# Instructions:

Before the course, select four of the 11 tool topics to insert into the presentation, including at least one tool from each of the three goal categories. Replace each tool placeholder slide with the slides associated with each selected tool by moving or copy/pasting the slides from this section into the placeholder space. Delete the placeholder slide.

The goal categories are identified at the bottom of each tool slide and include:

1. Support the Rural Landscape
2. Help Existing Places Thrive
3. Create Great New Places

Select tools that are relevant to the region where the module will be conducted. Each tool discussion features a real-world example of where it has been used. You may choose to select the tools with examples in a region the same or similar to the workshop location. For example, an instructor conducting a workshop in a rural Midwestern community may select tools that have examples pulled from other Midwestern areas (such as tools #8 and #10).

You may also tailor the selection of the tools to the workshop based on your knowledge about the needs or existing conditions of the region. For example, if a region is already using a Transfer of Development Rights Program (tool #4), it would be best to select a different tool from Goal #1 to introduce new concepts or ideas to the participants.

Finally, choose tools that you will be comfortable presenting and answering questions about. Prior to selecting the tools, you may find it valuable to review the detailed explanations of the tools are available in Handout Two: Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities.

## Instructions:

Tool #8 begins with this slide. It focuses on the second goal and the fourth strategy listed under it on Handout One: Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities.

If you choose this tool to for discussion, replace one of the tool placeholder slides with the slides associated with this tool by moving or copy/pasting the slides from this section into the placeholder space. Delete the placeholder slide.



**GOAL #2:**
**HELP EXISTING PLACES THRIVE**

*Strategy D: Foster Economic Development in Existing Downtowns*

**Slide:** 1

**Time:** 1 Minute

## Script:

"The second goal we discussed earlier was to help existing places thrive. We must take care of existing assets and investments, such as downtowns, infrastructure, and places the community values. One strategy is to foster economic development in existing downtowns. We will identify some tools and policies that support that strategy, and then we will focus in on one specific tool, a local business survey."

# Instructions:

Introduce the strategy, and mention the possible tools and policies related to it.

# Script:

**Strategy D: Foster Economic Development in Existing Downtowns**

Downtowns and main streets are key community assets, and supporting and strengthening them is an important economic development strategy.

**Tools and Policies**
- Local business survey
- Business recognition program

**Goal #2: Help Existing Places Thrive**

**Slide:** 2

**Time:** 1 Minute

"Downtowns and main streets are traditionally the heart of rural communities, and the condition of the downtown can define the image of the whole region. An attractive and vibrant downtown is crucial to bringing new young people, creative workers, entrepreneurs, and businesses to the area. Communities should make maintaining and enhancing the viability of their downtown areas a priority. There are many strategies that can be used to foster economic development in downtowns. Two possible tools and policies related to this strategy include: local business surveys and business recognition programs. These tools and policies are often implemented at the local level. However, they strengthen the region as a whole, and the more communities implement them, the more competitive the entire region will be. The following three slides will provide a brief overview, benefits, and an example of a local business survey."

## Instructions:

Explain the concept of a local business survey.

## Script:

**Strategy D: Foster Economic Development in Existing Downtowns**

**Local Business Survey**
- Determine needs of downtown businesses
- Given by chambers of commerce, local government leaders, or economic development officials
- Administer in person, mail, e-mail or web
- Cover broad range of topics or focus on specific issues

**Goal #2: Help Existing Places Thrive**

**Slide:** 3

**Time:** 1 Minute

"A local business survey can be an effective tool to learn about the needs of downtown businesses. It could address topics such as maintenance, appearance, infrastructure issues, transportation access, leadership or others.  Surveys are often undertaken by chambers of commerce, local government leaders or economic development officials. Surveys can be administered in may ways, including in-person interviews with business owners, or sent out by mail or via email. There are also many tools available for conducting web surveys.

A survey can be designed to cover a broad range of topics or to focus on a specific issue of concern. However, consideration should be given to brevity, as small business owners are often very busy with little time to respond. The results of a local business survey can help highlight areas where improvements may be necessary, such as streetscapes, parking, or other areas."

# Instructions:

Explain the benefits of a local business survey.

# Script:

"Conducting a survey to engage local businesses is a first step towards demonstrating that the local economic development organization values their businesses and opinions. A survey will help you develop a better understanding of what local businesses need in terms of economic development assistance and improvements to downtown. Learning about the strengths and weaknesses of a downtown area from business owners' perspective can help local officials strengthen and improve the area and make it more supportive for businesses and more attractive for customers. All of this will help retain existing downtown businesses, attract new ones, and bring more customers downtown."

**Strategy D: Foster Economic Development in Existing Downtowns**

**Benefits of Local Business Surveys**
- Develop a better understanding of business needs
- Improve downtown, making it more supportive of business and pleasant for customers

**Goal #2: Help Existing Places Thrive**

**Slide:** 4

**Time:** 1 Minute

## Instructions:

Present an example of a successful local business survey program.

## Script:



**Strategy D: Foster Economic Development in Existing Downtowns**

**Example: Local Business Survey**
McCook, Nebraska
- Undertaken by McCook Economic Development Corporation
- Conducted as a web survey using Survey Monkey
- Gauged business owners' interests in participating in programs
- Explored opinions about downtown conditions

**Goal #2: Help Existing Places Thrive**

"This is an example of a local business survey sponsored by the McCook Economic Development Corporation, a public and privately-funded economic development organization located in McCook, Nebraska, a town of about 7,500 people. The survey was conducted as a web survey, using the online web survey tool, Survey Monkey. This website and others like it allow users to conduct simple surveys for free, with additional features available for a reasonable cost. Respondents follow a web link to the survey and then are lead through the survey process.
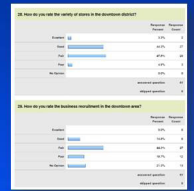
The town's survey gauged business owners' interest in participating in activities such as a downtown planning committee and zero interest loan or grant program to help with improvements. The survey also asked about downtown conditions, such as the overall appearance of the area and available parking. The information gathered from local business surveys can be very useful to address the programs, projects and other issues that businesses think are most important and needed."

**Slide:** 5

**Time:** 2 Minutes

**Additional Information:**
For additional information on this example, review the following document:
http://mccookne.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/McCook-Downtown-Survey-Summary-2012.pdf