



Preserving Community Character

The vast majority of residents feel a strong attachment to the culture and the character of their town. They want a healthy economy, but not at the expense of their culture or community character. Gateway communities across the country, not just the Smokies, are exploring ways to support tourism while minimizing the impact on their defining resources.

Questions for Discussion:

- What are our best heritage and natural assets to tell a “special story” that would be of interest to a visitor?
- How can we tell that story in an entertaining way?
- What steps can we take to maintain and cherish that heritage?
- What is the role of our landscapes in telling our stories to visitors?
- How can our landscape become a sustainable foundation for economic growth and community identity?

Economic Sustainability

Natural and cultural resources have attracted visitors, residents and new businesses to the GSMNP region. These changes produce new investments, new revenues, and new challenges for the future.

Community officials and residents want to find ways to preserve what they love about their communities without saying no to jobs and economic development.

Sustainability for the Smokies

- What are good practices that you have experienced or visited?
- Would those practices work here?
- Are there additional opportunities for economic development on which our community should focus?
- Are we ready to take advantage of new trends in eco-tourism and cultural tourism?
- What tools and resources do we need to do the job right?

Next Steps

- What key themes have emerged from the discussion?
- Are there other key issues that we did not address?
- How do we ensure that all stakeholders are involved?