



# SMART LAND USE IN SARATOGA

## 9 Key Principles for Sustainable Development

### WHAT IS SMART LAND USE?

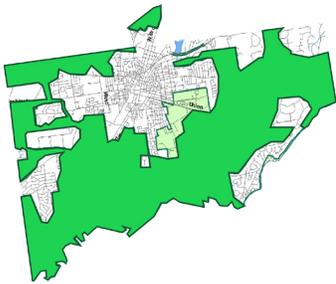
#### WHY DO WE NEED IT?

The principles contained in this summary are closely related to Smart Growth and New Urbanism, both of which emphasize the benefits of clustered development, mixed-used buildings and neighborhoods, and a diversity of people, buildings, jobs, and transportation options.

Saratoga Springs is a successful upstate City facing growth pressures. New development and redevelopment must be carefully planned so as to minimize the cost of service provision, and to ensure long-term success. Land use policy must also be oriented toward energy efficiency and seek to reduce impacts from climate change.

### 1. PROTECT THE GREENBELT

The “greenbelt” is the sparsely developed area surrounding the core of Saratoga Springs—the “country” part of the “City in the Country” concept. It includes sensitive and valuable natural areas including:



Saratoga's "Greenbelt"

- Stream corridors
- Flood prone areas
- Wildlife habitats and migration corridors
- Farmland
- Scenic and recreation areas
- Community gateways

Unfragmented open space provides great benefits and makes our community more attractive to visitors and residents. These areas must be protected. Land use regulations should:

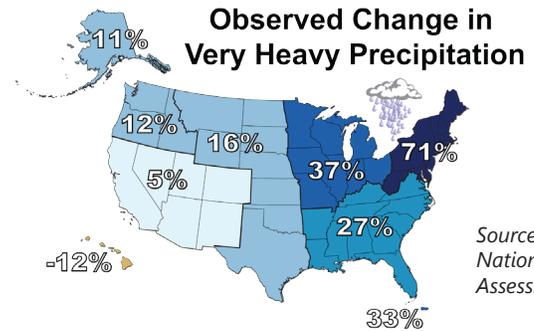
- Restrict incompatible uses
- Limit the intensity of development
- Require conservation best practices
- Create a clear distinction between city and country

### 2. FILL IN EXISTING DEVELOPED AREAS IN URBAN CORE

With proper urban design standards, the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods should be developed more intensely. Core areas with the most developed infrastructure are best able to accommodate new

development while minimizing environmental impacts. Filling in these areas will help prevent infrastructure-intensive “sprawl” in rural and suburban areas, which require far more resources and energy to service.

### 3. REDUCE CLIMATE IMPACTS AND ADAPT TO CHANGE



Improving energy efficiency through land use can slow climate change. Investment in adaptive measures can reduce the worst impacts of severe weather. Our region is expected to receive more frequent heavy rains, heat waves, and average temperature increases of 4 to 8°F.

- Compact land use patterns make buses, trains, bicycles, and walking more viable for transportation, reducing reliance on energy-intensive automobiles.
- Innovations in stormwater management, forestry, and water conservation can save energy and reduce damage from more frequent heavy rain events.
- More local agriculture helps build resiliency in the food system and saves energy. Increased composting can prevent harmful methane emissions.



*Advocate.  
Educate.  
Act.*

Read the full document at [sustainablesaratoga.org/smartgrowth](http://sustainablesaratoga.org/smartgrowth)

*Sustainable Saratoga is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization that promotes sustainable practices and the protection of natural resources, through education, advocacy, and actions, for the benefit of current and future generations in the Saratoga Springs area.*

## 4. SUPPORT A DIVERSE AND RESILIENT LOCAL ECONOMY

Land use decisions should promote a diverse and resilient economy by encouraging many types of industries, many housing types, and various employment situations. The community should strive toward supporting jobs that are close to people's homes, create economies that stay in the community, and serve the real needs of local residents.

High value-added industries that maintain a high proportion of earnings in the local economy or bring wealth into the region should be supported. Clean manufacturing located in close proximity to residential areas and transit stops should be considered.

## 5. IMPLEMENT MIXED USES

Mixed use neighborhoods involve siting small-scale commercial establishments, as well as recreational amenities, close to or within residential neighborhoods. Neighborhood retail shops, restaurants, and recreation afford opportunities for residents to walk, bike, and interact with each other in public space.



Five Points Grocery - 42 Park Place

Neighborhood amenities make a community more attractive to residents, visitors, and businesses who can benefit from being where their residents want to live.

Commercial land uses also generate a large portion of the tax base and help keep residential taxes low.

## 6. PROMOTE COMPACT DESIGN

Compact design in buildings and in neighborhood planning involves a higher ratio of building floor area to land area. Our historic neighborhoods had tall houses on narrow but deep lots, maximizing the efficiency of municipal infrastructure. This is in contrast to land-consumptive suburban neighborhoods where buildings and amenities are spaced far apart.

Neighborhoods with a variety of housing styles and types command higher market value compared to conventional homogenous developments. Priority should also be given to preserving historic buildings and neighborhoods, which saves resources and highlights the city's unique character.

## 7. PROVIDE HOUSING DIVERSITY

A diverse and ample supply of housing with a variety of price points helps ensure that those people who work in Saratoga can also live here and raise a family, without having to endure long commutes from energy-intensive suburban areas. Commuters create costs for the city in the form of congestion and subsidized parking.

Businesses that depend on a high-quality workforce will be attracted to places where their workers want to live. Creative housing types are also necessary to allow the elderly to "age in place" in the neighborhoods that have significant meaning and history for them.

## 8. SUPPORT A VIABLE MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM



Mass transit, bicycling, and walking should be more convenient.

Land use decisions should help reduce the preeminence of personal automobiles by prioritizing mass transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and handicap-accessible infrastructure in public rights-of-way. Innovative approaches to transportation:

- Improve availability, visibility, and convenience of transit, pedestrian, and bicycle infrastructure;
- Create redundancy and connectivity in street networks (more intersections and pathways);
- Ensure connectivity between transportation modes (e.g. bike racks, bus shelters, park-and-ride lots);
- Encourage emerging technologies such as bikesharing and carsharing infrastructure;
- Address the high costs of "free" public parking and minimum parking space requirements

## 9. ENGAGE THE PUBLIC WITH TRANSPARENCY AND INCLUSIVITY

The City should embrace and encourage participation in land use decision making by all segments of the population. An informed citizenry is essential to successful democratic government. The decision-making process should involve clear communication of rules and procedures and protect the interests and rights of all citizens, not only developers and interest groups.