

What is smart growth?

Most people think of smart growth as a way of preventing suburban sprawl in fast-growing regions of the country. They ask: why plan for smart growth in the Adirondacks where little, if any growth is occurring? This is a sensible question, but smart growth also provides stimulus to a declining local economy. If effectively implemented, smart growth can create investment incentives to improve conditions in Adirondack hamlets. So just what is smart growth in the context of the Adirondack Park?

Smart growth in the Adirondacks is the opposite of auto-dependent growth. A smart-growth Adirondack hamlet remains compact, walkable, well defined, and connected to neighboring hamlets. Smart hamlets provide job opportunities and year-round, affordable, workforce housing for Adirondackers. Smart growth in the Adirondacks steers new development toward existing hamlet infrastructure or facilitates new infrastructure investments. It respects a community's form and place as well as the natural features of the park. Smart plans for hamlet expansion are prepared publicly, creatively, and in

concert with the state's park-wide land use and development regulations. The visual character of Adirondack smart growth is rooted in 19th century architecture and building traditions brought into a modern age of energy efficiency and independence.

Principles of smart growth

The smart growth principles presented in this section form the foundation for the *Hamlets 3* planning and design model. Photographs of sites in the Adirondacks and other places with similar climate and landscape illustrate these principles and their captions discuss ways of realizing them. The *Hamlets 3* principles of smart growth are:

- Form and place
- Boundaries
- Walkability and human-scale
- Access to nature
- Compact centers
- Energy and sustainability
- Jobs and housing
- Travel choices
- Visual quality
- Resource preservation
- Collective decision-making

FORM AND PLACE



Björholmen, Sweden

Illustration: Björholmen hamlet and marina on the west coast of Sweden, a fine expression of place-making principles, recently expanded into a modern recreation destination while preserving its compact form and traditional architecture of red fisherman's houses. New boardwalks on the waterfront improve pedestrian access through the hamlet.

BOUNDARIES



Rivello, Italy.

WALKABILITY



Essex, New York.



Old Forge, New York.

PRINCIPLE:
WELL-DEFINED
BOUNDARIES
PREVENT HAMLET
SPRAWL AND
PROTECT NATURAL
RESOURCES.

Illustration: In the southern Italian hilltop hamlet of Rivello, continuous boundaries between built and natural follow the land's contours, strengthening the core; they channel density into the center, protect agriculture, and present a sweeping view to the horizon.

PRINCIPLE:
WALKABLE
PUBLIC SPACES
PROMOTE SOCIAL
INTERACTION AT
A HUMAN SCALE,
ENERGIZING
HAMLET ACTIVITIES.

Illustration: Essex and Old Forge pedestrian spaces in the hamlet center encourage walking and social interactions that benefit local businesses.

Illustration: The Rich Brothers Lumber Company founded the small hamlet of Wanakena in 1902 and built colorful arts and crafts cottages from salvaged lumber, many of which remain today. It is one of the best examples in the Adirondacks of a human-scale hamlet, with compact and sociable spaces and strong ties to nature.

PRINCIPLE:
ACCESS TO
NATURE PROVIDES
MANY WITH THE
AUTHENTIC
ADIRONDACK
EXPERIENCE.

Illustration: The kayak and canoe launch at Moose River Outpost off Route 28 in Old Forge, and Inlet's Arrowhead Park are both good examples of access to nature from within a hamlet.



Arrowhead Park, Inlet, New York.

HUMAN SCALE



Wanakena, New York.

ACCESS TO NATURE



Moose River, Thendara, New York.

RESOURCE REUSE



Dalhalla Quarry, Sweden.

GREEN DESIGN



Wild Center, Tupper Lake, New York.

Illustration: Dalhalla Quarry is a former limestone quarry in central Sweden near Lake Siljan now used as a summer music venue with 4,000 seats. The amphitheater hosts 20-30 events each summer and the acoustical qualities are comparable to the best outdoor stages in Europe.

PRINCIPLE: STRONG HAMLET CENTERS SUPPORT DENSITY AND PROVIDE A COMPACT MIX OF USES.

Illustration: The Wild Center Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks in Tupper Lake reclaims an old sand pit, converting it into a retention pond that filters storm water through indoor aquatic exhibits. The building, partially made of local materials, has solar panels and green roofs, and the parking lots are made of permeable pavers. The building's architecture reflects the Adirondack's Great Camps.

ENERGY

Illustration: Växjö Sweden Old Town has set a goal to be 70% fossil fuel free by 2025. Heat is supplied from a central biomass plant using wood chips from local mills. Växjö also utilizes geothermal heat pumps, hydroelectricity, and energy-efficient buildings while reducing oil demand through transit, walking, biking, and ethanol usage.

PRINCIPLE: ENERGY EFFICIENCY IS ACHIEVED THROUGH GREEN DESIGN AND SUSTAINABLE LAND USE.

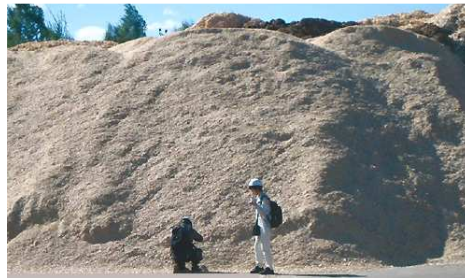
Illustration: The original 1904 hydroelectric plant in the hamlet of Wadhams, built to generate electricity for transmission to Mineville, closed in 1969. During the energy crisis of the 1970s it was purchased, restored, and reopened for small-scale production by local entrepreneurs and has, along with the popular Dogwood Bread Co. café and Wadhams Free Library, contributed to the revitalization of the hamlet.



Wadhams hamlet, New York.



Växjö's energy-efficient affordable housing.

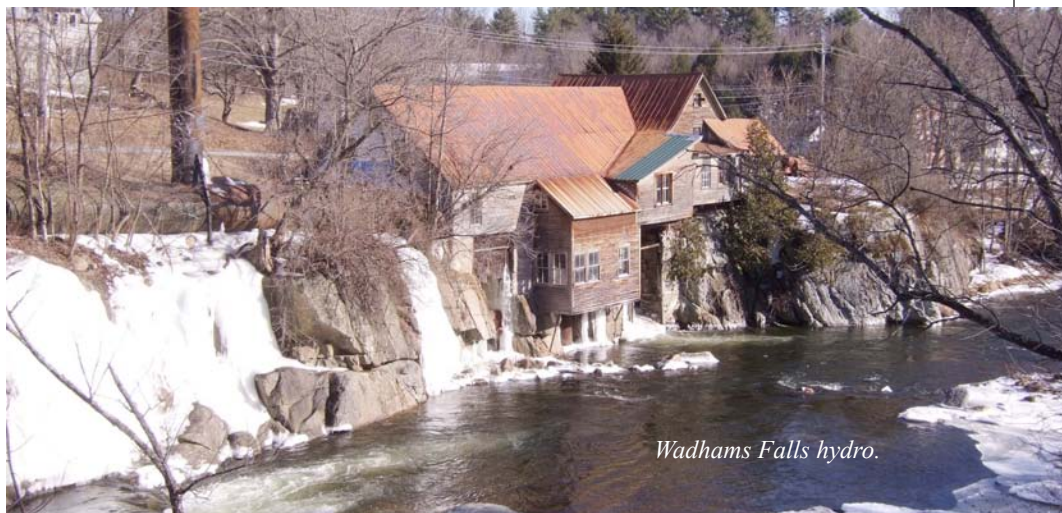


Bio-fuel mass in Växjö is used for district heating.



Water is used to generate electricity in Växjö, Sweden.

LOCAL POWER



Wadhams Falls hydro.

SUSTAINABILITY



Nubanusit, New Hampshire.

Illustration: The recently built Nubanusit Neighborhood and Farm illustrates innovative sustainable expansion in a rural context. On the banks of the Nubanusit River near Mt. Monadnock, New Hampshire, and one mile from the village of Peterborough, this 29-unit cohousing hamlet requires no fossil fuel and grows organic food on site. Energy-efficient structures in walkable clusters fit with the natural surroundings by using existing rocks and trees on the land.

PRINCIPLE: JOBS AND HOUSING GO HAND IN HAND.

Illustration: Newton Falls, a remote hamlet of 80 homes in the northwestern Adirondacks nearly disappeared when the local paper mill shut down in 2000. It made national headlines, however, when the mill reopened under new owners a few years later. By creating 104 new jobs and bringing in an estimated \$18 million to the local economy, it sparked housing renewal in the hamlet.



Newton Falls, New York.



Newton Falls Fine Paper Mill.



Inlet canal, New York.

Illustration: Making better use of existing rail lines and waterways could expand travel opportunities of Adirondack hamlets.

PRINCIPLE:
REVIVING OLD
RAILROADS WOULD
GREATLY EXPAND
TRAVEL OPTIONS.

Illustration: Essex hamlet along Lake Champlain shows the best of historic hamlet architecture in the eastern Adirondacks, expressing local character in form and detail. Many fine buildings hug main street, offering a model of high visual quality with intimate views of the lake.

PRINCIPLE: HIGH
VISUAL QUALITY
ATTRACTS
INVESTMENT
AND REFLECTS A
HAMLET'S HISTORY.

TRAVEL CHOICES



Upper Hudson River Railroad, New York.



Adirondack rail corridors.

VISUAL QUALITY



Hamlet architecture, Essex, New York.

PRESERVATION



Tolleby, Sweden.

Illustration: In Tolleby hamlet on the island of Tjörn, Sweden, expansion is clustered along edges of natural valleys, preserving ecosystems, active farmlands and wetland areas.

PRINCIPLE: CRITICAL RESOURCES ARE PRESERVED THROUGH GOOD PLANNING.

Good planning and design

These smart growth examples show why good planning and design matters. Good community design leads to investment and economic development. However, Adirondack communities typically abdicate the job of design and physical planning to the cumulative results of incremental development or the actions of a land developer. The former results in scattered lot-by-lot development and the latter in

disconnected enclaves. Neither process is likely to result in smart growth and investment.

The solution to this is for Adirondack communities to become proactive in the process rather than reactive, to take the next step and begin the physical design process to determine where major elements of the road system and water and sewer lines should be and what land uses and public spaces should be where. Planning and design can trigger unimagined possibilities and work to create form and structure for smart hamlet growth. In Section Five of the guide we introduce a smart growth planning and design model that communities can use to be more proactive.

PRINCIPLE: COLLECTIVE DECISION-MAKING IS PRUDENT WHEN GROWTH IS SLOW AND INCREMENTAL.