

# Aging in Place: 8 to 80 Maine Downtown Conference May 2, 2014



What can communities do to adapt to an aging population?

- Transportation policy and investments
- Building regulations that reflect the vision in a comprehensive plan
- Open space conserved for local foods and enjoyment

Adapting our communities for an aging population also makes it more appealing for people of all ages, as the title says, "from 8 to 80"

While difficult for us as individuals, to accept and live through this aging thing, and certainly there are challenges for Maine's economy, let's focus today on the opportunities for you to make a difference in your community.

GSM statewide nonprofit strengthening the connections between Maine's communities, economy and environment. We do so through advocacy, events and projects and when we succeed, our children's generation and their children's generation will want to...and be able to call Maine home.

Today we'll look at what smart growth brings to the issue of aging in place

## Why does it matter?



Adapting as our population ages is important.

We are so connected to our homes. Whether they age at home, or in their hometowns It is what most of us want. This is our sense of well being and community.

It's about them, it's about family members staying connected as elders live out their lives. For the community this is one important kind of diversity.

When we ensure that our communities are safe, affordable, engaging – we all benefit from those aspects of hometown.

In addition, whether low-income elderly or those with significant resources, there are business opportunities such as retail, hospitality, recreation, healthcare, and housing.

**Smart growth provides ways to  
plan for change and growth  
while supporting and strengthening  
the things we value  
about our communities.**



GrowSmart looks at communities, including downtowns highlighted today, through the lens of smart growth

## Smart Growth for Aging Mainers?

- Smart Growth supports choice and opportunity
- optimize the investments already made in public and private infrastructure. This means potential for lower property taxes.
- consume less land that is otherwise available for agriculture, open space, and rural lifestyles



Ten Principles of smart growth are on the buck slip on your seats.

Not the Ten Commandments, but strong guidelines as you consider your community.

How does this specifically relate to adapting to our aging population?

Choice and opportunity matter. This is about allowing for options.

Property taxes as a barrier to staying in their homes.

Agricultural lands mean local foods, open space and rural lifestyles. We are a rural state. This IS part of smart growth.

## So what can communities do?



**Housing:** Options include in-law apartments, co-housing, reconfiguring large homes to multi-family, allow small lot sizes for affordability and for those not interested in mowing and shoveling. Communities can create ordinances allow for a range of housing choices

**Active and Healthy Way of Life:** Options include walking trails, safe sidewalks, transportation designed to accommodate all users, not just motor vehicles. Communities can invest in these assets where they make sense and support complete streets policies

**Downtown revitalization:** Whether Main Street, village center or downtown, are there a variety of things to do? Work, live, shop and eat, services? Communities can encourage development where it already exists. Synergy brings success for all uses of downtowns

**Natural Resource Sector:** Provides local foods, fisheries, forests, fiber as well as quality of life and health. Communities can support natural resource sector in their plans, zoning and ordinances.

**Effective Government Process:** Working together, town committees and regional collaborations will create communities we want. Communities can provide support and training for elected and appointed officials and can reach out to neighboring communities for projects and ideas that are more likely to succeed through collaboration.

**Economy, Innovation, Small Business:** This is about the future economy. As Mainers age in place, their children and grandchildren will be raising families and working in place. This

means a strong economy based on a foundation of those same community and environmental values. Communities can ensure that regulations accommodate business decisions by being predictable, fair and cost-effective. Communities can promote Buy Local campaigns and have policies in place for local purchasing by town.

Transportation: As with housing, allow for choices. In small towns this might be a carpool or ride-sharing arrangement, larger populations can support cost-effective public transit options. Note the connections between policy areas; the need for transportation is directly related to the location of homes and services. Connections reduce the need for driving a car. As with housing, communities can provide options.

Climate change: Long term changes in our climate present potential for great risk. You may wonder how climate change impacts aging Mainers, perhaps this is not an immediate concern but... smart growth is also about leaving a legacy for our children and grandchildren that we can be proud of. Communities can encourage living and work styles that reduce carbon discharge and waste. It is also important to be looking at adaptation and mitigation steps; acknowledging that this change is happening, communities can incorporate climate change into their planning, with storm water infrastructure, built and green.

## Community Resources

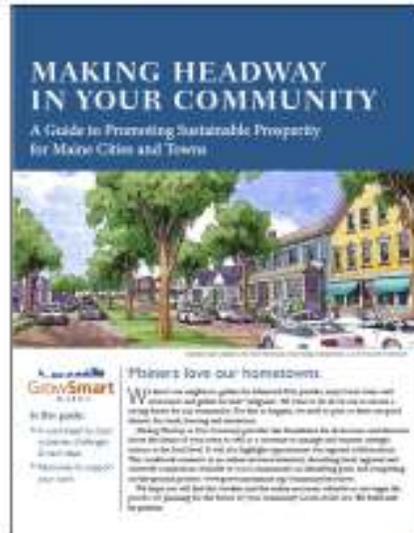
- **Project Canopy**  
[projectcanopy.me](http://projectcanopy.me)
- **Maine Farmland Trust**  
[mainefarmlandtrust.org/building-farm-friendly-communities](http://mainefarmlandtrust.org/building-farm-friendly-communities)
- **Municipal Planning Assistance Program**  
[maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning](http://maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning)
- **Maine Downtown Center**  
[mdf.org/mdc\\_resource\\_cafe.php](http://mdf.org/mdc_resource_cafe.php)
- **Maine Preservation**  
[mainepreservation.org/preservation-help/municipalities](http://mainepreservation.org/preservation-help/municipalities)
- **GrowSmart Maine**  
[growsmartmaine.org/resources](http://growsmartmaine.org/resources)

How are we going to accomplish this?

Here are a few organizations offering community-level resources across the state

Another first step is to find your regional Council of Government and Regional Planning District and Economic Development District. Key services are offered, likely your town is paying dues already.

Coming this fall . . .



Nancy Smith  
Executive Director  
GrowSmart Maine

[nsmith@growsmartmaine.org](mailto:nsmith@growsmartmaine.org)

## Making Headway In Your Community

An online clearinghouse of organizations providing expertise, information, tools to communities for all these goals.

Simply plug in where you live and what you want to do and you'll be connected with a list of relevant organizations.

Making Headway In Your Community will be connected to Maine Downtown Center's My Green Downtown success stories – inspiration and resources will make you even more powerful.

Our goal with this project is to help communities create more success across Maine, more smart growth polices, projects...  
for Mainers from 8 to 80