

Town Meets Country:

Farm-City Forums on
Land and Community

A Joint Project of
The U.S. Conference of Mayors
and American Farmland Trust



American Farmland Trust



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The U.S. Conference of Mayors is a national nonpartisan organization representing cities with a population of 30,000 or more through their chief elected official, the Mayor.

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March 2002



Dear Reader:

One of the greatest challenges facing our country today is “sprawl.”

Since World War II, out-of-control development has spread over the land, hollowing out cities, gridlocking suburbs and destroying the countryside. It has been the result not just of market forces, but of the failure of government policies to shape growth as well as to attract it. And, too often, policies have failed because cities, suburbs and rural communities have worked at cross-purposes or simply ignored each other.

Town Meets Country is an attempt to change that. Its purpose is to get urban, suburban and rural leaders to work together for “smart growth”—the kind of growth that gives everyone more choices and better choices of where to live, work, commute and recreate. Growth that will revitalize our cities and reconfigure our suburbs while safeguarding our most fertile and environmentally important rural lands.

Smart growth is the goal of a unique partnership between The U.S. Conference of Mayors and American Farmland Trust. To bring urban and rural leaders together to promote smart growth, the institutions we represent jointly sponsored a series of Farm-City Forums on Land and Community around the country. This is a report on what happened at those forums, the issues that were discussed, the actions the participants agreed to take, and how to hold your own forum.

We hope you will be inspired by Town Meets Country to organize a farm-city forum in your region. Together, urban and rural leaders can end sprawl and help fulfill the American Dream for everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "marc morial".

*The Honorable Marc H. Morial
Mayor of New Orleans, Louisiana
President, The U.S. Conference of Mayors*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William A. Johnson Jr.".

*The Honorable William A. Johnson, Jr.
Mayor of Rochester, New York
Co-Chair, The U.S. Conference of Mayors
Regionalism & Smart Growth Task Force*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ralph Grossi".

*Ralph Grossi
President, American Farmland Trust*

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March 2002



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Introduction

“This was a first. We had never before sat down with a group of farm leaders to talk about where our concerns intersect.”

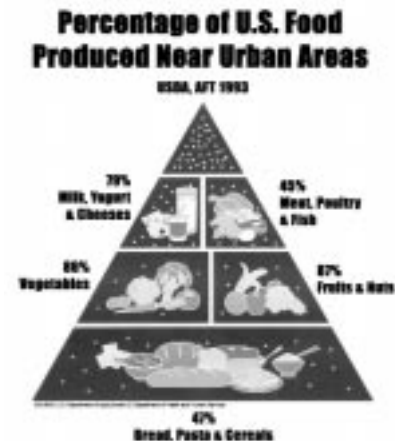
– *The Hon. Patrick McCrory, Mayor of Charlotte, North Carolina*

One of the most important issues for Americans is how their communities grow and develop land. Since World War II, suburban “sprawl” – scattered, low density, auto-dependent, often unplanned development on the outskirts of urban areas – has been the norm in this country. It is attractive to many or it wouldn’t have happened. But with it has come problems for cities, rural areas and, indeed, the suburbs themselves; problems that are the result, not just of market forces, but of government policies.

As people have left for the suburbs, cities have deteriorated. Urban infrastructure and housing stock are aging and their tax base is shrinking, leaving cities less able to improve schools and fight crime. The suburban exodus has inundated rural areas, consuming productive farmland and weakening agriculture with higher taxes, more regulations, fewer suppliers and new neighbors who complain about farm odors, dust and noise.

Suburbs are also finding that rapid, uncontrolled development has a downside: traffic congestion, over-crowded schools, disappearing open space, conflicting land uses and the continuous struggle to raise enough taxes to pay for the growing list of needs and challenges. In short, they are beginning to suffer the same problems as cities and rural America.

American Farmland Trust (AFT), the nation’s premier agricultural land conservation organization, and The U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM), the official organization representing the interests of the largest cities in the United States, have joined together to address the problems – urban, rural and suburban – associated with sprawl. Their mutual goal is to promote growth and development that uses land and existing infrastructure more efficiently; that relies more on public transportation and less on the auto; that conserves farmland and strengthens agriculture; and that results in communities that are safe, diverse, pleasant places to live and work. Toward that end, AFT and USCM co-sponsored a series of forums to bring together



urban and rural leaders – many for the first time – to discuss land use issues facing their communities. These discussions focused on how “smarter growth” could help improve and maintain the quality of life of the people living in their communities.

During 2000 and 2001, we held farm-city forums in Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Charlotte, North Carolina; Rochester, New York; and in both Everett and Tacoma, Washington. Each full-day meeting opened with a presentation on regional land use trends by a local expert, which was followed by a facilitated discussion among a diverse group of urban, suburban and rural leaders, focusing on the challenges those trends have posed for their respective communities. The objective was to begin a dialogue among constituencies that have much to learn from each other, but who have not often sat around the same table. At the conclusion of each forum, participants were asked to agree on a few specific things on which they could cooperate to promote smart growth in their regions. And arrangements were made to follow up the forums with additional meetings to pursue these issues.

The lessons we learned from these initial forums should be helpful to others who want to organize their own farm-city forums – and we encourage you to do so! With that in mind, this publication will describe in more detail how the initial three forums were organized, summarize the issues discussed and the results of these sessions, and outline an agenda of “Ten Things Urban and Rural Leaders Can Do Together to Promote Smart Growth.” This agenda, the product of discussion at our forums, is intended to provide thought-provoking issues for discussion at future forums.

Organizing the Forums

Farm-city forums were organized largely by USCM and AFT staff, with significant assistance from mayors and their staff. Future forums could be organized by public officials alone or in cooperation with civic and agricultural organizations like the Farm Bureau. USCM staff took the initiative to contact local mayors to determine their interest in hosting farm-city forums in their regions. Once a commitment was made to hold a forum, the mayors and AFT regional staff identified potential participants. We tried to achieve a balance among rural, urban and suburban participants, including elected and appointed officials, prominent business, civic and environmental leaders, and representatives of farm organizations and agribusiness.

“Last month, farmers, environmentalists and representatives of a number of local governments got together to talk about how [urban and rural] challenges might be addressed. The initial meeting is likely to be just the start of a several-years effort to find solutions to some of the problems and make agriculture more viable.”

– Editorial, Everett Herald 12-30-01

Please see the USCM and AFT Web sites for additional details about how the forums were organized and conducted, including sample invitations, agendas, etc.

*www.usmayors.org
www.farmland.org*

We extended invitations at least a month in advance to about three times as many leaders as we expected to attend. In most cases, we achieved a higher rate of attendance, which ranged from 15 to 40. One reason for the good turnout was that we deliberately avoided time periods when farmers would be especially busy with planting and harvesting, or when electoral politics could discourage public office-holders from attending. We considered excluding the media from the forums, but eventually decided that their presence would not inhibit open dialogue. To facilitate thoughtful and relevant discussion, we asked respected, local university professors to moderate the sessions.

The all-day forums were divided into five sessions. First, the hosts (mayors and one or more suburban and rural leaders) and all participants introduced themselves, adding personal details to help others understand their perspective on the issues to be discussed. Second, to set the stage for discussion, a land use expert, in most cases a professional planner, made a Powerpoint or slide presentation on regional land use trends. Third, to wrap up the morning and put specific issues on the table, each participant was then given 3 to 5 minutes, depending on the number of participants, to discuss the local land use issue of most concern to them and its impact on their urban, suburban or rural community.

After lunch, during which participants were encouraged to talk one-on-one or in small groups, the fourth session, led by the moderator, attempted to refine the issues that had been put on the table and to focus the group's attention on two or three that seemed to be of greatest concern to the largest number of participants. In this way, we tried to encourage proposals for cooperative action among rural and urban leaders to address specific problems or challenges related to land use in their communities. Finally, in a wrap-up session, the moderators summarized what they believed to be the most promising opportunities for continued dialogue and cooperation on specific issues.

With each successive forum, we learned more about how to encourage actual follow-up by the participants. In the earlier forums, individuals or single organizations volunteered to promote continued dialogue, with mixed success. At the conclusion of the final forum in Everett, Washington, we organized four "subcommittees" of the participants, each charged with organizing follow-up public meetings on a specific issue. This approach appears to be more promising because of the mutual accountability of those who volunteered.

The Issues: A Summary of Forum Dialogue

Discussion at all the farm-city forums focused on the community problems associated with growth, their causes and potential solutions. All are exceedingly complex. In this publication, it is possible only briefly to summarize how the participants raised and addressed these issues. We suggest further reading about the issues in the appendix to this report.

Trends and Problems

All the regions where we held the initial forums are experiencing the symptoms of sprawl, some to a greater extent than others. Rochester, New York, typical of older “Rust Belt” cities, has suffered the greatest loss of population, decline in its revenue base, and deterioration of its housing stock and infrastructure, as a result of suburbanization. Obsolete and abandoned commercial and industrial sites, also known as “brownfields,” represent promise unfulfilled. In the surrounding countryside, dairy, crop and vegetable farms and apple orchards are struggling to survive low consumer prices, stricter environmental regulations and increasing competition from Western, Southern and foreign producers. Pressure to sell out or subdivide farms into rural estates is starting to fragment the land.

Charlotte, North Carolina, at the other extreme, is the paradigm of the Sunbelt cities that have experienced explosive growth, but much later than their northern counterparts. Its downtown housing and infrastructure are relatively new, and its revenue base remains higher, so the city has been able to compete more successfully with its suburbs to retain population and jobs. The dedication and investment of major employers like Eastman Kodak in Rochester and the Bank of America in Charlotte have played a crucial role in promising efforts to reverse urban decline. Agriculture in Mecklenburg County, which surrounds Charlotte, produces the third highest value of farm products in the state, but the land is quickly being overcome by sprawling development.

Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is smaller than Rochester and Charlotte. But it, too, is struggling to maintain its infrastructure and services, while the proliferation of suburban development in unincorporated areas has cut off future



At left, Charlotte Mayor Patrick McCrory makes a point to facilitator Owen Furuseh and co-host Michael Pitchford, Senior Vice President of the Bank of America at the Charlotte forum.

“Farmers who are selling land for development are rolling their gains into land farther out, driving up its price.”

– Roy Bardole, Farmer,
Green County, Iowa

opportunities for the city itself to grow. A major concern is the potential economic burden that will be imposed on the city if developing areas wish to be annexed and sewerage needs to be extended to scattered homes on large lots with failing septic systems. Agriculture around Cedar Rapids, and throughout much of the state, is so extensive that there isn't much concern for the loss of farmland to development. But for those corn, soybean and especially hog producers who find houses springing up in the fields around them, the increasing risks and costs of farming are a threat to their livelihood.

Everett and Tacoma, Washington, are “satellite” cities north and south of Seattle, struggling to maintain their separate identity in the wake of rapid growth. In recent years, both have invested considerably in downtown revitalization, but development continues to spill over into the small percentage of land in their respective counties that remains in agriculture. Farming in both areas produces high-value crops that are increasingly marketed directly to local consumers.

In every case, the suburban communities around the cities are experiencing growing pains. They are hard pressed to raise enough tax revenue to keep pace with the growth in demand for public services – roads, schools, water and sewer systems, police and fire protection, hospitals, etc. They are often forced to compete with each other for tax-paying commercial development by compromising their land use plans – if they have any – fueling more sprawl and uncertainty for farmers. Another major problem that comes with more development is traffic congestion, which affects not only commuters but also farmers who need to move machinery between fields.

But that isn't the only effect of sprawl on agricultural communities around these and other cities. They are being fragmented into a random mixture of farms, large-lot estates and subdivisions. Property taxes are increasing along with land values. Older farmers who want to expand and younger ones who want a farm of their own cannot afford to buy or rent land. The proximity of development to farms also increases the demand for more regulation of agriculture for farmers who are already struggling with rising production costs and low crop prices. Worst of all, it causes land use conflicts, like neighbors' complaints about spreading manure or spraying crops. This adds to the cost and risk of farming, prompting the next group of farmers to sell their land for development and move their operations farther away from populated areas – or to go out of business altogether.

Contributing Causes

According to forum participants, a major cause of sprawl is the effect of government taxing and spending policies on the land market. The farther one travels from population centers, the cheaper land becomes and the faster and less expensive it is to develop. But this is not just a function of a “free market.” What makes land developable on a large scale is the availability of infrastructure such as roads, sewers, etc. These are financed at taxpayer expense and result in large economic gains to those owning land when they are built. Generally, local communities do not have the ability to recapture any of this windfall. As a consequence, taxpayers in the cities tend to subsidize development on the outskirts, increasing its competitive advantage over downtown redevelopment. The migration of people and businesses to the suburbs, in turn, depresses property values and tax revenue in the cities, putting them at further disadvantage in terms of being able to afford the public services that keep communities attractive.

Another major institutional contributor to sprawl, according to forum participants, is the lack of good planning. Rural communities often fail to anticipate growth – “It won’t happen here,” was an oft-cited attitude – and those that do tend to lack the financial resources to hire expert staff to plan for it. Regional cooperation among local jurisdictions in planning and managing growth is inhibited by their pre-occupation with their own problems as well as by competition for development and tax ratables. Even where officials of cities, towns and counties are inclined to work together toward smarter growth, they have not even been given the enabling authority by the state legislature to plan and act regionally. In some states, school boards make siting decisions, which are powerful determinants of residential development patterns, independently of local governments. One official summed up regional planning as “systematic discord.”

From a rural perspective, a significant contributor to rural development – regardless of whether sprawl or smart growth – is the marginal profitability of commercial agriculture. U.S. farmers now compete in a global marketplace where most commodities, from corn to apples, are being overproduced and prices to producers are low. On average, only about 20 cents of the consumers’ food dollar actually goes to



farmers rather than retailers and middlemen. The potential for direct marketing of local farm products – which would put a higher percentage of the consumer’s dollar in farmers’ pockets – appears to be significant. There are, for example, 60 million consumers within a day’s trucking distance of the farms in the Rochester area. But the infrastructure is lacking to enable more than a few farmers to take advantage of this opportunity. And the high price that farmland commands for development makes this option too tempting for many farmers to resist.

Local officials could adopt strong zoning to prevent the development of farmland, but are reluctant to do so because of concern for private property rights. Farmers, speculators and developers resist land use regulations because these regulations can reduce the value of their land. As one North Carolina official put it, “I can use the carrot [of incentives] all I want, but I can’t use the stick and get re-elected.” But incentives, such as compensating farmers who agree not to develop their land, are expensive. More than a million acres of agricultural land have been protected under voluntary conservation easements at a public cost of over \$1.7 billion. But rural communities have a hard time raising funds for this approach to curbing sprawl, so state governments have had to finance most easements.

Toward Solutions

There was near unanimity among the participants in all our forums that solutions to sprawl must come from the “bottom up.” Local action must begin with greater public understanding of the causes and consequences of urban decay, rural fragmentation and suburban congestion. Especially important is the need for local officials to appreciate the fiscal implications of large-lot, widely scattered residential housing on the metropolitan outskirts. It may be the most popular type of housing, but research shows that it seldom pays for itself in tax revenues, imposing a burden on urban and rural communities alike. Only if voters understand where sprawl is leading us will politicians have the will to promote smarter kinds of growth.

Forum participants also agreed that preventing both rural sprawl and urban decay must be addressed simultaneously, for their causes are intimately related. From an urban perspective, it is critical to attract middle class residents and clean industry back to central cities. A promising place to begin is recycling “brownfields.” They represent

“Solutions must come from the bottom up, where they are about people, not politics.”

*– Hon. William Carpenter,
Supervisor, Town of
Pittsford, New York*

an opportunity to create modern mixed-used housing and commercial development, while reserving some land for green open space that adds value to nearby property and, hence, to the tax base. Encouraging this will require much more funding and program development from the federal and state governments. The New York forum agreed that promoting more “brownfields” recycling was one of the specific action items rural and urban leaders should pursue together in the state legislature.

New York forum participants also agreed to jointly promote the Farm Bureau’s agricultural initiative in the state legislature. This entails additional funding for programs that will provide product development, marketing and business planning assistance from regional agricultural extension specialists. Expanding local markets for farm products was also a high priority for the Washington state forum participants. Addressing all these rural challenges – land use, environment and the farm economy – are necessary to help agriculture resist sprawl and, thus, give urban revitalization a better chance. Funding incentives for farmland protection can also help overcome landowner resistance to anti-sprawl measures on property rights grounds.

By far the most important step toward the prevention of sprawl, according to forum participants, is better local planning and regional cooperation to manage growth. There have been some promising steps in this direction, for example, the Rochester-Monroe County economic development corridor initiative, intended to link the fortunes of city and suburb. In some cases, however, the legal authority to act regionally is lacking and funding to hire expert staff is needed. Rural and urban leaders in both North Carolina and Iowa agreed to make it a priority to approach their respective legislatures to obtain this kind of cooperation at the state level.

By far the most important step toward the prevention of sprawl, according to forum participants, is better local planning and regional cooperation to manage growth.

Conclusions

“Unlike endless, mind-numbing sprawl, cities and farms are ‘authentic landscapes.’”

– *The Hon. William Johnson, Jr., Mayor of Rochester, New York*

Given the momentum of sprawl, revitalizing cities and preserving agricultural land near them are daunting challenges that will require genuine urban-rural understanding and cooperation. The communication that took place at our farm-city forums is a hopeful step in the right direction. As sponsors, those of us representing USCM and AFT were, quite frankly, surprised that so many participants said they had never before sat down to discuss land use issues with their counterparts from the city or countryside. We were pleased, as they were, that they were able to educate the “other” side and to learn more about another perspective on how land use affects the economics and quality of community life. Nearly everyone who took part in the forums expressed enthusiasm for continuing the dialogue.

One of the most encouraging ideas to emerge from our workshops was the observation of Rochester Mayor William Johnson that farms and cities, for all their obvious differences, are both “authentic landscapes” that are attractive to people in ways that endless, mind-numbing sprawl simply is not. Inspired by the promise that this offers, American Farmland Trust and The U.S. Conference of Mayors encourage you to organize your own farm-city forums to explore how the use – and neglect – of land influences community character and well-being, and to build relationships between urban and rural constituencies that will make solutions to sprawl easier to achieve.



American Farmland Trust

Ten Things Urban and Rural Leaders Can Do Together to Promote Smart Growth

Good intentions are not enough. It is important to identify specific things that rural and urban leaders can work on to promote smart growth. Though by no means exhaustive, the following issues are among the most important things our farm-city forum participants agreed need to be done – together. The web sites listed under each topic are among the best sources of information and examples. You may access these sites directly by clicking on them in the on-line version of this booklet on the AFT and U.S. Conference of Mayors web sites.

Raise Public Awareness

1 To take effective action, elected officials need to understand problems and have public support for solutions. Public support, of course, depends on broad awareness and understanding of the issues. So, it is incumbent on rural and urban leaders who want to promote smart growth to educate themselves and their constituents about how it will benefit their communities and about the costs of continued sprawl. Since the concept of “smart growth” isn’t self-explanatory, it is important that educational efforts explain in plain language what it is and how it can improve the things that people value.

Smart Growth America

www.smartgrowthamerica.org

Smart Growth Network

www.smartgrowth.org

Joint Center for Sustainable Communities

www.naco.org/programs/comm._dev/center/index.cfm

Sprawlwatch Clearinghouse

www.sprawlwatch.org

Local Government Commission

Ahwahnee Principles for Smart Growth

www.lgc.org/freepub/land_use/articles/ahwahnee_article_cont.html#prin

Improve Local and Regional Planning

2 The cornerstone of smart growth is comprehensive planning that includes a clear vision of future development patterns and a framework for policies and infrastructure investments that will shape them. Communities without plans should do them, and those that have them should update them in accordance with smart growth principles. Ideally, planning will take place on a regional scale so that the plans of neighboring jurisdictions are coordinated. This will increase the chances of avoiding conflicts between urban and rural land uses, traffic congestion, over-crowded schools and the loss of treasured open space.

American Planning Association

“Growing Smart” Project

www.planning.org/growingsmart/

Planning Commissioners Journal

www.plannersweb.com/sprawl/home.html

1000 Friends of Oregon

www.friends.org/resources/resourceguide.html

Envision Utah Regional Plan

www.envisionutah.org

Guide Infrastructure Investments

3 Where states and communities choose to build highways, public transit, water and sewer systems and other infrastructure has a powerful influence on the direction and type of development, and on the taxes the public must pay. The location of schools, often dictated by school boards independent of local government, also plays a major role in directing growth. Good planning integrates infrastructure decisions with land use objectives. Decisions on new development should not allow it to exceed the capacity of existing and planned public services.

Surface Transportation Policy Project
Transportation Choices
www.transact.org/Reports/tti2001/default.htm

Controlling Sewer & Water Line Extensions
www.plannersweb.com/sprawl/solutions_sub_sewer.html

National Trust for Historic Preservation
School Sprawl
www.nthp.org/issues/schoolsSum.pdf

Share Local Revenue

To cover the cost of services demanded by residential development – which seldom pays for itself in property taxes – local jurisdictions often compete with each other for commercial development, whether they want it or not. This contributes to sprawl by undermining well-intentioned land use plans. The revenue imbalance between newer, more affluent suburbs with higher tax bases, and central cities, older suburbs and fast-growing middle class suburbs, also leads to regional economic inequities that contribute to the decline of these other communities. To ameliorate these problems, a few metropolitan areas are experimenting with intergovernmental revenue sharing.

Twin Cities, MN, Tax-Base Sharing
www.sprawlwatch.org/taxbase.html

Dayton, OH, Economic Development/Government Equity Fund
www.ydr.com/projects/rusk/lruskz.shtml

Recycle Brownfields

“Brownfields” are abandoned or underutilized properties whose redevelopment is hindered by either real or perceived environmental contamination. These sites have infrastructure in place and represent enormous untapped potential for revitalizing cities. Redevelopment of these sites boosts the urban economy, creates jobs, reduces environmental hazards and offers opportunities to create amenities to attract people downtown. It also helps reduce the pressure for sprawl on green fields devoted to

agriculture and open space. Though brownfields recycling is beginning to occur, cost and other issues need to be addressed to make it still more attractive to the business community. Recently passed federal legislation should help accelerate this promising approach to smart growth.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Brownfields Initiative

www.epa.gov/swerosps/bf/

The U.S. Conference of Mayors
Recycling America's Land

www.usmayors.org/uscm/brownfields/index/html

Brownfields Non-Profit Network

www.brownfieldsnet.org/

Urban Land Institute

Washington's Landing, Pittsburgh, PA

http://defcon-hq.com/uli/DCS_Frameset_Other.asp?Section=8&CSID=C027009A

Provide Affordable Housing Near Jobs

Assuring that people of all economic classes can afford attractive housing near good jobs is a cardinal principle of smart growth. Claims that regulating the location of development will make houses more expensive are usually exaggerated. But a legitimate concern is the lack of a mix of housing types, particularly in suburban communities. As a result, low- and moderate-income people have a hard time affording housing near new employment centers. Transit-oriented development can help. But some communities go farther by requiring that a percentage of new housing be affordable or by offering density bonuses to developers who build a mix of housing types.

Making the Connection between Smart Growth and Affordable Housing

www.smartgrowth.org/pdf/epa_ah-sg.pdf

National Neighborhood Coalition

www.neighborhoodcoalition.org/smart%20growth.htm

New Jersey Future
Housing Equity

www.njfuture.org/HTMLSrc/MtLaurelhtm.htm

Boston Housing Authority

www.bostonhousing.org/detpages/admin139.html

Transit-Oriented Development, Orenco Station, Hillsboro, OR

http://defcon-hq.com/uli/DCS_Frameset_Other.asp?Section=8&CSID=C029001A

Streamline Urban Development Approval

7 Making it easier and faster to obtain development approval in urban areas promotes infill and discourages sprawl. Yet, permit review tends to take longer in already-developed areas. Some states and communities are experimenting with streamlining development approval to facilitate smart growth where they want it to occur. Among the approaches being tried are one-stop permitting and providing assistance to help developers negotiate the permitting process.

U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development
Building Homes in America's Cities Initiative

www.hud.gov/library/bookshelf18/pressrel/bdhmininit.html

California Environmental Protection Agency

Permit Consolidation Pilot Program

www.calepa.ca.gov/permitzone/zones/default.htm

Protect Farmland and Open Space

8 Protecting farmland and other significant open spaces around and in metropolitan areas can help assure locally grown food, safeguard the environment, contribute to the local economy, keep property taxes low – cows don't go to school! – and “frame” growth by promoting efficient development in and around existing communities. There is also a national interest in protecting farmland near cities, which accounts for more

than half of the food produced in the United States. Maintaining other open space in cities and suburbs attracts investment and adds value to nearby private property.

American Farmland Trust
Farmland Protection Technical Assistance
www.farmland.org/how/index.htm
Funders Network on Smart Growth and Livable Communities
Agriculture and Smart Growth
**[www.fundersnetwork.org/info-url_nocat2778/
info-url_nocat_show.htm?doc_id=56689](http://www.fundersnetwork.org/info-url_nocat2778/info-url_nocat_show.htm?doc_id=56689)**
Trust for Public Land
Open Space “Greenprinting”
www.tpl.org/tier3_cdl.cfm?content_item_id=1351&folder_id=830

Support Farmers’ Markets

9 Farmers’ markets can be a good way to attract people downtown and stimulate economic activity that leads to the revitalization of urban neighborhoods. At the same time, they provide a direct outlet for local farmers, adding value to the rural economy and helping farmers resist the pressure to sell land for sprawling development. Communities support farmers’ markets in a variety of ways, from providing appropriate sites and publicity to direct financial support.

New York City Greenmarkets
www.cenyc.org/HTMLGM/maingm.htm
Crescent City Farmers’ Market, New Orleans, LA
www.grass-roots.org/usa/crescent.shtml
North American Farmers’ Direct Marketing Association
www.nafdma.com
American Farmland Trust
Freshfarm Markets
www.farmland.org/market/market.htm

Lobby the State Legislature Together

10 Sometimes, only the state can provide what local communities need to successfully implement smart growth. For example, legal authorization for local and regional planning and for development regulation nearly always must come from the state legislature. Farm-city coalitions can succeed, where independent efforts fail, to persuade state legislatures to provide the legal authority and funding for local smart growth projects and programs that benefit both urban and rural constituencies.

Vermont Housing & Conservation Board

www.vhcb.org/Mission/html

California Planning & Conservation League

www.pcl.org/aboutpcl/pcl2.html#history



Appendix

Further Reading about Smart Growth

Beaumont, Constance and Elizabeth Pianca, *Why Johnny Can't Walk to School: Historic Neighborhood Schools in the Age of Sprawl* (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2001)

Benedict, Mark and Edward T. McMahon, *Green Infrastructure: Smart Conservation for the 21st Century* (The Conservation Fund, 2002)

Benfield, F. Kaid, Jutka Terris and Nancy Vorsanger, *Solving Sprawl: Models of Smart Growth from Communities Across America* (Island Press, 2002)

Bollier, David, *How Smart Growth Can Stop Sprawl* (Essential Books, 1998)

Calthorpe, Peter and Sim Van der Ryn, *Sustainable Communities: A New Design Synthesis for Cities, Suburbs and Towns* (Congress for the New Urbanism)

Community Based Initiatives Promoting Regional Equity: Profiles of Innovative Programs from Across the County (Policy Link 2000)

Duany, Andres, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and Jeff Speck, *Suburban Nation* (North Point Press, 2000)

Downs, Anthony, *Stuck In Traffic: Coping With Peak-Hour Traffic Congestion* (Brookings Institution-Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 1992)

Farming on the Edge: A New Look at the Importance and Vulnerability of Agriculture Near America's Cities (American Farmland Trust, 1994)

Getting to Smart Growth: 100 Policies for Implementation (Smart Growth Network-International City-County Management Association, 2001)

Katz, Bruce and Katherine Allen, *Help Wanted: Connecting Inner-City Job Seekers With Suburban Jobs* (Brookings Institution, 1999)

Kuntsler, James Howard, *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape* (Simon & Schuster, 2001)

Orfield, Myron, *Metropolitics: A Regional Agenda for Community and Stability* (Brookings Institution-Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, 1997)

Recycling America's Land: A National Report on Brownfields Redevelopment (U.S. Conference of Mayors, 1999)

Rusk, David, *Cities Without Suburbs* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1995)

Saving American Farmland: What Works (American Farmland Trust 1997)

Smart Growth: Better Neighborhoods: Communities Leading the Way (National Neighborhood Coalition, 2000)

Spitzer, Theodore and Hilary Baum, *Public Markets and Community Revitalization* (Urban Land Institute-Project for Public Spaces, 1994)

Ten Years of Progress: Building Better Communities Through Transportation (Surface Transportation Policy Project, 2001)

The Link Between Growth Management and Housing Affordability: The Academic Evidence (Smart Growth America-Brookings Institution, 2002)



Adopted Resolutions: Energy and Environment

Promoting the Preservation of Urban-Influenced Farmland



WHEREAS, The U.S. Conference of Mayors and American Farmland Trust formed a historic urban-rural coalition between local elected officials and farmers to develop smart growth policies that will promote city reinvestment and farmland preservation; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, over two million acres of rural land are being lost to development each year, which is double the rate of a decade ago; and

WHEREAS, this partnership strives to remove development pressure on irreplaceable and invaluable farmland located near metropolitan areas called urban-influenced farmland; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Conference of Mayors recognizes that protecting important urban-influenced farmland through the purchase of conservation easements is a valuable smart growth tool, which can assist in creating a comprehensive smart growth plan; and

WHEREAS, well managed urban-influenced farmland provides habitat for native species, protects local watersheds and clean air environmental benefits; and

WHEREAS, urban-influenced farmland provides thirty percent of our grain, forty-five percent of our livestock and more than eighty percent of our domestic fruit, vegetables and dairy products; and

WHEREAS, urban-influenced farmland near metropolitan areas have historically provided local markets with not only farm commodities, but continue to serve as economic engines in local economies; and

WHEREAS, the preservation of urban-influenced farmland provides local farmers markets with commodities that provide food supply stability while contributing to the overall quality of life in metropolitan areas; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Conference of Mayors believes it is in the Nation's best interest to protect domestic food supply, especially farmland surrounding metropolitan areas,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that The U.S. Conference of Mayors encourages its members to work more closely with farmers through urban-rural coalitions to further discussions on preventing farm failure through city reinvestment strategies, urban-influenced farmland preservation and local farmer's markets programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that The U.S. Conference of Mayors strongly encourages federal and state governments to promote local farmers markets through infrastructure and facility improvements, including rehabilitation of existing facilities, and marketing efforts to increase profitability for urban-influenced farms, thereby preventing farm failure and ensuring the future stability of local food supplies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference strongly encourages Federal and State governments to work with mayors and farmers to further implement smart growth policies and programs that encourage development in existing urban centers and better protect the nation's urban-influenced farmland; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference supports voluntary purchase of development rights programs and other farmland protection tools at the state, county and local level, including federal incentives for such efforts, that protect private landowners of urban-influenced farmland, who may face escalating land prices from development pressures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference calls upon the Administration and Congress to include funding for conservation programs, stewardship incentives, programs for research, marketing and rural economic development programs, and assistance to sustain and expand farm markets, including rehabilitation of existing facilities, and to promote marketing and sales at these markets to support independent and resource conserving farms in the farm bill.





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