

# 7 Guiding Principles

(Drawn from *APA Sustaining Places: Best Practices For Comprehensive Plans & Reference Guide* linked to [here](#)).

Please note: **Principles** provide general rules or direction for the target community. Cf. **Policies** which specify more definitive or defined courses of action to follow for future decisions or implementation.

## 1. Quality of Life

Ensure that community health needs are recognized and addressed.

### Examples principles/practices

Continue to build a strong sense of community through cultural and recreational opportunities.
Expand public safety initiatives where shown to be necessary and seek an appropriate level of public services consistent with residents' needs.
Provide accessible public services, recreation facilities, educational opportunities, public safety facilities, arts and cultural amenities, and parks and outdoor opportunities for all residents.
Continue to develop partnerships of residents, businesses and education and encourage public involvement and leadership which is responsive to community needs and promotes healthy community goals.
Seek to be a town that is well-planned and environmentally sensitive- where residents are safe and have equal access to services and amenities.
Reduce exposure to toxins and pollutants in the natural and built environments.

## 2. Livable Built Environment

Ensure that all elements of the built environment including land use, transportation, housing, energy and infrastructure work together to provide sustainable, green places for living, working, and recreating, consistent with a high quality of life and responsible regionalism. A triple-bottom line approach is suggested as a key driver to planning and problem-solving.

Fundamental to this approach are:

1. Systems thinking where actions/decisions emphasize interrelationships among components under consideration

2. Continuous improvement where planning is not static but is dynamic and may be continuous
3. Consideration of environmental, economic and human/social factors and impacts.

### Examples principles/practices

Promote efficient, sustainable and innovative 'green' building and site design which is compatible with the historic look of the Town. If and where possible, link land use planning to limit infrastructure costs and environmental impacts.
Foster transportation modes/networks, integrated systems of technology and utilities which support the changing needs of the community, a vital local economy and coordinates with regional plans.
Conserve and reuse historic resources and assets.
Discourage development in environmentally sensitive areas.
Attract appropriately-scaled business opportunities to enhance revenue generation, local job creation and mixed commercial uses consistent with Town character and environmental carrying capacity..

### 3. Harmony with Nature

Ensure that the contributions of natural resources to human well-being (and other living organisms) are explicitly recognized, valued and preserved, and that maintaining their health is a primary objective and a shared responsibility of residents and the Town.

### Examples principles/practices

Encourage strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation throughout the Town's working natural landscape including the provision and protection of green infrastructure.
Support policies to reduce carbon footprints and encourage renewable energy use.
Restore, connect, and protect natural habitats including but not limited to forest cover, sensitive lands, watersheds, and wetlands.
Encourage development that respects natural topography.
Support waste, plastic, and harmful chemical reduction.
Encourage water conservation to plan for a lasting water supply.
Protect air quality and reduce light pollution.

## 4. Resilient Economy

Ensure the community is prepared to deal with changes in its economic health by initiating sustainable development strategies which facilitate green business practices and build upon local assets.

### Examples principles/practices

Create incentives for new business opportunities consistent with community character and environmental carrying capacity.
Encourage community-based, economic development to enhance revenue generation and local job creation.
Plan for businesses and municipal entities to operate sustainably by reducing waste and by-products, recycling organic and synthetic materials, and conserving natural resources.
Enhance green infrastructure capacity for sustainable growth within the planned business district consistent with town character.
Foster transportation access to employment opportunities and transportation hubs.
Promote business incubation and flexible work access which support teleworking and sustainable economic activity consistent with local environmental carrying capacity.

## 5. Interwoven Inclusivity

Ensure fairness, equity and inclusion in providing for the housing, services, health, safety, and livelihood needs of all residents of the community.

### Examples principles/practices

Encourage access to a range of housing types to create a more diverse community which meet the needs of the Town's residents and support sustainable growth and local economic activity.
Plan for improved health and safety for at-risk populations.
Provide accessible public services and facilities for the entire community.
Foster strong social networks to ensure resiliency and health of the Town's families and individuals.
Protect vulnerable populations from natural and human-made hazards.

## 6. Responsible Regionalism

Ensure that local proposals account for, connect with, and support the plans of adjacent towns and municipalities and the surrounding region where appropriate.

### Examples principles/practices

Promote regional cooperative efforts and sharing of information and resources.
Coordinate local land use planning, including local open space plans with regional plans and investments.
Include regional development assets in local planning scenarios including regional green infrastructure and encourage consistency between local capital improvement programs and regional infrastructure priorities.
Enhance connections between local activity and needs with neighboring municipal and regional centers and assets.
Coordinate local and regional population and economic projections as well as other data to drive local investment.

## 7. Participation, Implementation and Evaluation

Ensure the process actively involves all segments of the community with idea generation, issue identification, plan development and outcome evaluation with responsibility for carrying out the plan and metrics stated. What are measures of success, benchmarks and targets with respect to desired outcomes?

### Examples of principles/policies

Engage stakeholders at all stages of the process and seek diverse participation.
Develop information and use a diversity of communication channels.
Continue to engage the community after the plan is adopted, with the goal of fostering leadership and continued monitoring and idea generation.
Connection plan implementation to annual budgeting process and establish inter-board/committee and community organization cooperation