PRIORITY GROWTH AREAS

Focus development in community-identified growth areas, both infill redevelopment sites and land in and immediately around existing or proposed centers, rather than encouraging most new construction on outlying greenfields or farmland.

Fill in the Gaps First

Gaps in the streetscape, including empty parcels, derelict buildings, and especially oversized parking lots, break the traditional row of storefronts along the main streets and need infill repair, just like a missing tooth in a smile. With the wholesale demolition of the 1950s and 1960s Urban Renewal period, flight to the suburbs, and abandonment of many large manufacturing sites, there are abundant opportunities to heal the empty spots in and directly around cities, villages, and hamlet centers.

A community can start with an inventory of potential redevelopment sites and a set of strategies to attract infill interest. You should not only look for vacant properties, but also existing buildings that could be substantially expanded on the site or marginal structures that are clearly incompatible with historic areas. Often just the act of identification through a community sanctioned public process will spur action by existing owners or outside investors. Publicly owned properties or larger redevelopment sites can be advertised through a Request for a Proposal (RFP) process to solicit competitive ideas for redevelopment.

Infill project based on traditional neighborhood patterns for three single-family houses with shared driveway and rear garages on a half-acre vacant lot in the Village of Millbrook.

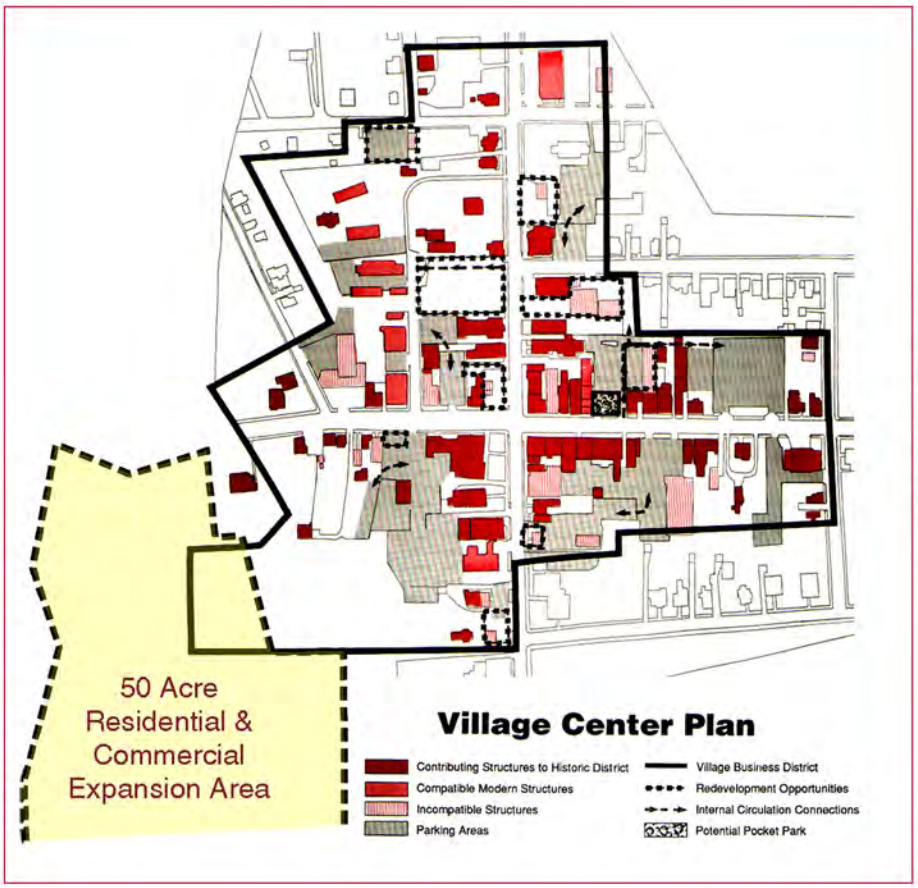
Construction crane places modular two-family house on a narrow infill lot in the City of Poughkeepsie.

Priority Expansion Areas

Building close to existing population centers makes communities more walkable and takes advantage of infrastructure already in place, such as streets, transit lines, water and sewer systems, parks, and schools. Also, as hamlets, villages, and city neighborhoods organically grow and fill in, they can support a wider range of activities for their residents. Dispersed development wastes both rural land and everyone's tax dollars, extending expensive services to scattered, outlying areas.

Key Strategies for Compact Communities

- Town, village, and city plans should identify land in or near centers that can be targeted for development, consistent with design guidelines, as well as sensitive land and historic properties that need to be protected.
- Ideal high priority development districts include vacant or underutilized land within walking distance of traditional centers, logically extending the existing compact neighborhood patterns.
- Communities can shift development from outlying farm properties or important scenic land to priority growth areas through a coordinated rezoning process, a transfer of development rights program, or other incentives.
- Towns can identify locations for new centers, either in the immediate vicinity of existing residential areas without services or in prime locations along public transportation routes. The Hyde Park Plan, for example, encourages growth in existing core areas and the transformation of large outlying subdivisions into mixed use neighborhoods.



The Village of Rhinebeck's Master Plan identifies specific infill redevelopment sites, as well as a 50-acre parcel within easy walking distance to the Village Center for potential commercial and residential expansion.

Sources:
Urban Land Institute, *Smart Growth, Economy, Community, Environment*, 1998