



Support a diversity of businesses in the community's town centers.

Fostering business growth and development in downtowns and villages reinforces those areas as centers of community life and contributes to social integration of community members. It can also be an effective use of existing infrastructure and a way to maximize past public investment in established centers. Balancing economic development in downtown businesses with opportunities for agricultural and forestry enterprises in the countryside also maintains the state's natural and historic landscape, supports the local production of food and fuel. It also prevents scattered commercial development along highway strips, a land use that undermines the vitality of downtowns and villages. Having businesses in compact town centers can also make it easier to accomplish errands without having to drive to multiple destinations – another opportunity to reduce energy use and carbon emissions.

TIPS FOR ACCURATE SCORING:

Review town plan and zoning

Talk with local business groups and business owners

Talk with town residents about where they shop and why

A. Can residents meet most daily shopping needs — groceries, hardware, etc. — in town (or, for smaller towns, at or near a town center that's less than 10 miles away)?

- Yes. We can meet everyday needs at a diversity of local businesses 3
- We can buy some goods in town, but must travel for others 2
- No. We have to travel outside town to meet most everyday needs..... 1

B. How does your town support existing business in the town center and attract new ones?

- We provide publically financed improvements — street and sidewalk repairs, sewer and water services, parking areas, benches, street trees, and by participating in state designation programs that incentivize improvements..... 3
- We are working on a plan to attract a variety of businesses, and to improve the downtown business district, but we have not taken action..... 2
- We have had little or no discussion about this..... 1

C. How does local zoning encourage business development in the town center?

- It allows a variety of uses in the town center, including those that meet people's daily needs. It also offers incentives, such as reduced parking and setbacks..... 3
- It allows a mix of downtown business types and uses, but regulations, such as lot size, setbacks and parking, make such development unlikely 2
- It does not encourage a mix of downtown business types. Regulations include lot sizes, setbacks, and parking provisions that can't be met in the town center, or that do not match the existing layout of our town center..... 1





D. Does your town discourage new businesses in locations, and at a scale, that could undermine the economic viability of businesses in the town center?

- Yes. New businesses, especially retail, services and offices, are limited to the town center, adjacent areas, and state designated growth centers 3
- Some areas outside of the town center are zoned for new businesses, but the location and scale of those businesses are restricted and applicants must demonstrate they will not adversely impact the viability of the town center 2
- No, zoning allows the development of new businesses along major highway corridors, and/or there is no restriction on the scale of new businesses located outside of the town center 1

E. Is there work underway in your community to encourage “buying local” to promote local businesses or, if applicable, local farming and forestry?

- Yes, there is an effort to promote local shopping, businesses, and foods . 3
- There is a “buy local” effort, but its activity is limited 2
- There is no specific “buy local” effort 1

Score: _____

Scoring	Suggested Steps for Building Resilience
13-15 Resilient Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a capital improvement plan to guide investment in town centers. Ensure that zoning guides business development that respects the scale and character of the community.
8-12 In Transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply for a state designation to access tax credits and other resources. Update zoning to include business development in the town center.
5-7 Needs Your Attention!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with a non-profit organization to develop a downtown strategy. Start a buy local campaign.