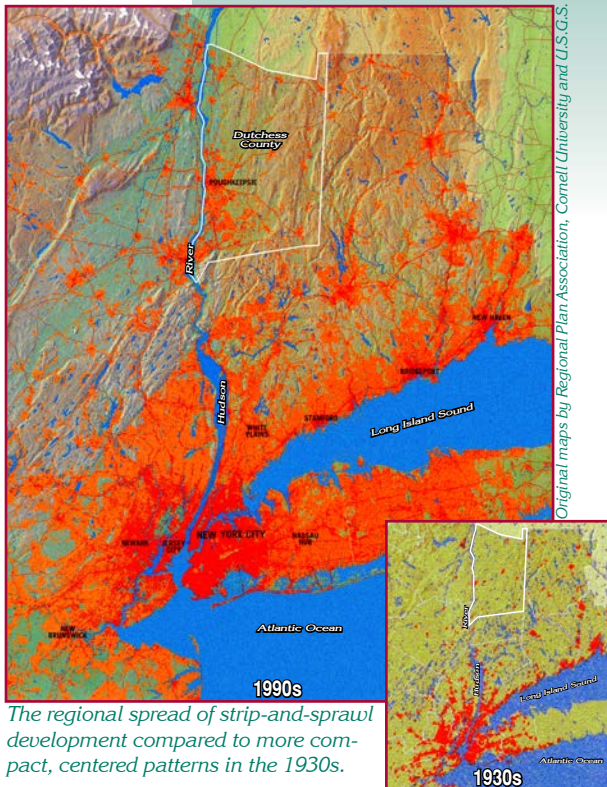


CENTERS AND GREENSPACES

Define smart growth within a traditional and ecological pattern of Centers and Greenspaces, where new development should either:

- *strengthen an existing city, village, hamlet, or town center;*
- *transform a suburban strip or subdivision(s) into a center in the form of a more walkable, mixed-use neighborhood; or*
- *fit gently into the rural countryside as a background element, preserving continuous natural and agricultural greenspaces.*



The regional spread of strip-and-sprawl development compared to more compact, centered patterns in the 1930s.

Most development before 1950 focused around walkable centers, surrounded by expansive rural and natural landscapes. Forming a combined ecosystem, cities and smaller centers concentrated diversity and innovation in commerce and culture, while large areas of farms, woods, and wetlands generated a wide diversity of natural species.

This interconnected pattern of central places and surrounding greenspaces, evolved over centuries and embedded in nature, has now segmented into suburban forms that mandate driving for every major movement. Commercial strips line most highways and residential sprawl spreads far into the countryside, fragmenting both communities and nature. Auto-dependency also fuels a basic contradiction: low-density sprawl creates higher levels of traffic congestion.

Limited land, unlimited traffic aggravation, and escalating local taxes to service all those scattered subdivisions make the continued strip-and-sprawl conversion of outlying areas unsustainable. Global energy and climate concerns make policy changes even more urgent. A Greenway-inspired Centers and Greenspaces approach that re-centers most new development into walkable, mixed-use forms can protect our natural and agricultural heritage, end wasteful land, energy, and pollution practices, and provide a wider range of transportation choices, from walking, biking, and cars to transit alternatives.

Centers Save Greenspaces

Build close-knit, connected centers.....to protect our landscape legacy

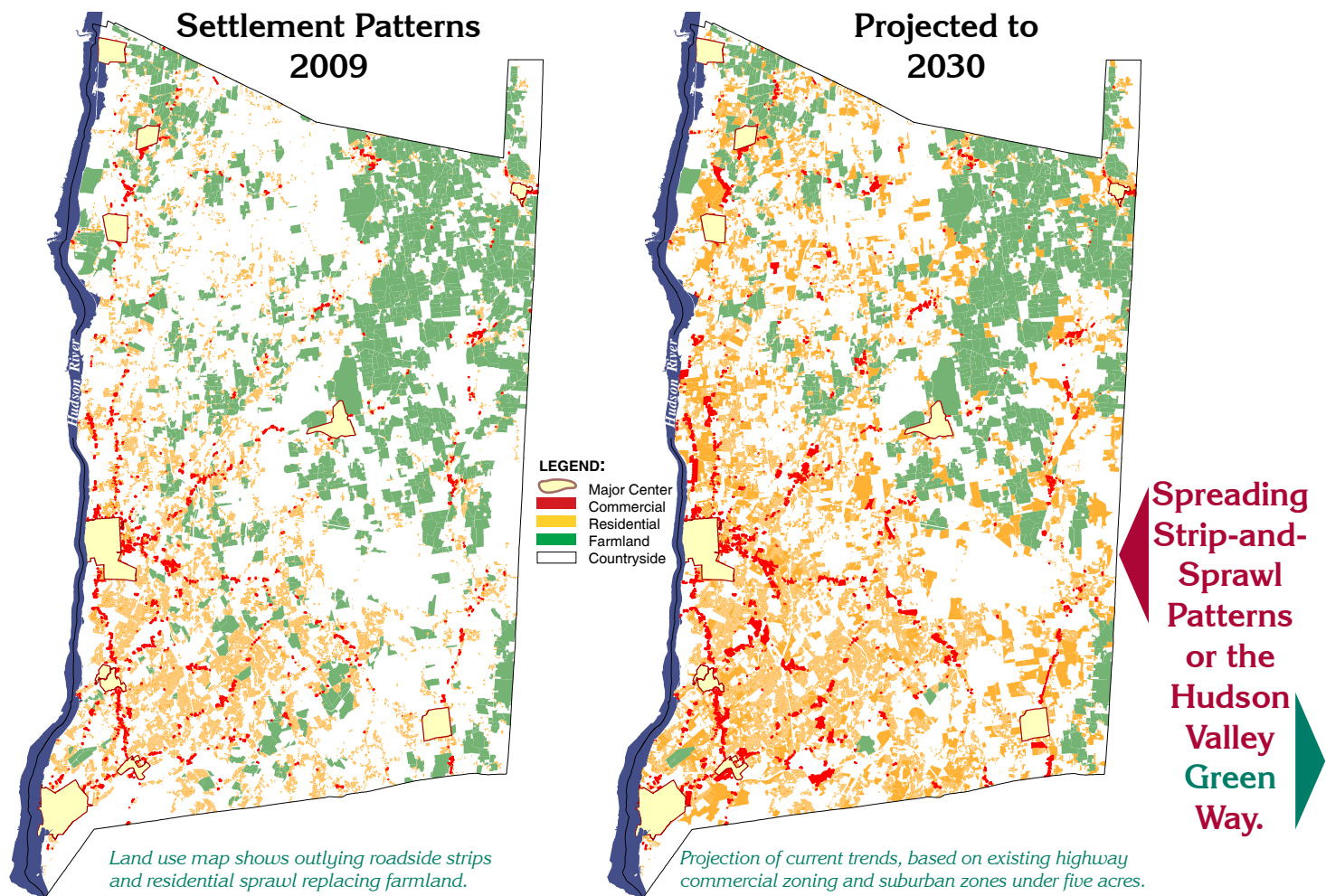


Village of Red Hook



Town of Amenia

- Reinforce existing centers and main streets with new infill buildings and redevelopment;
- Mix uses to promote walking from housing to stores, jobs, parks, schools and civic uses;
- Connect major centers with transit services;
- Locally identify **priority growth areas** for close-in expansion and conversion of strip districts or subdivisions into new centers.
- Employ a range of protection measures for farmland and natural wildlife areas;
- Adopt policies that support agriculture and rural uses, not suburban residential zoning;
- Plan for continuous greenspace systems, rather than just parcel-based solutions;
- Locally identify **priority greenspaces** for future public or private conservation.



“Greenway principles support reinforcing centers as primary growth areas, fitting any outlying development into the natural landscape to preserve farmland and open spaces, and providing strategies to pull together separated subdivisions and commercial districts into more connected neighborhoods or mixed use centers.” *Greenway Connections*, 2000, page 27

The **Centers and Greenspaces** initiative integrates land use, transportation, and ecological planning to implement Greenway principles and prevent strip-and-sprawl patterns. The goal is to encourage municipalities to identify natural and agricultural greenspaces for possible protection and priority growth centers with positive development potential. The Centers and Greenspaces approach was first applied in the Rhinebeck Town Plan and a Red Hook intermunicipal plan, then with the Towns of Poughkeepsie and Pleasant Valley and the City of Beacon. These plans not only identified growth centers and greenspaces, but also tried to illustrate what new close-in development might look like. The Centers and Greenspaces map builds on these local examples and will evolve on the interactive website as new municipal plans and projects are completed.*

The **Centers and Greenspaces** map is based on compiled local plans, but is designed as a future Greenway vision map, both centered and connected, highlighting four indispensable patterns for complementary natural and human ecosystems:

Centers - Concentrated places of community life, cultural history, and commercial exchange, including cities, villages, and hamlets and traditionally organized within a 1/4- to 1/2-mile walking radius. Priority locations for growth, including infill, redevelopment, extensions, and emerging mixed-use centers by primarily retrofitting existing strips and subdivisions.

Greenspaces – Parks, natural areas, and working farms, combined into a continuous rural countryside and essential for food, recreation, water quality, and diversity of habitats. Priority for possible protection measures, especially the large, continuous “biodiversity blocks” necessary for area-sensitive species (over 1,000 acres and undivided by roads over 25 vehicles per hour).

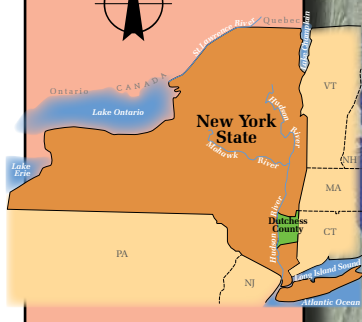
Greenway Corridors – Floodplains, waterway and wetland systems, hedgerows, stepping stone patches, and other critical connections between greenspaces for natural species, wildlife movement, water protection, and recreation.

Greenway Routes - Transportation linkages between centers, forming a landscaped Greenway network from trails to sidewalk systems and from regional rail lines and parkways to boulevards and tree-lined main streets.

*This guide will be linked to an interactive web-based planning tool at dutchessny.gov featuring a full range of digital mapping at the county, town, and village levels, as well as our best local examples where Centers are designed to save Greenspaces.

Centers and Greenspaces

Dutchess County,
New York

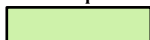


A Greenway vision map for local planning initiatives, featuring four indispensable patterns for interconnected ecosystems:

- variety of walkable, mixed-use **Centers**;
- large natural and agricultural **Greenspaces**;
- naturally connecting **Greenway Corridors**;
- transportation network of **Greenway Routes**.

GREENSPACES

Contained Greenspaces



Outlying Lots
Over 5 Acres

Continuous Greenspaces



1,000+ Acres of
Active Farms and
Natural Habitat

Conserved Greenspaces



Public & Private
Protected Land

CENTERS

City, Village, & Town Centers



1/2-Mile
Walking Radius

Emerging Centers



Potential or
Planned Centers

Hamlet Centers



2,000-Foot
Walking Radius

Suburban Development



Outlying Lots
Under 5 Acres

Greenway Corridors

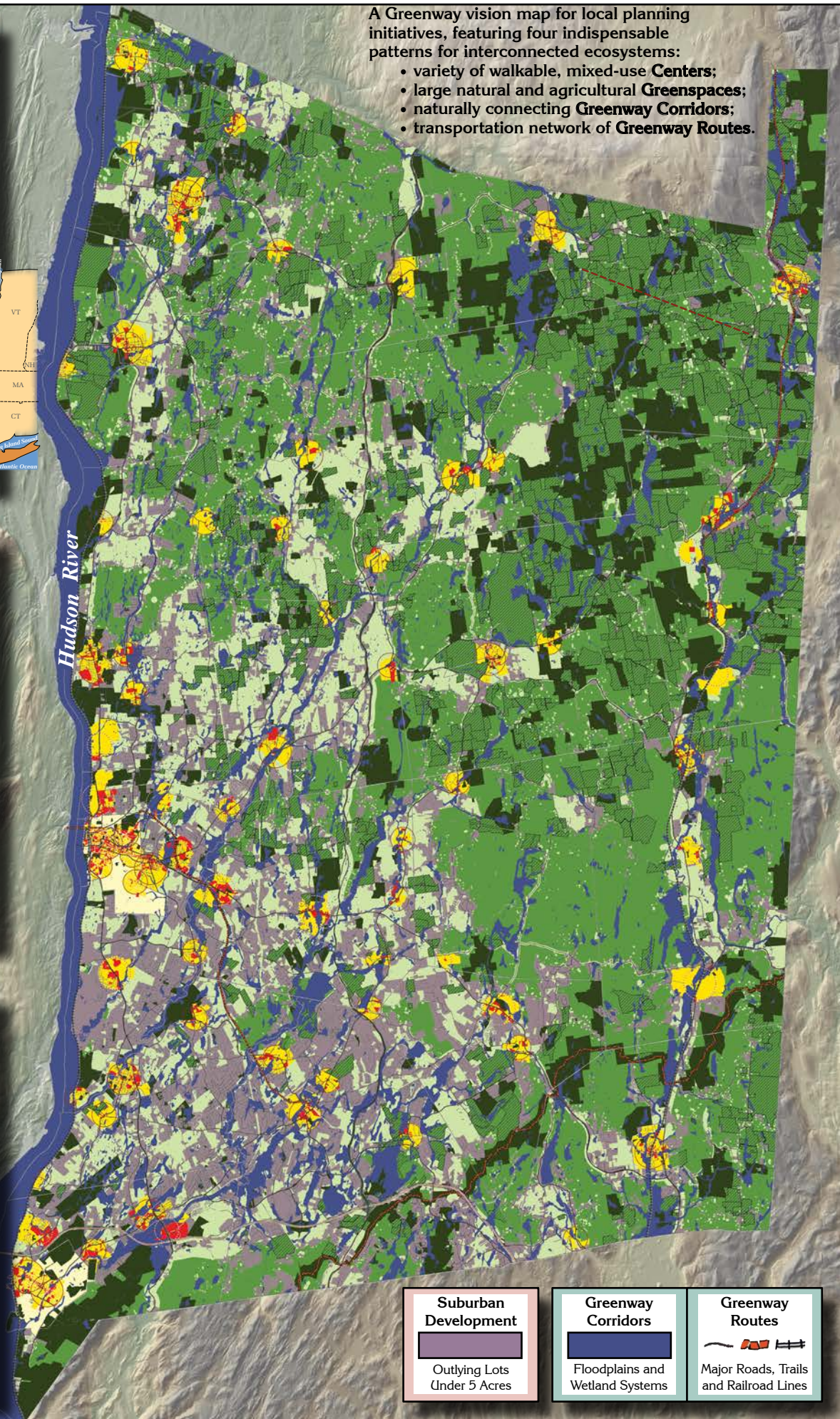


Floodplains and
Wetland Systems

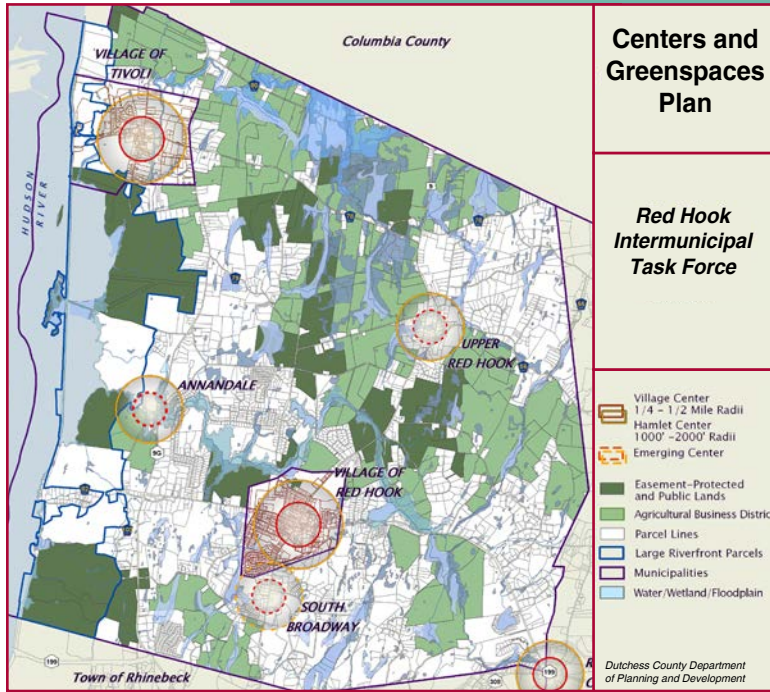
Greenway Routes



Major Roads, Trails
and Railroad Lines

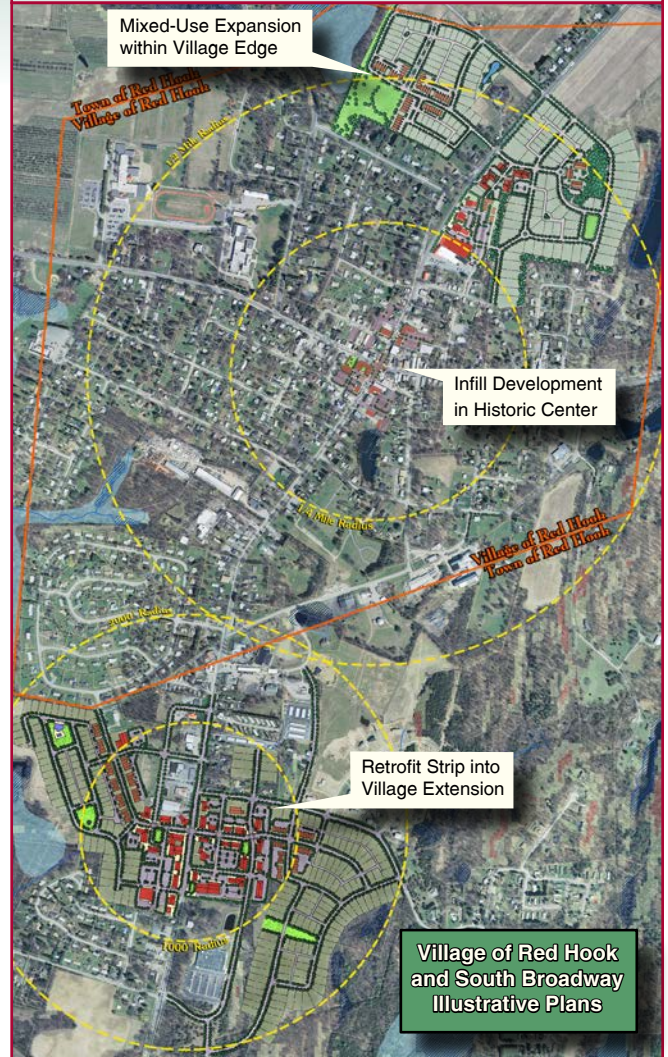


Centers and Greenspaces: Priority Planning at the Local Level



Major goals:

- Permanently protect farming, important farmland, and the rural countryside;
- Strengthen the residential and commercial base of the existing villages and hamlets;
- Transform the South Broadway strip into a traditional village entrance/extension;
- Use close-in smart growth development to help finance much-needed sewer systems.



Red Hook Centers and Greenspaces Plan

In 2009, an Intermunicipal Task Force from the Town and Villages of Red Hook and Tivoli proposed zoning changes to save farms, protect rural character, reinforce traditional village centers, and promote economic development. The plan identified over 50 farms to be included in an Agricultural Business District, designed to replace the current mostly 3-acre suburban-scale zoning and permit greater business opportunities for farmers. The Town's existing purchase of farm development rights program would receive extra funds through incentive zoning for development located close to the Village. The 2011 adopted zoning included detailed illustrative plans and standards for walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods to ensure compatibility with existing centers and to provide design guidance for future development proposals.

Instead of reacting to random development locations, the plan offers a positive vision for where growth is mutually beneficial, acting as an advertisement for new economic investment and streamlining the review process. A Fiscal Impact Study showed that the Centers and Greenspaces strategy could increase the commercial tax base and reduce the potential for town-wide residential development, limiting both sprawl and school tax impacts.

Suburban Development	Traditional Neighborhood Centers
Spread out, disconnected patterns	Compact extension of existing centers
Segregated by use and income	Mix of uses, variety of housing types
Entirely automobile-dependent	Walkable scale, 1/4- to 1/2-mile radius
More exclusive and expensive lots	More moderate housing alternatives
Fewer choices for singles and seniors	Starter housing and downsizing options
Spreads sprawl/dissipates community	Reverses sprawl/concentrates community

Red Hook Intermunicipal Task Force Report

Sources: Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and Jeff Speck, *Suburban Nation*, 2000
 Richard T. T. Forman, *Land Mosaics, The Ecology of Landscapes and Regions*, 1995
 Elizabeth A. Johnson, Michael W. Klemens, *Nature in Fragments, The Legacy of Sprawl*, 2005