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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW RESOURCE ON MEASURING DOWNTOWN HEALTH

What exactly is a “healthy” downtown? How will new programs – like the Growth Center and Vermont Neighborhood Programs – impact our downtowns? What data do we have available to justify and defend existing programs?

Smart Growth Vermont’s Indicators of Downtown Health research project, conducted in partnership with the UVM Center for Rural Studies, The Vermont Downtown Program and Preservation Trust of Vermont, sought answers to these questions and have compiled the process into a handbook, [*Developing, Collecting and Analyzing Indicators of Downtown Health: A Handbook*](#), to help communities. The four pilot communities – St. Albans, Montpelier, Burlington and Bristol – collected a wide variety of data that was compiled so that they can now track trends such as downtown vacancies, and make informed decisions about how to grow their community. The findings, and guidelines on how to collect indicators in other downtowns, have been published on our website, along with relevant documents for download, <http://www.smartgrowthvermont.org/help/indicators/>.

“Investors will take a look at the downtown, the business mix, and the economic mix of the downtown. The downtowns need to be healthy because they are going to create jobs and increase quality of life,” said one of the Steering Committee members for our Indicators of Downtown Health research project. “If you can illustrate that the downtowns are getting better, that is a positive story and people gravitate towards success. More activities, better shopping, more dining, whatever it is that creates a positive buzz does an awful lot.”

Smart Growth Vermont is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to forging growth and conservation solutions for Vermont communities and working rural lands. We work both on-the-ground in communities and at the state level to help develop and implement land use legislation designed to foster growth that works to strengthen our downtowns and village centers while conserving our working landscape and open areas. For more information, please visit Smart Growth Vermont’s website at www.smartgrowthvermont.org.

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