



Friend –

Though I am not a planner, as the head of GrowSmart Maine, I have worked with planners for more than ten years. In that time, there has been nothing more transformative than the State’s plan to extend internet access across Maine.

Affordable internet access does not guarantee a sustainable future, but the lack of it will stymie any other efforts to positively advance economic opportunities for all. At the same time, planners are mindful of the potential for creating sprawl as we extend broadband infrastructure. Bringing internet access to existing homes and businesses, most likely on those utility lines running along rural roadways beside undeveloped land, increases the potential for new residential or commercial development far outside of a town or city center, be it a quiet village center, a vibrant historic downtown or the heart of a city.

As outlined in our Community Guide [The Creeping Cost of Sprawl](#), the risks of this kind of growth can be significant for our economy and environment, municipal budgets, personal wellness and quality of life. GrowSmart is updating the data presented in this piece, yet the underlying premise remains valid - the incremental “creeping cost” of low-density development often goes unrecognized until it’s too late to reverse the damage.

But there are smart growth tools municipalities can use to encourage sustainable growth while accommodating demand for internet access. GrowSmart Maine will be diving into this topic in a [free webinar](#) on March 30th, from 4-5 pm.

FREE WEBINAR

join

GrowSmart Maine
Keeping Maine...Maine

**MORE BROADBAND
LESS SPRAWL**

March 30 Tues | 4 PM

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This follows the [Press Herald Policy Matters: Broadband](#) online forum on March 23rd, 6:30-8:00 addressing how Maine lost early momentum and how to get it back.

I value planners' abilities to bring together members of the community to comprehensively consider pieces of the land use puzzle, mindful of current needs of the community and anticipating what future generations of Mainers will be looking for in their hometowns. Their active participation is essential now, as we ensure affordable access to high-speed internet for all Mainers.

Read our testimony on broadband and our other advocacy efforts within the legislature here:

[Advocacy Update](#)

We hope to see you at our "More Broadband, Less Sprawl" webinar. Thank you for your support of GrowSmart Maine and our efforts in "Keeping Maine ... *Maine*".

Nancy Smith,

Executive Director

GrowSmart Maine

<http://growsmartmaine.nationbuilder.com/>