documented facts
- build partnerships with organizations and agencies with complementary goals

*One of many public facilities impacted by rapid population growth and the increasing number of visitors to Grand County, Utah.*





SECTION V

# Leadership



*The historic agricultural landscape of Rio Arriba County, New Mexico, near Velarde.*

**Q.** Do you understand the role of leadership in the planning process?

**A.** Successful communities value leadership and cultivate local leaders who can help realize their vision by ...

- making participation in civic affairs a rewarding experience and supporting leadership development programs.

Someone's leadership—actually the leadership of many people—is reflected in every example and case study presented in this book. Local leaders are the custodians of their community's vision. They know, however, that many people must participate in the development and attainment of that vision.

Chapter 11 explains how successful communities cultivate local leaders who can help realize their vision by making participation in local civic affairs a rewarding experience and supporting leadership development programs.

The rules of leadership have changed ... leaders are now expected to inform citizens, build consensus, resolve conflict, and involve all points of view in decision making.

*from NACo's County Leadership Handbook*

### ***Decisive Leadership Makes a Difference in New Mexico***

Rio Arriba County, New Mexico, has one of the rural West's most ambitious farmland protection policies. But when the county sent a team to the first Western Community Stewardship Forum (WCSEF) in 1999, that policy did not yet exist. The Board of Commissioners—Alfredo Montoya, Moises Morales, and Ray Tafoya—had just adopted a nine-month moratorium on the subdivision of irrigated lands.

Their action was the outcome of several years' attention to their community's changing landscape. The commissioners had established a planning department and addressed urgent issues raised by rural subdivision, timber harvest on private lands, and mining. They were now ready to confront the future of the county's most limited natural resource: water.

Irrigated lands compose only about one percent of Rio Arriba County's 5,800 square miles. That one percent is critical, not just to continuing local agriculture, but as a reservoir of unique crop varieties and the historic and scenic landscape that is the cradle of Hispanic settlement in New Mexico. Subdivision of the remaining irrigated lands also threatens the wildlife habitat provided by the cottonwood bosques along the Rio Chama and Rio Grande, and will eventually lead to groundwater contamination and the need for expensive central sewerage systems in low-income communities.

Following the WCSEF, Rio Arriba County conducted community meetings throughout the county, talking with residents about the importance of the irrigated lands in their lives and providing them with basic facts about the county's land resources and development potential. Those meetings were followed by educational forums that helped people understand the tools that might be used to regulate future development of the irrigated lands. This process led to the timely end of the moratorium and adoption of an agricultural conservation ordinance that limits future residential development to 30 percent of each irrigated parcel.

Rio Arriba County's story illustrates the importance of a well-informed, inclusive public process, and of choosing tools that are appropriate for a community's needs. But the process would never have begun without leadership: county commissioners willing to initiate public discussion of a controversial topic, commit resources to support that discussion, and act decisively when the discussion was over.

# CHAPTER 11

## Cultivate Local Leadership

Rio Arriba County's experience illustrates the central importance of leadership from elected officials. But leadership comes from many other sources, including appointed planning and zoning commission or advisory committee members, concerned citizens and their organizations, and staff members. Successful communities encourage new leaders to step forward at all these levels. The most important way they do this is by making sure that involvement in civic affairs is productive.

### MAKE PUBLIC SERVICE REWARDING

Using the approaches described in this book will help people feel confident that they can get helpful information about the issues (remember the importance of shared knowledge described in Chapters 3 and 5). They will also be assured that public discussion of those issues will be conducted in a way that allows everyone to have effective input (remember the messages about participation in Chapters 1 and 2). Well-informed people who believe they can influence the future of their community are potential leaders. Communities must also remember to thank the people who devote their time to public service on a regular basis.

### SEEK OUT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Your community may want to sponsor a local leadership development program or help people find training in other places. There are also many state, regional, and national programs that may be helpful. The **Resources** for this chapter link you to descriptions of some of those programs. For example:

- This book is a product of the Western Community Stewardship Forum (WCSF), which serves county officials in the western states.
- One of the WCSF's sponsors, the National Association of Counties, publishes a *County Leadership Handbook* and offers Advanced Leadership Training training opportunities to its members.
- State associations of counties often partner with universities to provide training for elected

### *Staff as Leaders*

*Author's Note:* One Nebraska rancher liked to refer to the county's planner as the planning commission's "hired man." Most are not so direct, but many people are not entirely comfortable dealing with professional planners, or even with the more familiar administrators, attorneys, and engineers. Successful communities know how to accept professional advice without feeling that they are losing control. The lesson they have learned is mostly one of respect, both for what they can learn from competent professional advisors and for their own ability to make independent judgments. If your community treats its professional staff or advisors like bureaucrats, that is almost certainly what you will have. If you are willing to treat them as partners in a joint effort, you can find staff and consultants who will do a great job of informing and facilitating your community's effort to define and attain its vision for the future.

officials and staff. For example, the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government and that state's association of county commissioners offer training for newly elected commissioners (as required by state law), as well as additional training for municipal and county officials.

- The Heartland Center for Leadership Development of Lincoln, Nebraska, is another well-known source of leadership development programs that appeal to rural communities.
- State planning associations and chapters of the American Planning Association often offer sessions for citizen planners at their conferences. Some states have special programs like the Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Education Institute, a partnership between the

## Does your community have the leadership it needs to build and attain its vision?

Every case study in this book reflects someone's leadership. Case Studies One (page 19) and Four (page 67) highlight the roles of citizens and their organizations in local planning efforts. Case Study Six (page 85) shows the critical importance of elected leadership in a consensus-based process.

Pennsylvania Planning Association and Penn State Cooperative Extension, which offers courses in subdivision review, zoning, and the state planning code. The Planning Association of Washington's "Short Course" is another example. Professional planners in your area can help you find out about these events.

An excellent account of a leadership development program can be found in *Partnerships in Communities: Reweaving the Fabric of Rural America*. Author Jean Richardson and others from the University of Vermont conducted leadership training in several towns; the book summarizes that experience. We especially recommend the part of Chapter 4 that describes "Attributes of the New Rural Leader." It reinforces many points made in this book, including the importance of having and sharing a vision and the need to find and use the best available information.

### STEP UP

Successful communities have strong leadership. The experiences of Rio Arriba County, New Mexico, and Wallowa County, Oregon, demonstrate what decisive leaders can accomplish by encouraging citizens to get involved, listening carefully, and then choosing a course of action to pursue. Your community needs leaders who will advance its vision! Does the fact that you are reading this indicate that you are ready for that role?

The leaders who make civic groups and local government work got started with a positive experience in the public arena. If your community needs more of those people (and most do!), you must find ways to make participation in local civic affairs a rewarding experience. Once you get potential leaders involved, invest in them by providing leadership training, either locally or through state, regional, or national programs.



*Alfredo Montoya, former county commissioner from Rio Arriba County, New Mexico, provided leadership that resulted in the adoption of one of New Mexico's most progressive ordinances.*

Our people may be led, but they won't be pushed.

Ben Boswell, Wallowa County, Oregon, Commissioner

# CASE STUDY SIX

## Wallowa County, Oregon

### PROACTIVE LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY ACTION

This case study shows how leadership — the hallmark discussed in Chapter 11 — helped one rural county address a major land use issue.

### BACKGROUND

Wallowa County occupies the remote and beautiful northeastern corner of Oregon, the traditional homeland of the Nez Perce people. Some two-thirds of the county is public land, including the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area and large acreages in the Umatilla and Wallowa National Forests. The Nez Perce Reservation is in a nearby part of Idaho, but tribal members retain certain hunting, fishing, and gathering rights in Wallowa County.

Wallowa County's residents have seen changes in federal agencies' management limit access to the public lands used for forage and timber. Their reaction to these changes has been both much the same and quite different from that of other remote public lands counties. Wallowa County explored the county supremacy movement—in which some Western county officials asserted that the Constitution gives the federal government no right to manage the public lands—and moved on to "county empowerment," in which local officials work hard to give their people a voice in state and federal decisions.

### ACTION

Faced with the impending listing of the chinook salmon as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act, Wallowa County and the Nez Perce Tribe joined in a "pre-emptive" planning process. They hoped this effort would be incorporated into the recovery plan the National Marine Fisheries Service would prepare in response to the listing. *The Wallowa County-Nez Perce Salmon Habitat Recovery Plan*, adopted in 1992, has since



Photo by Cynthia Warnock, SWCD, Wallowa County

*This dam allows for the diversion of water for irrigation without impeding the movement of salmon.*

### A Few Facts About Wallowa County

Seat: Enterprise

2000 County Seat Population: 1,895

2000 County Population: 7,226

Percent Change Since 1990: +4.6%

Land Area: 3,145 sq. mi.

Persons Per Square Mile: 2.3

Landscape: valley surrounded by mountains and Hells Canyon

Median Household Income: \$32,129

Percent Below Poverty: 14.0%

Sources of Income:

Transfer Payments - 21%

Dividends, Interest and Rent - 18%

Government - 17%

Services - 9%

Retail - 8%

Manufacturing - 8%

Construction - 5%

Transportation & Communication - 5%

Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate - 3%

evolved into a multi-species habitat plan that covers the county from ridge-top to ridge-top, addressing not only salmon but other threatened and endangered species as well.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- recognize the critical importance of leadership, especially in a consensus-based process!
- build partnerships for successful planning and implementation
- give people good information if you want better land management and development decisions
- base action in documented facts
- build partnerships with organizations and agencies with complementary goals

The *Plan* was developed over several months through a solution-oriented, consensus-based process involving the county, the tribe, and a dozen other agencies and stakeholders. No one, whether from an agency, an industry, or an environmental group, was admitted to the committee unless they were willing to “put both feet in the circle.” Local leaders’ insistence on full commitment left out some landowners and environmentalists but built trust among the partners and led to a plan that is working on the ground. County officials believe a “perfectly balanced” committee that represented every interest would have failed.

The *Plan* includes a mission statement, an explanation of the desired habitat conditions for chinook salmon, a watershed-by-watershed analysis of the habitat available, and proposed management approaches for use by the public and private land managers who are responsible for implementation. A twenty-

“Local control” is often used as a euphemism for *laissez-faire*, but we are not talking about a “no control” vacuum. We are talking about local control.

Ben Boswell, Wallowa County Commissioner

member Natural Resources Advisory Committee (NRAC) now meets quarterly to review the plan’s implementation. A smaller Technical Committee meets monthly to review specific proposed watershed actions, including proposed land developments.

## RESULTS

Implementation of the *Plan* is mostly voluntary. But after a four- to five-year period of education and adjustment, many local ranchers have come to think of it as “their” plan. They have participated in \$8–9 million of cost-sharing projects for habitat restoration and improvement. These projects include fencing, road closures and improvements, in-stream structures, spring development, live-stock watering systems, and improved irrigation diversion structures. County Extension Agent John Williams says that the plan has also changed the way both private and public land managers think endangered species protection.

One aspect of the *Plan* is regulatory. It has been adopted into the county’s comprehensive plan and land use regulations. Every proposed development that has the potential to affect water quality and salmon habitat is reviewed by the NRAC’s Technical Committee, which makes recommendations about how the project can be developed with minimal impact. There hasn’t been much land development in Wallowa County during the past 10 years, but the *Plan* has resulted in changes in proposed projects, ensuring their compatibility with some of the county’s most important natural assets.

Despite this impressive record of implementation, Wallowa County officials aren’t ready to call this a success story. They are waiting to see if the Forest Service will begin making timber sales based on a locally developed watershed plan. They are also waiting for an economic “pay-off” on their philosophy that resource use and conservation are not incompatible. The county has made a major commitment to salmon recovery, but its ranching and forest products industries have not recovered from the changes of recent years.

# HOW WILL YOU MEASURE SUCCESS?

Appendix A describes a “Measures of Success” activity, a useful technique for looking ahead. Let’s do a quick version. Our focus question is:

Now that you have read this book, how would you measure the success of your community’s planning process in five years?

- Will you have a shared vision, developed by many of your citizens?
- Will you have a better way of responding to economic change?
- Will you be using new tools to protect your natural and cultural assets?
- Will new leaders have emerged to help maintain and implement your community’s vision?

How you measure success in your local planning process is up to you. We hope this book has helped you see the possibilities.

Happy Planning!

## *Coda: Planning and Freedom*

Local planning can be contentious. People will probably tell you that your efforts will deprive them of their freedom. Yet what freedom do people or communities have when they willingly surrender things they cherish to decisions made by strangers in distant places? The processes and tools we present in this book are all about freedom: the freedom to live in the types of communities we envision in our civic conversations.

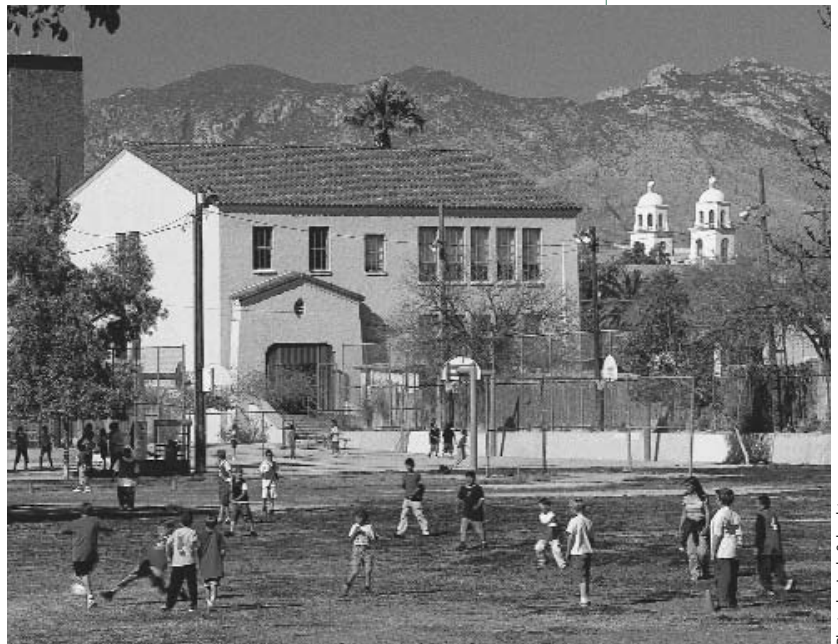


Photo by Josh Schachter

*Planning for results is an investment in our children’s future.*





# Appendices

# APPENDIX A

## Participatory Techniques



*Silver City, New Mexico, residents envision the future of their community.*

This appendix presents basic instructions for activities you may want to use at a visioning event, educational forum, or policy development meetings. We suggest some possible applications for each technique, but when and how you use them will depend on your objectives. You may wish to consult some of the materials listed in the **Resources** for Chapter 2 or an experienced facilitator for additional information and ideas about these and other activities you can use. The activities we describe here can be used in different situations, including at listening posts, as entry activities, and to structure discussion for results. We describe each of these situations below before moving to the activities:

### Listening Posts

Listening posts are a great way to communicate with people who are unlikely to attend meetings. There are many variations on this technique, which is sometimes also called “drop-in centers” or “open houses.” How you use it will depend on your needs. The most common application is to place an interactive

display at a busy public place (post office, grocery store, mall) or at a public event (county fair or the “\_\_\_ Days” event most small towns have) to tell people about upcoming meetings, give them some information about growth and land use change in their community, and engage them in the process with dot voting or other simple activities described later in this appendix. Another application comes later in the planning process, when you ask people to evaluate proposed policies or plans.

**Hints.** People’s time is limited. Keep listening post displays and activities as simple as your objectives allow. Have a handout people can take to remind themselves of upcoming events or meetings. However you use listening posts, it is important to be sure the volunteers staffing them understand that they are there to listen, not to express their views. A training session may be necessary.

### Entry Activities

One of the most important principles introduced in Chapter 2 is to “Engage People on Entry.” You can use most of the activities described in this appendix to get people talking to each other and in the mood for the event from the minute they walk in the door.

**Hints.** Be sure to allow ample time for entry activities. Provide a continental breakfast or a buffet lunch or supper while people are working. Don’t set up entry activities in a narrow hallway or other cramped quarters. Allow plenty of space for people to stand back, watch what others are doing, and talk to each other. Be sure also to use a room with enough wall space to leave the results posted during the rest of your event.

### Discussion Activities

Too many local planning processes feature lots of discussion and no results. You can use the activities described in this appendix to structure discussion. You have to be clear about your objective, but the best way to structure discussion is to begin with a thoughtfully selected entry activity and use the results as a guide for a more intense discussion. Participants will feel they have set the agenda. We have used dot voting, debates, photo galleries, visual preference surveys,

and the measures of success activity (all described below) as a basis for discussion using the nominal group process and character mapping. In every case, the principle is to start with individual or small group work before opening discussion in a larger group, where some people will feel obliged to vigorously defend positions and others' voices will be lost.

**Hints.** Set and post ground rules for respectful listening and discussion. Some practitioners like to have a volunteer facilitator, usually a local person who has had a few minutes of training before the event, in each discussion group. The facilitator does not serve as the recorder, but is charged with helping the group keep track of time and trying to ensure that the ground rules are observed. We have found that small groups in most communities manage themselves quite well, and that one or two roving facilitators are sufficient to answer questions and help groups that are struggling.

## DOT VOTING

(For Listening Posts and Entry Activities)

This is the technique Grand County, Utah, used in the listening posts described in Chapter 1. Use it when you need to learn what issues are on people's minds; when you want to validate a list of issues prepared by a smaller group, like a steering committee; when you want to prioritize issues or ideas; or when you want to evaluate alternatives.

- Write a focus question. You might ask people, "What three or four issues are most important to address in our new plan?" or "Which alternative design for this proposed park do you prefer?"
- Post the instructions in writing, but also assign someone to watch and help participants understand what to do.
- Display the focus question above or beside panels that represent each potential issue or alternative.
- Give people one or more brightly colored self-adhesive dots. Let them make their choices and encourage informal conversation among them while they do so.
- When people have multiple votes, remind them that they may place all of their votes for just one choice or distribute them among the alternatives, as they wish.
- If you are using dot voting at listening posts before a major event, post the completed panels at the event for people to see while registering.

- Include the results in a summary report.

**Hints.** The focus question must be reasonably straightforward for this activity to work well. Never give people more than nine choices or alternatives. Five to seven is better. Use other techniques for more complex discussions. Make this activity livelier by using photos or cartoon drawings to illustrate each choice for which people may vote. Remember that one of the advantages of this technique is that anyone can look at the panels and make a quick visual estimate of which ideas or alternatives are best supported. Leave the panels on the wall during the next step in your event or process.

**Other Applications?** If you want to know where meeting participants live within the community, have them put a dot on a large map of the area. You can also have folks place dots on maps indicating their favorite place or view. This is a good quick activity for listening posts at community events.

## PHOTO GALLERY

(For Listening Posts and Entry Activities)

While it requires considerable preparation, this is a great way to open a visioning event or a policy development workshop. Posting hundreds of photographs taken by dozens of people makes a powerful statement about what is important in their community.



*Silver City, New Mexico, residents post photos they have taken of the "heart and soul" of their community.*

- Write a positive focus question. One we have used is, “Use your camera to illustrate the heart and soul of \_\_\_\_ County.”
- Obtain disposable cameras several weeks before the event at which you want to use the photos. Try to arrange a discount for processing the film.
- Announce the availability of cameras in the local newspaper and through other media. You can have also cameras available at listening posts.
- Distribute cameras with written instructions that include the focus question the photographs should illustrate, a date by which they must be returned, and this deal: if someone takes a camera, they commit to being at the event.
- Be sure to get cameras in the hands of people you know need to be represented.
- Collect and develop the film, label it with the photographers’ names, and return it to them as they register.
- Have people post their photos. This will take lots of tape. We usually provide some broad themes to help organize this part of the activity.
- Allow ample time for people to view the “gallery” and talk about it informally.
- Save the photos for use in a summary report or other planning documents.

**Hints.** Some people have asked us about using this technique to illustrate things they don’t like about their community, but we believe it is best suited for a positive approach consistent with local values. The photos can be used as a resource for other activities including character mapping (described later in this appendix). People can also take photos from the gallery to illustrate lists of important community features and values developed during discussions guided by the Nominal Group Process.

**Other Applications?** You can create a photo gallery as part of an event. Acquire Polaroid cameras and film. Distribute them to small groups. Send the groups on a “Scavenger Hunt” for photos of particular places or features of places. Unless you are focusing on a small central business district, you will have to arrange transportation, but this activity can help people learn to analyze their visual environment and generate a lot of interesting and productive discussion among group members.

## DECADES

(For Entry Activities and Discussion Activities)

This is a technique you can use when you want to get old-timers and newcomers talking to each other. It will generate a collective community history that interests, entertains (in one community folks traced growth by the number of stoplights in different decades), and provides a starting point for a community conversation about changing times.

- Post the instructions in writing, but also assign someone to watch and help participants understand what to do.
- As people register, direct them to a wall or panel that has sections for each of the past four or five decades: 1960’s, 1970’s, etc.
- On nearby tables, have an ample supply of large index cards and tape or large post-its, and markers.
- Ask people to write significant events on the cards or post-its (one event each!) and place them in the appropriate decade.
- Have a skilled facilitator help people pick out high points and trends.
- Include the collective history participants have created in a summary report.

**Hints.** Allow ample time for this activity. It works well to provide a continental breakfast or a buffet lunch or supper while people are posting their cards. Also, you need a big wall or panel (we once used a volleyball net). A meeting of any size will generate dozens of cards for each decade.

## MEASURES OF SUCCESS

(For Entry Activities and Discussion Activities)

One of our favorite techniques is to ask people how they would define success in their community, in five or 10 years. The time span should vary with your objectives. What will have happened to make them feel that their community or organization (this activity can work well for a planning commission, nonprofit board of directors, or business) had been successful? You can use this activity to begin a meeting where you will discuss specific policies or strategies. You can also use it to close a visioning meeting, then post people’s measures of success at the first policy development meeting.

- Give everyone three or four large post-its. Have pencils or pens available.

- Ask each participant to put just one measure of success on each index card or post-it. Give them an example like, “We will have twice as many EMT’s to staff our ambulance service.”
- Give them 10-15 minutes to list their measures of success.
- Then ask each person to come forward, read each of their answers, and post them on a wall or panel. This can take a while, but is worth it.
- Have a skilled facilitator help people group or cluster the measures into a handful of categories.
- Include the results in a summary report.

### VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY

(For Listening Posts and Entry Activities)

A visual preference survey (VPS) presents people with a series of images to evaluate on a quantitative scale. These images may be from your community or others, and may invite people to think about scenic views, architectural styles, landscaping practices, or other visual features of a community. Simple statistics are used to determine community preferences, which tend to be remarkably consistent. See Chapter 5 for an example of how a VPS has influenced land use decisions in a Montana city. We do not give step-by-step instructions for this activity. Using it requires a lot of commitment (you may have to collect hundreds of images with specific characteristics) and professional expertise for image selection and statistical analysis.

### NOMINAL GROUP PROCESS

The Nominal Group Process (NGP) is designed to help give everyone an effective voice in the community conversation. There are many possible variations on this technique, some of which are described below, but the essence is as follows:

- Write a focus question or questions. We have successfully used, “List three things that should not change in our community” and “List three things that should change.” There are many other possibilities depending on your objectives.
- Divide participants into groups of four to nine people. At initial visioning events try to make sure that all interests in the community are represented in each group. Later in the process, you may want to organize groups by geography (people from the same neighborhood) or topic (people with shared interests).

- Following introductions, have people work silently and independently to answer the focus question you have given them. Have large index cards or post-its and pens or pencils on the tables. Each group should also have an easel with pad and markers for recording.
- When people have finished their individual answers—give them 10 minutes or so—they choose someone to act as a recorder and share their answers with the group. The ground rules for this part of the process emphasize respectful listening. Everyone gets a turn to speak without interruption. The only editing allowed is consolidation: a person may say that one of his or her answers is the same as an answer already recorded. There are no questions or discussion until all answers are before the group. Depending on the complexity of the focus question and the size of the group this can take from 20 minutes to an hour.
- Once all the answers or ideas are recorded, discussion begins. The course of that discussion will depend on the focus question, but the ground rules do not vary: listen respectfully; seek to understand; disagree respectfully; and work to find areas of agreement.
- As a final act, each group should select a reporter to share its areas of agreement with the larger group.
- Data should never be lost. Collect the individual responses as well the group lists of areas of agreement. We often print all of the responses, individual and group, in the summary document.

**Hints.** One way to create random groups is the rainbow agenda. If you think you will have six groups, print your agenda on six different colors of paper. This can also be done with stickers on agendas or name tags. Then divide people into groups corresponding to the colors of the agendas in their hands.

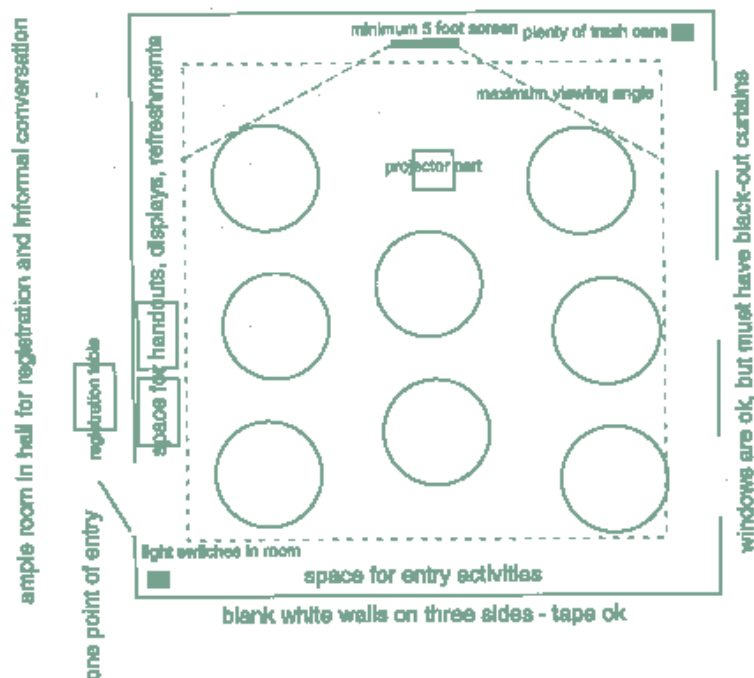
**Tight Schedule?** One way to work within a tight schedule is to print your focus questions on cards and have people fill them out while registering. Putting the individual work up front allows small groups to move directly into the sharing and discussion phases.

### CHARACTER MAPPING

Character mapping gives people an opportunity to identify specific important features of their local landscape and built environment. This activity requires considerable preparation, assembling aerial

photographs, maps, and other reference materials, more time, and more training for participants than the other activities we have described here. Getting people's hands on the maps and markers can help them learn a lot about their community, however, and a character mapping workshop can be a lot of fun.

## The Ideal Meeting Room



- No pillars!
- Round tables if at all possible.
- Must be able to eat in room. A pass-through window to a kitchen is desirable.
- This drawing shows the ideal meeting room set up for 8 groups of no more than 8 people each. The room is shown as a 44x44 foot square (1936 SF), but a shallow rectangle of the same size will work just as well. If you anticipate more than 64 participants, add at least 28 SF per group.

- Divide participants into groups of four to nine. Depending on your objective, you may want to make these groups random (you can use the techniques described in the hints for the NGP) or geographical.
- Equip each group with markers, aerial photographs, base maps, and lots of tracing paper (the kind architects use).
- Ask each group to map important features of the community. These might include major transportation routes, neighborhoods, prominent landmarks, and development patterns and trends. Also include places where people shop, work, live, learn, play, socialize, and celebrate. Mapping these connections to daily life will help people understand the physical interconnection within their community. Give the groups at least 45 minutes for mapping.
- Share and compare maps with larger group. This takes at least 20-30 minutes per group, sometimes more. It is important to have a good facilitator who can draw out common threads.
- Use the character maps as basis for building your vision or land use policies.

**Hints.** Give people different colored markers to distinguish different features of the community. The photo gallery activity is a good way to start a character mapping workshop. It gets people thinking visually and provides a resource to use in the mapping. Character mapping is a good follow-up to a discussion of change in the community (remember the example of a focus question we gave for the NGP).

**Habitat Mapping.** The workshop described in the Sonoran Institute's publication, *Landscapes, Wildlife, and People* (see the **Resources** for Chapter 5) is similar to a character mapping workshop, with a focus on wildlife habitat.

## MEETING ROOM LAYOUT

While we have overcome limitations ranging from someone forgetting to turn on the heat in a small town Legion Hall (participants were still wearing mittens two hours into that workshop) to trying to work with small groups in auditoriums with fixed seating, we can tell you that the choice and arrangement of meeting rooms is important. A drawing of an "ideal" meeting space is presented here.

## APPENDIX B

### Resources

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Most of the **Resources** listed for the individual chapters are intended to answer specific questions. Here we list Web sites where you will find useful general information about community planning.

The American Farmland Trust, [www.farmland.org](http://www.farmland.org), offers a wealth of information, including the Farmland Information Library, [www.farmlandinfo.org](http://www.farmlandinfo.org), and a series of fact sheets that we often use as handouts at public meetings.

The American Planning Association (APA) can be found on-line at [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org). APA's Planner's Book Service (click on "APA Store") offers numerous useful publications, including reports on practical planning topics from the Planning Advisory Service. This site also directs you to the local chapters and divisions of APA.

*Cyberbia, the Urban Planning Portal*, [www.cyberbia.org](http://www.cyberbia.org), provides planning links and discussion forums. You can often get helpful answers to questions posed in the forums.

The National Association of Counties can be found on-line at [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org). Specific areas of interest may include The County Resource Center programs for education and professional development and technical assistance, and NACo policies on community and economic development.

*The Planners Web*, [www.plannersweb.com/index.html](http://www.plannersweb.com/index.html), operated by the *Planning Commissioners Journal*, offers information specifically for citizen planners. The "Quick Tour of the Planning Universe" is good for people who are new to land use issues.

**The Sonoran Institute's Web site may be found at [www.sonoran.org](http://www.sonoran.org).**

The Internet is a great resource, but books are best at consolidating a lot of related information into one place. Books that cover the field, in different ways, are:

Randall Arendt's *Rural By Design: Maintaining Small Town Character* (APA Planners Press, 1994);

Tom Daniels' *When City and Country Collide: Managing Growth in the Metropolitan Fringe* (Island Press, 1998);

Tom Daniels, John Keller, and Mark Lapping's *The Small Town Planning Handbook* (APA Planners Press, 1995);

Christopher Duerksen and James van Hemert's *True West: Authentic Development Patterns for Small Towns and Rural Areas* (APA Planners Press, 2003);

Frederick Steiner's *The Living Landscape: An Ecological Approach to Landscape Planning* (McGraw-Hill Professional, 2000); and

Sam Stokes, Elizabeth Watson, and Shelley Mastran's *Saving America's Countryside* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

You may also find answers to specific questions in one or more of the Planning Advisory Service reports available from the Planner's Book Service. See the APA Web site, above.

#### Resources for the Introduction to Section I

The draft plan prepared by the Sonoita [Arizona] Crossroads Community Forum may be found at [www.hanksville.org/crossroads/compplan/Feb2002/contents.html](http://www.hanksville.org/crossroads/compplan/Feb2002/contents.html).

The 1996 *Kent County [Maryland] Comprehensive Plan* is posted at [www.kentcounty.com/gov/planzone/compplan.htm](http://www.kentcounty.com/gov/planzone/compplan.htm).

Contact information for the Kent County Planning Department is provided in the **Resources** for the Kent County, Maryland, Case Study, Chapter 9.

A general resource on visioning is *Planning for the Future: A Handbook on Community Visioning* (2nd Ed) produced by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania. See [www.ruralpa.org/reports.html](http://www.ruralpa.org/reports.html).

## Resources for Chapter 1

### Getting People in the Room

You can learn more about working with the media at the following Web sites:

<http://home.connection.com/~regan/Media.html>, which takes you to *Community Works*, which also offers “skills training” in other areas that may be helpful, including meeting design and organization, making videos for community television, and more.

[www.ascd.org/advocacykit/working\\_media.html](http://www.ascd.org/advocacykit/working_media.html), which presents tools for educating activists, tells you how to create a “media kit” for an event, and offers tips on how to discuss an advocacy issue with the media.

[www.dawninfo.org/co/tools/work\\_media.cfm](http://www.dawninfo.org/co/tools/work_media.cfm), which includes a “Community Organizing” section, telling you how to organize a press conference and other media events.

<http://mediamavens.com/primer.htm>, a site for entrepreneurs that tells you how to make your story relevant to the media and general public.

### Getting Out into the Community

*From Dialog to Action*, the follow-up report on the Grand County, Utah, visioning event is posted at [www.sonoran.org/resources](http://www.sonoran.org/resources).

The Twin Falls [Idaho] Planning Department is on-line at [www.tfid.org/plan\\_zone](http://www.tfid.org/plan_zone).

The results of the *Ross County [Ohio] Fair Land Use Survey* are reported in the *Ross County Smart Growth Initiative Background Report*, a document distributed to Smart Growth Task Force members. It is not available for mass distribution, but we have posted an annotated copy of its table of contents as an example of what other communities might want to include in background documents for participants in the planning process at [www.sonoran.org/resources](http://www.sonoran.org/resources).

## Resources for Chapter 2

### Making Meetings Work

Numerous resources can help with the design and conduct of meetings. Here are a few we have found helpful.

The *Community Works* link given in the **Resources** for Chapter 1 also covers meeting design: <http://home.connection.com/~regan/meeting.htm>.

The Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs and University of Minnesota Extension have published an excellent eight-volume set of *Facilitation Resources*, which may be ordered at [www.extension.umn.edu/units/dc/item.html?item=07437](http://www.extension.umn.edu/units/dc/item.html?item=07437). Your university extension service may also be helpful. For example, Montana State University has an on-line flyer on setting group goals at <http://www.montana.edu/wwwpb/pubs/mt8401.html>. We have located similar resources at Iowa State, Michigan State, Penn State (see <http://cax.aers.psu.edu>), the University of Vermont’s Center for Rural Studies, the University of Wisconsin, and other extension Web sites.

*Keep Custer County Special* may be found at: [www.sonoran.org/resources](http://www.sonoran.org/resources). It is an example of a summary of community visioning event. An example of a more detailed follow-up document comes from Douglas County, Washington. Go to [www.douglascountywa.net/2002cpu](http://www.douglascountywa.net/2002cpu) and look for the “Vision Evaluation Report.”

## Resources for the Custer County Case Study

Find out more about the San Isabel Foundation at [www.sanisabel.org](http://www.sanisabel.org) or by calling 719-783-3018. *Keep Custer County Special* is posted as an example of a follow-up document, as noted in the **Resources** for Chapter 2.

## Resources for Chapter 3

### Finding the Information

The Sonoran Institute's Economic Profile System (EPS), including a user manual and a slide show demonstrating its use, is available at [www.sonoran.org/eps](http://www.sonoran.org/eps). Use of this system is free. The EPS is designed to help communities fill in the blanks when their economic data are limited by disclosure rules.

### Describing Your Population

Start with the U.S. Bureau of the Census at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov). If you have not used this site before, we suggest you begin by clicking on American FactFinder. There is also an alphabetical index. If you are unsure about what data you need or how to use it, the Association for University Business and Economic Research provides a list of state data centers that may be able to help. See [www.auber.org](http://www.auber.org). For examples of data centers, take a look at Idaho State University's Center for Business Research and Services at [www.isu.edu/cbr](http://www.isu.edu/cbr) or the Colorado State Demographer at [www.dlg.oem2.state.co.us/demog/demog.htm](http://www.dlg.oem2.state.co.us/demog/demog.htm).

Besides the Bureau of the Census, sites that have useful demographic and economic data for the entire U.S. include GovStats at Oregon State University, <http://govinfo.kerr.orst.edu>, and the Geospatial Data Center at the University of Virginia at <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu>.

The University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research publishes a helpful pamphlet on population projections, *Population Projections: What Do We Really Know?* It may be ordered at [www.bebr.ufl.edu](http://www.bebr.ufl.edu).

### Describing Your Economy

Extensive economic information is available from the Bureau of the Census at <http://www.census.gov>; the Geospatial Data Center at [http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/active\\_data/domestic.html](http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/active_data/domestic.html); and GovStats at <http://govinfo.kerr.orst.edu>.

The Regional Economic Information System (REIS) personal income data generated by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis are posted at [www.bea.doc.gov/bea/regional/reis](http://www.bea.doc.gov/bea/regional/reis). They can also be accessed through the Geospatial Data Center, mentioned above.

Recent Census of Agriculture data are at GovStats: <http://govinfo.kerr.orst.edu/php/agri/index.php>.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) provides a directory of links to the research and analysis divisions of state employment agencies at [www.bls.gov/bls/ofolist.htm](http://www.bls.gov/bls/ofolist.htm). BLS is also the source of the Consumer Price Index and other data used to track inflation. See [www.bls.gov/bls/inflation.htm](http://www.bls.gov/bls/inflation.htm).

To help document commuting trends, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials makes the 2000 Census "Transportation Planning Package" available at <http://transportation.org/ctpp/home/default.htm>.

See also Ron Hustedde, Ron Shaffer, and Glen Pulver, *Community Economic Analysis: A How To Manual*. (North Central Regional Center for Rural Development, 1984, but still quite useful), at [www.ag.iastate.edu/centers/rdev/pubs/contents/141.htm](http://www.ag.iastate.edu/centers/rdev/pubs/contents/141.htm).

The North Central Regional Center for Rural Development may be reached at [www.ag.iastate.edu/centers/rdev/RuralDev.html](http://www.ag.iastate.edu/centers/rdev/RuralDev.html). NCRCRD is one of four regional rural economic development centers that work to connect university researchers and decision makers. Find links to the others at [www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ruralres/regional.htm](http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ruralres/regional.htm).

## Resources for Chapter 4

### A New View of Economic Development

William Galston and Karen Baehler's *Rural Development in the United States: Connecting Theory, Practice, and Possibilities* (Island Press, 1995) provides a broad overview of rural development issues.

Thomas Michael Power's *Lost Landscapes and Failed Economies: The Search for a Value of Place* (Island Press, 1996) provides a conceptual basis for the grassroots view of local economic development.

The Devens Enterprise Commission Web site provides a wealth of information about sustainable development and eco-industrial parks at [www.devensec.com](http://www.devensec.com).

Learn more about Mississippi's retirement cities certification at [www.mississippi.org/retire/index.html](http://www.mississippi.org/retire/index.html).

The *New Frontiers of Ranching: Business Diversification & Land Stewardship* may be ordered from the Sonoran Institute Web site [www.sonoran.org/publications](http://www.sonoran.org/publications). There are also examples of agricultural diversification in the Sustainable Agriculture Network's project database. Find it at [www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org). There are numerous other resources for farm and ranch diversification, especially local marketing. The Grace Factory Farm Project may be found at: <http://www.factoryfarm.org/index.html>. We have also gleaned helpful information and links from the National Agricultural Library's Alternative Farming Systems Information Center, [www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/sbjusag.htm](http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/sbjusag.htm), and state university extension services, including Washington State University's Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources, the University of California-Davis, Kansas State, the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State, Penn State, and the University of Maryland's Center for Agroecology.

Find the Ganados del Valle cooperative on-line at <http://ganados.org/index.html>.

Find out more about Heritage Tourism at [www.nationaltrust.org/heritage\\_tourism/index.html](http://www.nationaltrust.org/heritage_tourism/index.html). This site tells you how to order Amy Webb's *Getting Started: How to Succeed in Heritage Tourism*, a guide to the principles and steps of sustainable heritage tourism programs.

The National Main Street Center is the premier resource for downtown redevelopment. Find it on-line at [www.mainstreet.org/](http://www.mainstreet.org/). The Puyallup Main Street Association is at [www.puyallupmainstreet.com/](http://www.puyallupmainstreet.com/).

The Main Street effort in Newkirk, Oklahoma, is a helpful example for very small towns and earned a Great American Main Street Award in 2000. See [www.mainstreet.org/Awards/GAMSA/2000/newkirk.htm](http://www.mainstreet.org/Awards/GAMSA/2000/newkirk.htm).

The New Hampshire Main Street Center's web site provides a good summary of the Main Street principles and links to that state's Main Street communities. See [www.nhcdfa.org/mainstreet.html](http://www.nhcdfa.org/mainstreet.html).

You can get the *The Hometown Advantage: How to Defend Your Main Street Against Chain Stores ... and Why It Matters* by Stacy Mitchell from the New Rules Project, [www.newrules.org](http://www.newrules.org), of the Institute for Local Self Reliance, [www.ilsr.org](http://www.ilsr.org). You may also be interested in the New Rules magazine.

See also *Better Models for Superstore Sprawl* by Constance Beaumont (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1997).

A history of the Catron County Citizens Group, "Catron County Then and Now" is posted at [www.sonoran.org/resources](http://www.sonoran.org/resources). You may also be interested in Melinda Smith's *The Catron County Citizens Group: A Case Study in Community Collaboration* (New Mexico Center for Dispute Resolution, 1998).

### Resources for the Grand Traverse Bay Region Case Study

Brief descriptions of the New Designs for Growth program are available on-line at the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation at [www.gtrcf.org](http://www.gtrcf.org), and at the Michigan Land Use Institute at [www.mlui.org/projects/growthmanagement/newdesigns/newdesigns.html](http://www.mlui.org/projects/growthmanagement/newdesigns/newdesigns.html) or [www.mlui.org/projects/growthmanagement/newdesigns/otgnedes.html](http://www.mlui.org/projects/growthmanagement/newdesigns/otgnedes.html).

The third edition of the Grand Traverse Bay Region Development Guidebook is available from the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 387, 202 East Grandview Parkway, Traverse City, MI 49684, for \$25.00. The New Designs for Growth office is at 231-947-7566.

## Resources for the Introduction to Section III

A case study of planning in Fremont County, Idaho, is posted at [www.sonoran.org](http://www.sonoran.org). The Fremont County Planning Department is on-line at [www.co.fremont.id.us/departments/planning\\_building/index.htm](http://www.co.fremont.id.us/departments/planning_building/index.htm).

## Resources for Chapter 5

### Gathering Information

Information on the Helena, Montana, Visual Preference Survey may be obtained from that city's Community Development Department by contacting 406-447-8491. An excellent example of a visual preference survey available on the web comes from Connecticut's Capitol Region Council of Governments' Picture It Better Together project. See [www.crcog.org/Publications.htm](http://www.crcog.org/Publications.htm).

Many useful maps can be ordered from the U.S. Geological Survey <http://mapping.usgs.gov>. Note also that local officials can almost always get help finding useful maps from the local offices of state and federal agencies. Aerial photographs covering most of the U.S. can be ordered from the Farm Service Agency's Aerial Photography Field Office in Salt Lake City at [www.apfo.usda.gov/](http://www.apfo.usda.gov/) or the U.S. Geological Survey.

The U.S. Geological Survey offers extensive information about geology and water resources at [www.usgs.gov/](http://www.usgs.gov/). The Association of American State Geologists offers links to all state geological survey offices at [www.kgs.ukans.edu/AASG/index.html](http://www.kgs.ukans.edu/AASG/index.html). What is available varies from state to state, but many state geological surveys can offer assistance for your local planning effort.

Start your search for soils information at the local office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The NRCS web site at [www.nrcs.usda.gov/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/) is also worth checking out. You can determine the status of the soil survey for your area at [http://soils.usda.gov/soil\\_survey/pub\\_sur/main.htm](http://soils.usda.gov/soil_survey/pub_sur/main.htm).

*Landscapes, Wildlife, and People: A Community Workbook for Habitat Conservation*, by Carole Stark and Barb Cestero, may be ordered from Sonoran Institute, [www.sonoran.org/publications](http://www.sonoran.org/publications). This resource includes detailed directions for planning and conducting a local workshop on wildlife issues. Remember that you may be able to obtain assistance in planning for wildlife habitat from your state wildlife agency.

A directory of state historic preservation officers may be found at the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers' homepage: [www.ncshpo.org](http://www.ncshpo.org).

You can learn more about the *Traffic Calming Plan for Virginia's Rural Route 50 Corridor* at [www.virginiadot.org/projects/studynova-rt50.asp](http://www.virginiadot.org/projects/studynova-rt50.asp) or [www.route50.org/](http://www.route50.org/). You may also want to read *Profiting from Preservation: The Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation in the John Singleton Mosby Heritage Area*, which is available at [www.mosbyheritagearea.org/Report/mharprt.pdf](http://www.mosbyheritagearea.org/Report/mharprt.pdf).

### Analyzing Information

The current LESA guidebook, James R. Pease and Robert E. Coughlin's *Land Evaluation and Site Assessment: A Guidebook for Rating Agricultural Lands, 2nd Edition* (1996), may be ordered from the Soil and Water Conservation Society at <http://www.swcs.org/>.

The *Delta County, Colorado Land Evaluation Site Assessment System* is at [www.sonoran.org/resources](http://www.sonoran.org/resources).

The *Ross County Smart Growth Task Force LESA Model* is not available on-line, but information may be obtained from Tim DeWitt, at Bennett & Williams, in Columbus, Ohio: 614-882-9122.

The *Teton County [Idaho] Residential Buildout Analysis-2001* is posted at [www.sonoran.org/resources](http://www.sonoran.org/resources).

Another interesting build-out study, *Paving Over Paradise: A Study of Rural Growth in the Borderlands of Yellowstone National Park*, comes from the Park County [Montana] Environmental Council: [www.parkcountymountaincouncil.org/buildout/index.html](http://www.parkcountymountaincouncil.org/buildout/index.html).

A good source on suitability analysis is Frederick Steiner's *The Living Landscape*, cited in the **Resources** for the Introduction.

## Resources for Chapter 6

More examples of land use policies can be found in the draft plan prepared by the Sonoita [Arizona] Crossroads Community Forum and the *Kent County Comprehensive Plan*. See the **Resources** for the Introduction to Section I. Also check APA's Planner's Book Service at [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org), (click on "APA Store").

The City of Hauser, Idaho, may be reached at 208-777-9315.

The proposed *Ross County [Ohio] Smart Growth Plan* is not on-line. The Ross County Planning Department may be contacted at 740-702-3008.

*Racich v. Boone* is found at 625 NE2d 1095. If you don't have access to a law library or know how to use one, your community's attorney should be able to get a copy of this opinion for you.

### Resources for the Ross County Case Study

The Ross County, Ohio, Planning Department may be contacted at 740-702-3008. The county's web site is [www.co.ross.oh.us](http://www.co.ross.oh.us).

## Resources for Chapter 7

### Sharing Information

Larimer County's "Code of the West" may be found at [www.co.larimer.co.us/planning/planning/code\\_of\\_the\\_west](http://www.co.larimer.co.us/planning/planning/code_of_the_west).

Many other counties and some states have published pamphlets that explain the realities of rural living to prospective residents. *A Guide to Building and Living in Rural Ross County* can be obtained from the Ross County, Ohio, Planning Department. Contact information is given in the **Resources** for the Ross County Case Study, Chapter 6. *Tips on Land and Water Management for Small Farms and Ranches in Montana* may be available from that state's Department of Natural Resources: 406-444-6667.

You can download *Building from the Best of Tucson* at [www.sonoran.org/programs/si\\_sea\\_program\\_best\\_tucs](http://www.sonoran.org/programs/si_sea_program_best_tucs).

The *Rural Development Handbook* for Muskego, Wisconsin, may be found at: [www.ci.muskego.wi.us/planning/RuralDevelopmentHandbook.pdf](http://www.ci.muskego.wi.us/planning/RuralDevelopmentHandbook.pdf).

### Voluntary Land Conservation Strategies

You can obtain more information about Washington's open space tax program at the San Juan County Web site at [www.co.san-juan.wa.us/assessor/default.asp?page=current](http://www.co.san-juan.wa.us/assessor/default.asp?page=current).

If you are interested in Washington's approach, you may also find *Applying the Public Benefit Rating System as a Watershed Action Tool* helpful. This document may be downloaded at the Washington Department of Ecology's Web site at [www.ecy.wa.gov/pubs/99108.pdf](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/pubs/99108.pdf).

Michigan's farmland preservation tax program is explained at [www.michigan.gov/mda](http://www.michigan.gov/mda) under farming.

Perhaps the best way to learn about conservation easements is to contact your local land trust. The Land Trust Alliance has a directory at [www.lta.org](http://www.lta.org).

If you want to read more about voluntary land conservation, the Sonoran Institute's *Preserving Working Ranches* may be ordered from the Sonoran Institute, [www.sonoran.org/publications](http://www.sonoran.org/publications). Other sources include the American Farmland Trust (AFT), [www.farmland.org/](http://www.farmland.org/), and the Trust for Public Lands, [www.tpl.org/](http://www.tpl.org/). The Trust for Public Lands and Land Trust Alliance jointly publish an annual accounting of state and local ballot measures for parks and open space. Find the most recent version at [www.tpl.org/tier3\\_cdl.cfm?content\\_item\\_id=6403&folder\\_id=66](http://www.tpl.org/tier3_cdl.cfm?content_item_id=6403&folder_id=66).

Tom Daniels and Deborah Bowers, *Holding Our Ground: Protecting America's Farms and Farmlands* (Island Press, 1997), provides an overview of farmland protection programs, including the purchase of development rights. Chapter 13 can help you understand which farmland protection strategies may work best in your

community. Another important resource, *Saving American Farmland: What Works*, may be ordered from American Farmland Trust.

For information on Peninsula Township, Michigan, try [www.peninsulatownship.com](http://www.peninsulatownship.com).

Gunnison County, Colorado's Land Preservation Board may be reached at 970-641-0248. For more information on the Routt County, Colorado, purchase of development rights program contact Routt County Cooperative Extension Service at 970-879-0825 or via e-mail at [routt@coop.ext.colostate.edu](mailto:routt@coop.ext.colostate.edu).

### **Voluntary Redevelopment Strategies**

Major federal housing programs are administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov), and the USDA's Rural Housing Service: [www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/index.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/index.html).

A large collection of links to information on housing and community revitalization can be found at [www.knowledgeplex.org](http://www.knowledgeplex.org).

### **Public Facilities Planning**

See the **Resources** for Chapter 9.

### **Regulatory Strategies**

The earliest European settlements in the United States were developed in accord with Spain's Laws of the Indies, which were as specific and restrictive as a modern zoning ordinance. One source of more information on New Mexico's settlement pattern, then and now, is Jose Rivera's *Acequia Culture; Water, Land, and Community in the Southwest* (University of New Mexico Press, 1998). Land use regulation in the Massachusetts Bay Colony is documented by William Cronon in *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (Hill & Wang Publishers, 1984).

The best summary of takings law for a layperson is *Takings Law in Plain English* by Christopher J. Duerksen and Richard J. Roddewig. This publication is available from the National Trust for Historic Preservation at [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org). The National Trust also publishes *Procedural Due Process in Plain English*, by Bradford J. White and Paul W. Edmondson. While subtitled "A Guide for Preservation Commissions," this publication will be helpful to any elected or appointed officials. The American Planning Association also offers publications on the takings issue: check the Planner's Book Service.

The *Planner's Web* cited in the **Resources** for the Introduction is a helpful source of information on most regulatory planning strategies and tools.

Learn more about the transfer of development rights (they're called development credits in this case) at the New Jersey Pinelands Commission's web site: [www.state.nj.us/pinelands](http://www.state.nj.us/pinelands).

The Maryland Department of Planning has several on-line publications on urban growth boundaries, adequate public facilities ordinances, and other topics that may be useful to people in other states. Look for these booklets at [www.op.state.md.us/planning/order\\_publications.htm](http://www.op.state.md.us/planning/order_publications.htm).

## **Resources for Chapter 8**

### **Affordable Housing**

Housing affordability is addressed in the report of the Millennial Housing Commission, which may be found at [www.mhc.gov](http://www.mhc.gov). A detailed analysis of the housing needs of working families may be found in three reports of the Housing Policy Center: *Housing America's Working Families; Paycheck to Paycheck*; and *Housing America's Working Families: A Further Exploration*. These reports may be downloaded from [www.nhc.org/comm\\_and\\_pubs\\_publication.htm](http://www.nhc.org/comm_and_pubs_publication.htm).

HUD's estimated median family income data may be found on-line at [www.huduser.org/datasets/il/fmr02/index.html](http://www.huduser.org/datasets/il/fmr02/index.html).

The **Resources** for Chapter 7 direct you to the federal housing agencies. The Rural Community Assistance Corporation affordable housing primer can be found at [www.rcac.org/programs/awhhp/primer2.pdf](http://www.rcac.org/programs/awhhp/primer2.pdf).

Many people are aware of Habitat for Humanity, [www.habitat.org](http://www.habitat.org), which brings families and communities in need together with volunteers and resources to build decent, affordable housing.

Learn more about the Community Reinvestment Act at [www.fdic.gov/regulations/community/index.html](http://www.fdic.gov/regulations/community/index.html) or [www.federalreserve.gov/dcca/cra/](http://www.federalreserve.gov/dcca/cra/).

The Washington Community Reinvestment Association is at [www.wcra.net/](http://www.wcra.net/). The Housing Assistance Council describes the WCRA and other nonprofit housing efforts that may be of interest at [www.ruralhome.org/pubs/nonprofit/jointventures/contents.htm](http://www.ruralhome.org/pubs/nonprofit/jointventures/contents.htm).

The Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit Program of Montgomery County, Maryland, gives developers a density bonus if they build a certain number of moderately priced units. Get information at [www.mc-mncppc.org/research/analysis/housing/affordable/mpdu.shtm](http://www.mc-mncppc.org/research/analysis/housing/affordable/mpdu.shtm).

The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board is on-line at [hwww.vhcb.org](http://hwww.vhcb.org).

The Gunnison County Housing Authority Coordinator can be reached at 970-641-7900.

### Open Space

The Kent County, Maryland, zoning ordinance is on-line at [www.kentcounty.com/gov/planzone/newzone/land-use.pdf](http://www.kentcounty.com/gov/planzone/newzone/land-use.pdf).

Grant County, Washington, farmland protection measures are described in the Washington State Office of Community Development's *Achieving Growth Management Goals: Local Success Stories*, which can be downloaded from [www.ocd.wa.gov/info/lgd/growth/publications/index.tpl](http://www.ocd.wa.gov/info/lgd/growth/publications/index.tpl). The Grant County Zoning Ordinance is at [www.co.grant.wa.us/planning/index.htm](http://www.co.grant.wa.us/planning/index.htm).

Rio Arriba County's *Agricultural Conservation Ordinance* is posted at [www.sonoran.org/resources](http://www.sonoran.org/resources).

A brief description of Fremont County's planning effort and documents may be found at [www.sonoran.org](http://www.sonoran.org).

The Jackson Meadows development has its own web site at [hwww.jacksonmeadow.com](http://hwww.jacksonmeadow.com). You can learn about the other Minnesota project, The Fields of St. Croix, at the National Association of Homebuilders web site at [www.nahb.org/generic.aspx?genericContentID=507](http://www.nahb.org/generic.aspx?genericContentID=507).

General resources for open space design include the Arendt, Duerksen/van Hemert, and Steiner books cited in the **Resources** for the Introduction. For the *Rural Development Handbook* of Muskego, Wisconsin, see the **Resources** for Chapter 7.

The Center for Green Space Design, <http://greenspacedesign.org/home.html>, promotes open space development patterns.

The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy provides a useful summary of research on the "Economic Value of Open Space" at [www.lincolnst.edu/education/val\\_tax/workpap/cfpap.html](http://www.lincolnst.edu/education/val_tax/workpap/cfpap.html).

There is also a chapter on this topic in Arendt's *Rural By Design*, listed in the **Resources** for the Introduction. The Trust for Public Lands offers its report on the *Economic Benefits of Parks and Open Space* at [www.tpl.org/tier2\\_rp2.cfm?folder\\_id=727](http://www.tpl.org/tier2_rp2.cfm?folder_id=727).

Find the Copper River Watershed project on-line at <http://www.copperriver.org>.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is found at [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org). Click on "Publications" to find NTHP's "Dollars and Sense" series, which documents the economic benefits of historic preservation in several states and major cities.

## Central Business District

The Evanston, Wyoming, Main Street story is not well-documented on-line, but the City's home page is at <http://www.evanstonwy.org/>. Evanston's planning department can be reached at 307-783-6458.

## Resources for the Kent County Case Study

Find the Kent County Planning Department, including the Agricultural Land Preservation Board, on-line at: [www.kentcounty.com/gov/planzone](http://www.kentcounty.com/gov/planzone). A 2003 evaluation of Maryland's statewide farmland protection program may be found at [www.mda.state.md.us/agland/malpfprt.pdf](http://www.mda.state.md.us/agland/malpfprt.pdf).

## Resources for Chapter 9

### Fiscal Impact Analysis

For Cost of Community Services Studies, check American Farmland Trust's web site. The Sonoran Institute has also sponsored COCS studies as part of the Western Community Stewardship Forum at [www.sonoran.org/resources](http://www.sonoran.org/resources).

Our friends at the Rural Planning Institute have allowed us to post an excellent example of the case study approach to fiscal impact analysis from Colorado at [www.sonoran.org/resources](http://www.sonoran.org/resources). Another interesting source on the fiscal impacts of development is the Natural Resource Defense Council's *Developments and Dollars*, which may be found at [www.nrdc.org/cities/smartgrowth/dd/ddinx.asp](http://www.nrdc.org/cities/smartgrowth/dd/ddinx.asp).

### Capital Improvements Program

Levels of service for highways are well-illustrated at <http://yerkes.mit.edu/DOT1/LOS/LOS.html>.

Kent County, Maryland, publishes a detailed annual report. It is not on-line, but contact information for the planning department is given in the **Resources** for the Kent County Case Study in Chapter 8. Another good example comes from the New Berlin, Wisconsin, "Planning Library" at [www.newberlin.org/dcd/pdf/yearinreview2001.pdf](http://www.newberlin.org/dcd/pdf/yearinreview2001.pdf).

### Paying for Public Facilities

New Castle County, Delaware, requires a combined performance and maintenance guarantee prior to plan approval. See Article 27 of the county's Unified Development Code at [www.co.new-castle.de.us/CountyCode/CoCode1.htm](http://www.co.new-castle.de.us/CountyCode/CoCode1.htm). Impact fees are established in Article 14.

The Brookings Institution has published a useful report, *The Link Between Growth Management and Housing Affordability: The Academic Evidence*, which may be downloaded at [www.brookings.edu/es/urban/issues/smart-growth/policies.htm](http://www.brookings.edu/es/urban/issues/smart-growth/policies.htm).

## Resources for Chapter 10

The most relevant Web resource on Dillon's Rule we have located (although its conclusions are controversial) comes from the Brookings Institution, which may be downloaded at [www.brookings.edu/es/urban/publications/dillonsrule.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/es/urban/publications/dillonsrule.pdf).

Your county or city attorney should be able to help you understand how Dillon's Rule is applied in your state.

For more on Wisconsin's Smart Growth legislation, check the 1000 Friends of Wisconsin's Web page: [www.1kfriends.org/](http://www.1kfriends.org/). It provides information on the comprehensive planning and transportation grants program that is helping Wisconsin communities address their planning needs. Also visit the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' "Smart Growth" page at [www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/es/science/landuse/smart\\_growth](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/es/science/landuse/smart_growth). You can download guidebooks and other publications that could be useful to communities outside Wisconsin from this site.

### Resources for the Grand County Case Study

Grand County's official web site is [www.grandcountyutah.net](http://www.grandcountyutah.net), but the facilities planning process is not documented on-line.

### Resources for Chapter 11

The May, 2000, *Rio Arriba Ag Conservation Study* and *Rio Arriba County's Agricultural Conservation Study and Agricultural Conservation Ordinance* may be found at [www.sonoran.org/resources](http://www.sonoran.org/resources).

Jean Richardson's *Partnerships in Communities: Reweaving the Fabric of Rural America* was published by Island Press in 2000.

Find the Heartland Center for Leadership Development at [www.heartlandcenter.info](http://www.heartlandcenter.info). Besides providing training programs, the Heartland Center hosts the W.W. Kellogg Collection of Rural Community Development Resources.

Information about NACo's *County Leadership Handbook* and Advanced Leadership Training Seminars may be found under "Education and Professional Development" at [www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org). Or call 202-393-6226. The University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government is on-line at [www.cviog.uga.edu](http://www.cviog.uga.edu).

A description of the Virginia Institute for Planning Commissioners is found in Michael Chandler's article in *Planning Commissioners Journal* #29. This article may be downloaded for a modest fee at [www.plannersweb.com/articles/frame-pdf.html](http://www.plannersweb.com/articles/frame-pdf.html).

Learn more about the Planning Association of Washington's "Short Course" at [www.planningpaw.org](http://www.planningpaw.org).

Find information about Massachusetts' Citizen Planner Training Collaborative at [www.umass.edu/masscptc/about.html](http://www.umass.edu/masscptc/about.html).

Learn more about the Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Education Institute (PMPEI) and the training courses offered at <http://cax.aers.psu.edu/pmpei>.

### Resources for the Wallowa County Case Study

For information on the salmon restoration plan go to [www.co.wallowa.or.us/salmonplan](http://www.co.wallowa.or.us/salmonplan).

Wallowa County Planning is on-line at [www.co.wallowa.or.us/pd](http://www.co.wallowa.or.us/pd). Or call 541-426-4543 Ext. 24.

## ABOUT THE SONORAN INSTITUTE

A nonprofit organization established in 1990, the Sonoran Institute brings diverse people together to accomplish our shared conservation goals.

The Sonoran Institute works with communities to conserve and restore important natural landscapes in Western North America, including the wildlife and cultural values of these lands. The lasting benefits of the Sonoran Institute's work are healthy landscapes and vibrant, livable communities that embrace conservation as an integral element of their quality of life and economic vitality.

Through our approach, the Sonoran Institute contributes to a day when:

- Healthy landscapes, including native plants and wildlife, diverse habitat, open spaces, clean air and water, extend from Northern Mexico to Western Canada;
- People embrace stewardship as a fundamental value by caring for their communities, economies and natural landscapes; and
- Resilient economies support strong communities, diverse opportunities for residents, productive working landscapes, and stewardship of the natural world.

For more information visit our Web site at [www.sonoran.org](http://www.sonoran.org)

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## ABOUT THE WESTERN COMMUNITY STEWARDSHIP FORUM

The Western Community Stewardship Forum (WCSF) is a training and assistance program providing rural Western county officials resources to effectively manage growth.

To participate in WCSF, teams of rural county officials and community leaders are selected through a competitive process. Teams then attend a training workshop, where they are introduced to a broad range of land-use planning, strategies, and tools; and encouraged to address their local planning issues. Participating counties are eligible to receive follow-up assistance and implement their growth management strategies through a competitive grants program.

Through WCSF, the Sonoran Institute works collaboratively with local elected officials to help them understand local economic trends, the dynamics of community building, and how to respond to the consequences of growth and change. WCSF is a partnership of the Sonoran Institute and the National Association of Counties (NACo). More information can be found at [www.sonoran.org](http://www.sonoran.org)

## THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization in the country that represents county governments. With headquarters in Washington, D.C., NACo's primary mission is to ensure that the county government message is heard and understood in the White House and the halls of Congress. NACo's objectives are to:

- Serve as a liaison with other levels of government;
- Improve public understanding of counties;
- Act as a national advocate for counties; and
- Help counties find innovative methods for meeting the challenges they face.

Through its research arm, the National Association of Counties Research Foundation, NACo provides county officials with a wealth of expertise and services in a broad range of subject areas, including job training, environmental programs, human services, affordable housing, county governance, and community infrastructure.

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