6. Planting trees in a deserted urban lot is just one way to make a difference. There are many planning choices that could improve existing urban areas and protect green space in suburban areas so that growing areas could provide more livable and environmentally compatible conditions.

Assessment and Review

There are advantages and disadvantages for living in different communities. Different choices might be better for certain life styles. Certain choices are better for protecting natural resources.

1. What choices do people have?

2. Why do certain people make certain choices?

Extension

In this lesson, the focus is on analyzing the value of livable towns, cities and similar communities. How can we improve the status of town living and create an awareness about their livability thus making it a more appealing and desirable choice for some? What characteristics make such places as Portland, Oregon and Wyomissing, Pennsylvania desirable places to live? How can we improve existing communities so that we can reduce the impacts of sprawl on our countryside?

Optional: Show Ed McMahon's DVD: "Community Choices." Discuss its message.

Activity 2:
Community Changes, Community Choices

Summary: Participants will define elements of a community and create a list of positive attributes that correlate

with attributes described by the American Planning Association. They will "develop" a community with all the elements needed for living. They will determine how to make their community desirable for themselves and their family. They will promote their community to others. Communities will face changes that will be addressed through the creativity and leadership of the citizens.

Questions: What attributes constitute a quality place to live? What is meant by a "sense of place" and how is it developed? What actions are important to help communities face changes?

Preparation

• Prepare Community Descriptions (p 104) and Nametags (pp 105-108).

• Provide four work areas with poster board and pens.

• Prepare a Community Postcard (pp 109-112) for each group.

• Develop four name place cards, each with the description of a community. Place the community name and description in each area.

   1. Skyline City (urban community) with public transportation, sidewalks, walkability to shops, neighborhood schools, historic architecture, housing for all income levels, police service, public transportation, retail and specialty shops, and restaurants.

   2. Forest Lake Borough with locally owned bait shop, gun shop, potter, citizens, small general store and a local diner that specializes in the "famous elk burger." Independent folks who look out for each other from a distance. Not too many outsiders visit the area. No motels. Beautiful wilderness. Easy access to countryside, adjacent to a state park with lake.

Activity 2

3. Coal Run Borough (mountainous area) with ethnic character, religious ties, strong neighborhood connections, ethnic foods, neighborhood support and security.

3. Rural Dairy Township in a pastoral setting, open space, farm houses situated on farms of 15 acres or more, community support and familiarity. Many make a living providing services to farmers. Annual community gatherings such as the Fair and Fall Festival draw visitors from long distances.

• Prepare overhead and copies of the Tool Box for Growing Smarter (pp 113-114).

• Prepare Community Dilemma Cards for each group (p 115).

Procedure

1. Introduce participants to each of the four communities. Inform them that each will be given a name of a job that could best be found in one of the four communities. Give each person a name of a job provided on the nametags. Each person must locate others with jobs appropriate to that community. Participants must introduce each other and determine if they would live in that specific community based on their job. There should be about five participants grouping together.

2. Distribute postcards of livable communities to each group. Have participants examine their photo of a community. Their task is to "sell" that community to the rest of the class.

3. Participants are to think of all the things that would make that community the best place to live. Each group will present and "sell" their community to the rest of the group. On a flip chart, record all the attributes that make the community a desirable place to live. Add check marks for each time a characteristic is mentioned again. Review the list with the whole group.

Livable communities are safe, walkable communities that provide access to natural areas, healthy recreational opportunities, an assortment of community services, places for children, architectural interest, historic interest, and unique character.

4. Explain that the American Planning Association and the Growing Smarter Network has developed a list of characteristics that have been identified in quality communities.

Distribute and display on an overhead the Tool Box for Growing Smarter. Review the list with the participants, comparing and contrasting their own list. What was missing? What is the same?

5. The participants will be working in groups to sketch a community map typical of the community that would employ the people in jobs that you have been assigned. Before drawing your community, we will discuss the services that each community should have. In 2007, there were 2,563 municipalities in Pennsylvania. Each unit is distinct and independent of other local units.

Each municipality is responsible "to protect and promote public health, safety, morals and general welfare" of the people. This is called the "police power" that is the ultimate responsibility of each municipality.

In order to achieve this important responsibility, each municipality must provide for services to meet its goal. Brainstorm a list of the services a community provides and write them on a flip chart.

• Police and Fire Protection (safety)
• Local Roads
• Water Supply
• Sewage Collection and Treatment
• Parking and Traffic Control
• Parks and Recreation
• Garbage Collection/Recycling

Activity 2

- Health Services
- Libraries
- Public Buildings
- Planning and Zoning

Municipalities are given the power to determine how land is used through planning, zoning laws and subdivision laws. Zoning laws are designed to provide for the orderly development of the community. Each municipality may choose to implement such laws and if it chooses to do so, it must designate land to be used for every kind of land use, such as land to build different types of housing, businesses, parks, schools, quarries and industries. Zoning laws may set aside land for just one use such as housing or they may allow for mixed uses such as housing and shops. Zoning also regulates the size, height, location and uses of buildings and the size of land on which they may be constructed or how far back from the street or property lines a building may be located.

Zones are color-coded on the zoning maps. Here is an example of how colors are used on some zoning maps.

Green—Agricultural, parks and recreation

Yellow—Agriculture

White—Residential

Red—Commercial

Violet—Industrial

Blue—Civic, schools, governmental

Lets review the components that are located in most communities.

1. Residential—Housing types should include apartments, single residences, trailer parks

2. Commercial—Businesses, factories, restaurants, offices

3. Agriculture

4. Parks and Recreation—Trails, parks, greenways, bike paths, jogging paths

5. Public Buildings, Civic Buildings—School, prison, churches, library, museum, courthouse, city hall

6. Services—Roads, railroad, airport, mass transit, fire department, police department, wastewater treatment plant, water treatment plant

7. Industrial—Sites for industries

6. Your team may choose to negotiate with another community to share one or more land uses. This is strongly encouraged and is referred to as a "multi-municipal" plan.

As you develop your community, think of a minimum of three laws that could regulate decisions for development in the future, keeping the community the way you like it.

7. Display the picture maps around the room. Conduct a "walk about" by rotating each group around to each community. Have each group spend a few minutes in each community. Using Post-it notes, have participants write what they like about the community and one suggestion to improve the community.

In a large group review the different communities, discussing what elements make a livable, healthy community.

8. There are pressures and changes happening to communities throughout Pennsylvania. Some communities are expanding in population and need more space for housing, some communities are growing in an unplanned manner, using up natural resources, agricultural lands and water supplies, and some communities are losing people and jobs and housing is abandoned. Each community must address the pressures of the future, whether it is growth or decline. There are priorities that will guide a healthy plan.

9. Each team will be given a Community Connections Dilemma Card. Each team will decide and establish

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Activity 2

planning strategies to meet the future changes happening to their community as described on the dilemma card. Each team will try to incorporate smart growth policies whenever possible in their plan.

Have each team discuss the dilemma and share the planning tools they used to meet the changes.

Assessment and Review

1.What is happening in their own communities that reflect these scenarios?

2. Survey a community, preferably their own community, and develop a profile of their own community and project what could happen in the future.

Activity 3:
Survey Your Community

Summary: Participants will conduct surveys in their community and assess issues and highlight positive elements. They will research information that is important about the functions of their local government such as the location of the municipal government and the schedule of meetings. They will conduct a preference survey and discuss how they can implement positive elements they envision.

Questions: What make a community a good place to live and what role can you take to implement your vision?

Preparation

• Provide two or more copies of the Community Survey Form (p 116) and the Community Photographic Project Survey (p 117) to each participant. The survey and project could be assigned to them prior to class or assigned to be completed outside of class hours. Participants should answer the questions and provide the survey to at least two or more members of the community.

• Prepare copies of Planning Meeting Worksheet (p 118) and Your Community Worksheet (p 119).

• Prepare copies or transparency of Community Photos (pp 120-121).

• Prepare copies of the Smart Growth Rating Sheet (p 122).

Procedure

1. Participants may work individually or in groups to conduct a survey in their community. They may develop their own survey tool or use the Community Survey worksheet provided.

2. The Community Survey could be accomplished on the participant's own time or the survey could be accomplished as an organized field trip. To further reduce time or provide practice, the survey could be performed in the classroom using the maps from the previous activities. Teams of participants would "stroll" through the classroom, visiting the picture maps and answering questions based on the maps.

3. Participants compile their surveys by working in small groups of four or five participants to compare and contrast their findings about their communities. They will compile their data, present graphic visualization of their surveys, presenting one summary to the class. Compare and contrast the responses.

4. Photographic Survey. It is recommended for each participant or participant group to develop a Photographic Survey of their community. (If working in groups, the group may identify a "photographer.") Digital cameras could be provided through grants. This survey could be completed prior to the first day of the course or could be

Activity 3