

**Appendix G:**  
Irasville Public Forums Information

# Irasville Public Forum

## Creating A Master Plan for A New Town Center

*Thursday November 29, 2001*

6:30 – 7:00	<b>Doors Open</b>	<i>Display Material Available</i>
7:00 – 7:10	<b>TBD...</b>	Introduction – this might include the presentation of the build – out and presumption of future changes to be accommodated in Irasville
7:10 – 7:30	<b>Gina Campoli</b>	<i>The Importance of Growth Center Planning such as Irasville</i>
7:30 – 8:45	<b>Bob White / Groups</b>	<i>Creating a Village at Irasville: Design Alternatives to explore for the evening</i> <b>Group 1: Continue the Status quo – infill and expand the Irasville Growth Center</b>  <b>Group 2: Reinvestment future: making Irasville more of a traditional town center</b>  <b>Group 3: The village for the future: maximizing integration of “green” technologies, and other Smart Growth concepts.</b>
8:45 – 9:25	<b>Discussion:</b>	<i>Groups present their work on the Alternatives, Q&amp;A time...</i>
9:325 – 9:30	<b>Closing Remarks</b>	<i>Short and sweet</i>

On a bright spring evening in May over eighty people from all parts of the Valley attended a public forum on Irasville. The purpose of the evening was to stimulate creative thinking around the subjects of growth and change. A variety of speakers, planners, designers an author and others, shared their love of, and vision for the Valley. The response from the audience was encouraging; the majority of people responding to the survey distributed that evening support a growth center at Irasville. The survey also clearly indicates some of the other amenities and services Valley residents envision for the growth center, green spaces, bus stops and bike lanes to name a few. It's now time to take the next step and use the information provided by the community to create a master development plan for what can be a vibrant new town center.

NO.	Question	Yes	No
1	Should Irasville continue to serve as the residential and commercial growth center In the Valley?	98 %	2%
2	Do you think promoting growth in Irasville Will help to prevent sprawl in outlying areas?	84 %	16%
3	As the local employment center, should additional job growth include light industry such as Mad River Canoe?	87 %	13%
4	Should green spaces and parks be included in future plans for Irasville?	100 %	
5	As Irasville develops should it follow a traditional village Pattern? OR	97 %	3%
6	Should Irasville be developed as a single story shopping center?	12%	88 %
7	Should second and third story apartments be encouraged in Irasville?	80 %	20%
8	Should the Town work towards municipal sewer and Water to support and contain growth in Irasville?	95 %	5%
9	Should there be sidewalks with curbs in Irasville?	95 %	5%
10	Should utility lines in Irasville be buried?	94 %	6%
11	Should there be street lighting and trees in Irasville Similar to those at Northfield Bank?	97 %	3%
12	Should the Waitsfield Town Offices move to Irasville?	49 %	51 %
13	Should Irasville have bus stops?	94 %	6%
14	Should Irasville have bike lanes?	98 %	2%

## Workshop #2: Planning charrette to develop alternative design concepts:

This workshop will focus on two issues:

1. A discussion about the mix of uses that might be accommodated in Irasville, and the application of those uses to...
2. Design "visions" or "concepts" for village plans.

This will be a hands - on exercise, done in teams. Each team will be designated to exploring a particular approach to the problem of what, where, and how. The reason we are assigning groups to topics is because differences of opinion have already emerged about what types of land uses should be included in Irasville, and it seems better to organize those issues early – on, so that our investigation can be well organized and consistent.

### **EPA SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES**

---

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

### **VT GROWTH CENTER PRINCIPLES**

---

1. Maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village centers separated by countryside.
2. Promote compact residential and economic development at a scale appropriate for the community and region.
3. Enable choice in transportation.
4. Protect environmental and historical/cultural resources.
5. Provide public access to open spaces.
6. Encourage agricultural and forest uses.
7. Provide diverse housing choices.
8. Support diverse business opportunities.
9. Balance growth with economic potential and public services.
10. Involve stakeholders and the public.

### **An Overall Program of landuses:**

**Residential:** the alternatives accommodate residential uses in different ways. There is interest and an apparent market for a variety of housing types ranging from "affordable" housing for employees and valley resident of lower and moderate income, as well as elderly housing. Current densities in these areas are perceived to be inadequate, and in a several instances, the existing housing is perceived to be of pretty low value. We will identify areas of new housing, replacement at higher density, and major rehabilitation. While we don't have a target for the number of housing units that might be provided – we should strive for a significant figure to get to the heart of a living working village center.

**SFR:** There appears to be market demand for single family housing in a village setting which would more likely be single family homes. To achieve densities we should be looking at relatively narrow lots on neighborhood streets, and a mix of house types. We should plan for housing to reflect the reduced family size in the community – further support for smaller denser lots.

**MFR:** Attached multi family housing exists in Irasville but mostly of the “Ski condo” version that really isn’t fitting for a village environment. Alternative housing types for MF housing could be developed either as separate blocks or mixed in with SF houses in neighborhoods.

**Affordable:** Smaller units on smaller lots will allow for more affordable housing to be built, and should be a high priority of the planning process Irasville. Wherever housing can go on upper floors, or tucked in small areas integrated with a mixed - use framework of development it should be included.

**Retail & Commercial Services:** Irasville currently has combination of local service businesses as well as tourism/recreation businesses. Most of these uses can fit just fine in a traditional town center framework with multi - use buildings. A number of existing uses have indicated either the desire to expand – and future plans should reflect those possibilities. Other new uses may also want to come to Irasville, but should be scaled appropriately to the village environment.

**Professional/Technological:** Local job growth can be accommodated by growth in a number of existing businesses and making places where new businesses can build or settle into commercial/office building blocks has strong potential short and long term market potential. It is assumed that most professional offices could occupy multi story buildings on upper floors .

**Open space and parks:** making a central community open space, and a series of smaller linked parks can be easily accommodated within a village structure, connected via trails, sidewalks, and other routes.

**Streets and parking:** We should expand upon the street system that is based upon the “Slow Road”, and a series of other side streets. Traffic calming along RT 100 should also be explored to slow speeds, and the layout and design of neighborhood streets should promote interconnectedness and slow pedestrian friendly characteristics. Share as much parking as possible between commercial uses, max. on – street parking, designate smaller amounts of off - street parking for residences, service and delivery.

#### BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF EACH OF THE DESIGN ALTERNATIVES:

**Landownership:** We recognize that all the parcels in the Irasville growth center are privately owned. We have met with a number of the business owners and know particular plans that they have. At the same time it is our job to take a long - term view for landuses that may outlive current ownership /operations. Some alternatives are designed to specifically reflect short - term possibilities that effect existing businesses, but others are specifically designed in blissful ignorance of that information so we can be free to explore larger possibilities.

**Density:** There are no preconceived densities in mind at this point, but the relative amounts of development for the different land uses is outlined as follows:

*Note: Current density in the zoning bylaws would allow*

**Infrastructure:** We are assuming adequate municipal sewer and water to serve the different alternatives, because if we accept the loss of valuable land to leachfields and well isolation distances – we will be thwarted in our efforts to design for a critical mass of village landuses. The phasing of infrastructure

## **Alternative #2: A reinvestment future - remaking a "Main Street"**

This alternative is based upon a more aggressive intent to promote greater reinvestment in the Irasville growth center. This scenario has several presumptions:

- There are a number of underutilized parcels in Irasville that are worthy of greater levels of development for village center style growth.
- There is a select group of parcels that were developed before the current policies on village development, and are decidedly out of character with the desire to create an expanded village that bespeaks more of a traditional VT town center.
- Creating a town center must address an enhanced relationship between RT 100 and the village center instead of the "avoidance" strategy that the "Slow Road" has advanced. Remaking a traditional Main Street as a center of public life and commerce would need to have some new development be oriented to face the street. This would include provisions for traffic calming, pedestrian facilities, and perhaps even on - street parking.

Redevelopment might include:

- Changes to RT 100 to make a clearly defined series of Main Street blocks with on - street parking, sidewalks, and traffic calming.
- Adaptive reuse and additions to historic properties for increased density/utilization along RT 100. Emphasis should be placed on greater commercial density facing RT 100 as the community "Main Street."
- Replacement or significant renovations to "outdated" commercial buildings for higher densities and mixed uses.
- New, mixed use infill development in a village - like framework of blocks and streets.
- Creation of public open spaces to have a village green or similar public space.
- Residential uses are primarily added in upper stories of commercial/mixed use buildings, with smaller scale houses.
- A stormwater/wetlands plan should be considered to be a part of the village design with connected open spaces for water treatment. Larger areas needed for wetland replacement, and stormwater treatment should be defined either on location within the village, or on adjacent parcels.

The emphasis is still on the accommodation of growth of existing mostly locally owned and/or operated businesses. The orientation of more business to RT 100 along a Main Street could contribute to either more local business expansion or commercial uses.

**Development program for the Alternatives Design Workshop:**

**Alternative #2**

Consider this as a guide for the development of each of the alternatives: blocks will be provided so simulate these elements for each group's work. Alternative #3 should strive for the high end of these numbers, Alt. #1 the low end and Alt. 2 could be anywhere between.

**Housing:** *(there are approx. 80 units of housing in Irasville currently, approx. 60 rental apts. /other SF)*

Between 40 – 80 units of rental apartment housing for single employees in upper floors of mixed use buildings (25000 – 50000 SF - over commercial space below)

Between 25 – 80 single family houses on small lots (5 – 10 units per acre)

Between 25 – 80 units of multi family buildings

Extended care/elderly residential facility of 25 units (approx. 12 -15,000 SF)

**Commercial/ office/professional:** *(there is approx. 180,000 SF of commercial space in Irasville currently)*

Between 50 – 100,000 SF of ground floor commercial space for retail uses.

Between 25 – 75,000 SF of second floor office/professional space.

1 – 3 3500 – 5000 SF business incubator spaces.

**Community facilities/spaces:** *(there is no public space/facilities in Irasville currently)*

Possible Town Office building (2500 – 4500 SF)

Daycare Center

Town recreation center/youth center

Church site

Town green

Pocket parks

Trail system

Community garden site

School site? (perhaps a grade K – 3 school if the exist. school is otherwise Ok for capacity)

**Infrastructure:** *(assumed to be available)*

Municipal sewer

Municipal water

Powerline easement

Public parking areas

**Smart Growth Elements:**

Targeted infrastructure allocation to new mixed - use development.

Promote smart transportation with integrated public transit into growth center

Promote "Park and Walk" village environment for both visitors and residents

Develop coordinated stormwater and wetlands mitigation/management plan with the village center plan

Strong integration of affordable housing achieved less by subsidies but more by compact development patterns, and efficient design.

### **Alternative #3: The new village:**

This alternative presumes that the life and work of Irasville could dramatically change over the next 50 years, and that a new vision of a village will be created under the most concerted effort to "Grow with Smarts".

Whereas the past historical development of the village has evolved from farming hamlet to a traditional commercial / job center, the new future will more consciously create an integrated environment where people live and work in closer proximity, and will define a compact village center that has a dramatic increase in residential neighborhoods and mixed uses

Among the elements of this alternative are:

- Engage RT 100 with new development to enliven the street but instead of having on – street parking, consider blocks of frontage streets with parking and new buildings.
- Higher densities and numbers of housing units, enabling families to move into the village center, and have greater proximity to live/work/school and other landuses. Provide a greater variety of housing types ranging for traditional family SF houses in discernable neighborhoods, apartments and "big house" multiple unit structures, congregate housing for elderly, and alternative family needs such as might be accommodated by co-housing, live-work units, and "granny flat" accessory units.
- Tear downs of "conventional" commercial properties such as single - story commercial exclusive buildings. These might be replaced by 2-3 story mixed use buildings. New buildings face streets and/or public spaces instead of parking lots.
- Mixed-use job centers where high tech businesses occupy "Main Street" and side street locations with support uses above and below them in multi – story buildings. Service for these uses could be shared alleys or service driveways for multiple businesses.
- Since development will be more concentrated within the growth center, the stormwater/wetlands plan may need to be at the edge of the village center, using adjacent lands for wetland replacement, and stormwater treatment.

**Development program for the Alternatives Design Workshop:**

**Alternative #3:**

**Housing:** *(there are approx. 80 units of housing in Irasville currently, approx. 60 rental apts. /other SF)*

Between 40 – 80 units of rental apartment housing for single employees in upper floors of mixed use buildings (25000 – 50000 SF - over commercial space below)

Between 40 – 120 single family houses on small lots (5 – 10 units per acre)

Between 40 – 120 units of multi family buildings

Extended care/elderly residential facility of 25 - 40 units (approx. 12 -15,000 SF)

**Commercial/ office/professional:** *(there is approx. 180,000 SF of commercial space in Irasville currently)*

Between 50 – 100,000 SF of ground floor commercial space for retail uses.

Between 25 – 75,000 SF of second floor office/professional space.

1 – 3 3500 – 5000 SF business incubator spaces.

**Community facilities/spaces:** *(there is no public space/facilities in Irasville currently)*

Possible Town Office building (2500 – 4500 SF)

Daycare Center

Town recreation center/youth center

1 – 2 Church sites

Town green

Pocket parks

Trail system

Community garden site

School site

**Infrastructure:** *(assumed to be available)*

Municipal sewer

Municipal water

Powerline easement

Public parking areas

**Smart Growth Elements:**

Targeted infrastructure allocation to new mixed - use development.

Promote smart transportation with integrated public transit into growth center

Promote "Park and Walk" village environment for both visitors and residents

Develop coordinated stormwater and wetlands mitigation/management plan with the village center plan

Strong integration of affordable housing achieved less by subsidies but more by compact development patterns, and efficient design.

# Agency of Natural Resources Wastewater Infrastructure Funding Program and Growth Centers White Paper

## Background

The “growth center” planning concept encourages municipalities to develop and implement policies that concentrate mixed use compact development in certain planned and designated places within a municipality or region, while allowing the surrounding landscape, outside the growth center, to retain a lower density of development, a far greater proportion of open space, and more rural, open characteristics.

The call for developing traditional growth centers is often viewed as a “quality of life” issue and a reaction to the homogenized landscape of endless residential subdivisions, strip malls and fast food restaurant alleys that demand people drive from one business to another. While aesthetics and protecting historic settlement patterns are certainly important considerations, growth center development also has direct environmental benefits:

- More compact development means people drive less, which reduces air pollution.
- Growth centers reduce the acreage lost to parking lots, roads, and other impervious surfaces, which curbs the volume of stormwater run-off and, in turn, improves water quality in nearby rivers, lakes and streams.
- Compact development reduces the amount of wildlife habitat lost to development.

The growth center concept does not stop growth. It provides an alternative to dispersed growth that is land consumptive, may be fiscally imprudent, and separates and spreads residential, commercial, business, industrial and civic uses, and the infrastructure needed to serve these uses, across the landscape.

Growth centers that consist of moderate to high-density development, a range of housing options with nearby shopping and employment opportunities, and pedestrian, bicycle and transit accessibility are some of Vermont’s most attractive and livable places. They include large portions of towns and cities as diverse as St. Albans, Randolph, Vergennes, Putney, Saint Johnsbury, and Bennington. These growth centers typically retain their historic character and have a distinguishing sense of place.

The rural landscape surrounding growth centers should not be entirely exempt from growth and development. Agriculture and the forest industry and associated uses are encouraged there; however, there is far less built development relative to the development in growth centers, natural resources are protected, and the rural landscape’s significant farm and resource lands should be conserved.

Growth Centers are not highway-oriented, commercial and industrial zones located on the edge and outside of growth centers and characterized by: separated uses, large lots, individual parking facilities, auto dependency, and few transportation alternatives. Growth centers are also not

isolated and scattered residential development characterized by: large lots (over .5 acres), little social and economic diversity, auto-dependency, and not connected to employment centers, and educational, commercial, and civic uses by transit, bike paths, sidewalks and other alternative modes of transportation.

### **Growth Centers and the ANR Wastewater Infrastructure Funding Program**

The Agency of Natural Resources supports growth center planning in Vermont communities by targeting its funding programs for wastewater improvements toward projects that will serve growth centers. In the past, the Agency gave the highest priority ranking to projects that solved public health and environmental problems. The Agency remains committed to first addressing threats to public health and the environment, but also believes state resources should facilitate development in growth centers and not lead to excessive scattered, unplanned growth in outlying areas.

In addition, the Agency supports exploring methods of using infrastructure in innovative ways to solve environmental public health and environmental problems without inadvertently creating incentives for undesirable development patterns (i.e., using on-site or cluster systems instead of creating line extensions which may solve a health or environmental problem outside a growth center, but support undesirable development along the extension).

The Agency recognizes that the term "growth center" does not *require* growth to occur there. There may be communities that do not wish additional growth to occur in certain traditional growth centers within their boundaries, yet these centers may benefit from wastewater improvements funded by Agency programs.

There may be instances when the most technically correct, economically efficient, or environmentally beneficial wastewater alternative requires construction of a new wastewater facility or extension of an existing system to serve areas outside of a growth center boundary. In such a case, land use planning, land conservation measures (such as conservation easements) or regulatory mechanisms *must* be in place at the local or state levels to assure that the new development benefiting from state investments not constitute scattered growth.

The Agency of Commerce and Community Development, in conjunction with numerous planners, community leaders and planning organizations, has undertaken several definitive growth center studies during the past 15 years (see attached bibliography). These studies are the basis for the following growth center characteristics that will be applied when communities are applying for the Agency of Natural Resources' loan and grant programs.

### **Why Growth Centers?**

The Agency of Natural resources supports growth center planning for two reasons:

1. Water supply and wastewater infrastructure is more cost-efficient when development is concentrated in growth centers. Savings to the state, communities, and users may be

achieved by shorter pipes, less infiltration and inflow, and greater utilization of existing facilities, which spreads costs over a large number of users.

2. Concentrating development rather than spreading it across the landscape protects natural resources. These resources include:

**Water quality** – Surface waters benefit from growth center planning. Concentrated development is more likely to protect vegetated buffers and riparian zones, which are essential to maintaining water quality and healthy watersheds. Also, the amount of impervious surfaces such as parking lots, roads and roof surfaces are minimized, thus limiting stormwater and non-point source pollution within the watershed.

**Air quality** – Growth centers make alternative modes of transportation, such as walking, cycling, transit, and rail for both passengers and freight, more viable as an alternative to the single occupancy vehicle because growth centers are concentrated development nodes. Vermonters can easily combine and reduce automobile trips when their jobs, schools, stores, and others services are located near one another within a growth center. Although today's cars and trucks have better emission controls than the automobiles of 30 years ago, the number of annual driver miles in Vermont has doubled during the past three decades.

**Wildlife habitat** - Many animal species require large areas of undisturbed forestland and open space. These species, and thus species diversity, are threatened by patterns of development that either directly consume or fragment habitat into isolated pockets.

**Forest and agricultural resources** - Forest and agricultural land may be directly consumed by scattered development, and indirectly affected as remaining undeveloped parcels can not be productively and economically managed due to their small size, multiple ownership, and scattered locations.

**Scenic resources and recreational open space** – The Vermont landscape is defined by historic towns and villages surrounded by open space consisting of rural agricultural and forest lands. The beauty of this landscape is one of the State's main tourist attractions and is an important part of numerous outdoor recreational opportunities. Growth center planning protects and reinforces Vermont's historic pattern of development.

## **Growth Centers**

There are four types of growth centers for the purposes of the ANR Infrastructure Funding Programs:

1. **Downtowns and the residential neighborhood that serve them:** Downtowns are located within larger towns and cities. Downtowns have the following definition in state law:

“Downtown” means the traditional central business district of a community that has served as the center for socio-economic interaction in the community, characterized by a cohesive core of commercial and mixed use buildings, often interspersed with schools, churches, homes, and public spaces, religious and residential buildings and public spaces, typically arranged along a main street and intersecting side streets and served by public infrastructure. Title 24 Sec. 2791 (3)

In addition, the surrounding compact residential neighborhoods that serve the downtown – and are connected by pedestrian access – are considered part of downtown growth centers. These neighborhoods may have civic and commercial uses within them. Industrial uses may also be within or on the edges of downtown growth centers.

2. **Traditional town centers:** Traditional “town center” growth centers are similar to downtowns but occur at a smaller scale that reflects the economy and population of the town or region that is served. They are communities’ historic centers and are a cohesive core where housing, shopping, and jobs are located within close proximity, allowing residents to live near where they work. The pattern of development in these centers is often multi-story, mixed use, and compact. They are, however, generally smaller in scale than downtowns, and range in activity and size from crossroads hamlets to bustling villages. Some towns may have several traditional town centers within their boundaries. The mix of uses that defines this type of growth center is identified in growth center characteristic #3 below. Industrial uses within or on the edges of the traditional “town center” growth center may be included.
3. **New or emerging growth centers:** New or emerging growth centers are designated area(s) within cities or towns, and are planned and regulated with tools such as mixed use zoning and design standards to have the characteristics of downtown or traditional “town center” growth centers. They are places where housing, shopping, and jobs are located within close proximity, and residents can live near where they work. The pattern of development, including planned development, is often multi-story, mixed use, compact, and supported by appropriate infrastructure.

New or emerging growth centers may include areas where little or no development has previously occurred. New or emerging growth centers may also include existing commercial strip development and other forms of scattered development, including residential areas, that are being re-planned in to more concentrated, mixed-use patterns, and that have the growth center characteristics identified below. Ski area villages are considered new or emerging growth centers if they are designated in the town plan, will benefit the community as a whole, include public spaces and amenities, and have the growth center characteristics identified below.

4. **Existing and proposed industrial parks:** The Agency believes that the town's or region's overall strategy should be to keep jobs within the three types of growth centers identified above; however, there may be some exceptions to this. Some uses, such as warehouses, trucking-related businesses, or certain manufacturing processes, may be more appropriately located outside of new or existing traditional centers because they 1.) would be incompatible with nearby residential areas, 2.) require immediate access to a major railroad or highway, or 3.) need substantial amounts of land.

New industrial parks should be designed or existing parks redesigned to be dense and concentrated, while allowing for business expansion, and without excessive parking lots, lawns, and other land-consumptive, suburban style site design features. This can be achieved by high density, limited setback, and lot coverage requirements, multi-story buildings, and shared parking. Industrial parks should be conducive to pedestrian movement throughout the park, and have pedestrian, transit and/or, other alternative transportation links to downtown, residential and traditional village areas. Infrastructure connections that serve industrial parks must not contribute to scattered development outside of growth centers.

#### **Growth Center Characteristics:**

Growth centers must have the following characteristics for the purposes of the Agency of Natural Resources Infrastructure Funding Programs:

1. **The growth center is part of a comprehensive vision for the municipality. The city or town needs to articulate this vision in its duly adopted and approved municipal plan and must support it through municipal regulations aimed at concentrating development in the growth center while protecting the rural qualities of the landscape outside of the growth center.**
2. **The municipality is planning to direct a large percentage of its 20-year anticipated growth into its growth center(s). There may, however, be certain traditional growth centers where the community does not desire additional growth.**

Growth centers should be aimed at meeting the predominant share of a community's present and future needs for housing, commerce, industry, and other facilities and services. Towns need to establish boundaries based on 20-year land use projections, opportunities for in-fill, reuse of vacant buildings, and land available for adding on to the growth center if future needs cannot be met in existing settled areas.

3. **The growth center includes a variety of uses ("mixed-use").**

All growth center types, except for industrial parks, must include a wide variety of uses ("mixed-use"). These uses include, or have the potential to accommodate in the future, residential (including affordable and low-income housing), commercial, business, civic, recreational, and, if appropriate, industrial uses in a compact and mixed, rather than separated fashion, within the growth center. Some small, traditional town centers and hamlets do not

have all of the uses noted above, but are considered growth centers nonetheless. Industrial parks may include limited services such as day care centers, or restaurants to serve the employees at the site.

**4. The growth center contains public spaces and focal points.**

Growth centers may but are not required to include public spaces, which promote social interaction, as well as a distinct organization around central places or focal points.

**5. The growth center is guided by lot size, road width, building height, lot coverage, and setback requirements that replicate or intensify traditional growth center patterns already present within historic communities<sup>1</sup>.**

**6. Development density within the growth center is significantly greater than the rest of the community.**

Medium to high densities define growth centers. Historic density numbers within traditional town centers and downtowns provide one guide for these communities as they grow out and in-fill. Some communities may want to consider intensifying the traditional densities when appropriate. New growth centers should consider densities, such as three to six units per acre or higher, which will produce compact development and facilitate alternative transportation uses. There should be an edge between the growth center and the surrounding landscape. Development within the growth center is compact and concentrated. Outside the growth center, there is less development and open space predominates.

**7. The growth center has a circulation system that is conducive to pedestrian use and other non-vehicular travel, and supports mass transit opportunities.**

Studies have shown that people will walk up to a quarter of a mile from a given point along a pedestrian-oriented streetscape. They will not, however, walk one-quarter of a mile across large parking lots. Transit stops, parking facilities, street networks, and pedestrian circulation systems within growth centers should be set up under this principle.

**8. When applicable, continued use and care of historic structures and new construction is compatible with the scale, size, design, and materials of the area's historic resources.**

In-fill of undeveloped land within a growth center and reuse of vacant buildings should take priority over demolition of existing structures unless no other options are available. Under federal and state law, growth center plans that call for the demolition of historic structures on

---

<sup>1</sup> Communities may want to consult with a 1995 study funded by the Vermont Agency of Development and Community Affairs, *Estimating Land Area Needs for Growth Centers*, by Research and Evaluation Specialists of Vermont, T.J. Boyle and Associates and Northern Economic Planners. The report specifies prototypical growth center characteristics including density, lot size, road width, and setback requirements based on a study of several Vermont communities and national literature.

or eligible for the state or federal registers of historic places must be reviewed by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. Brownfields redevelopment is strongly encouraged.

- 9. Sewer service areas are part of an adopted sewer allocation plan that should be generally consistent with growth center boundaries.**

Because municipal water and sewer facilities enable higher density development compatible with growth centers, it makes sense that sewer service area boundaries be coordinated with growth center boundaries, unless service is needed beyond the boundary for environmental or public health reasons.

- 10. Important natural resources within growth centers, such as surface and ground water, wetlands, unique natural areas, critical habitats, and endangered species, are protected according to state and federal laws.**

State and federal laws sometimes require protection of certain natural resources such as wetlands, critical habitat, including wildlife travel corridors within growth centers. The opportunity to comprehensively protect these resources within a town, region, or watershed by concentrating development rather than spreading it across the landscape, as allowed under law and procedure, is considered as a resource protection strategy.

- 11. Communities plan growth centers to provide recreational opportunities and green space and to allow easy access to recreational open space surrounding the growth center.**

Growth center residents need recreation opportunities and green space. Otherwise, many of them will seek housing outside of growth centers in rural areas. Communities should plan for parks, playgrounds, and other open space within walking distance of residential neighborhoods within the growth center.