



**WE ADVOCATE FOUR PRINCIPLES:**

- *Support greater densities and mixed use developments* in appropriate areas, especially in our region’s centers and transportation corridors.
- *Integrate transportation investments with appropriate land use.*
- *Increase housing choices* by removing barriers that artificially restrict the market.
- *Ensure that greenfield development is designed to achieve a sense of community, provide more housing choices, leverage existing infrastructure, and conserve natural resources.*

**GREENFIELD DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

# Quality growth can help create better greenfield development.

The Atlanta region is redeveloping many older neighborhoods, and more area residents are rediscovering the conveniences of living in-town. But even an aggressive strategy to redevelop the region’s town centers and transportation corridors won’t provide all the homes, shops, and offices needed to meet forecasted demand. That’s why the Livable Communities Coalition has developed guidelines for the wise use of so-called “greenfields” —previously undeveloped land in metro Atlanta.

*A growing population demands growth. It’s up to all of us to choose good growth.*

## What’s a “greenfield”?

A greenfield is a developer’s clean slate. It’s any undeveloped piece of land. Pasture land, woods, and abandoned farms are all examples of potential greenfield sites. Much of the region’s growth over the past 50 years has been in greenfields, a result of the relatively cheap cost of undeveloped land, the mobility offered by cars, and zoning policies that make it easier to develop greenfields than to redevelop older neighborhoods.



## Why do we need guidelines?

Conventional subdivision development of the past 50 years has provided housing for many people. But it has also raised challenges.

**Example of an Actual Development**

Village Habitat Design and Chattahoochee Hill Country Alliance

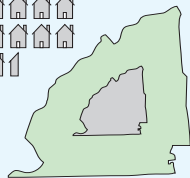
**Conventional Development**  
30,000 Homes



**80% of Land Disturbed**  
Out of 40,000 acres  
32,000 acres disturbed  
= 30,000 Homes

This includes:  
No Commercial  
No Services  
No Civic uses

**Villages and Conservation Subdivisions**  
38,000 Homes



**16% of Land Disturbed**  
Out of 40,000 acres  
6,380 acres disturbed  
= 38,000 Homes

This includes:  
Commercial  
Services  
Civic uses

**CONVENTIONAL DEVELOPMENT:**

- *Typically separates homes, offices, and shops*, making cars necessary for even the smallest errand. This near-total dependence on cars adds traffic congestion and hurts air quality.
- *Consumes roughly 50 acres of trees a day for new development in metro Atlanta.*
- *Strains the budgets of cities and counties* as they race to keep up with spread-out growth.
- *Provides limited housing choices.* Many suburbs focus on building single-family houses to the near exclusion of apartments, condominiums and townhomes.

The Livable Communities Coalition believes that greenfield development should build neighborhoods that preserve open space and foster a sense of community by using streets to connect neighborhoods, making walking and cycling real alternatives to driving, providing a wide variety of housing, and making good use of existing and already-planned infrastructure.

Good greenfield developments can take many forms. But they typically share six core characteristics. They:



## 1. Make walking easy

- Put homes, shops, and offices close to each other.
- Link sidewalks so that people can easily walk from home to parks or stores.
- Use good landscape design—including trees, benches, and lighting—to make walking safer and more pleasant.

## 2. Save tax dollars

- Develop near roads and future transit services.
- Build near existing utilities and schools.
- Use conservation subdivisions to protect open land and minimize storm water runoff.

## 3. Offer choices in housing

- Provide a variety of housing types—single-family homes, apartments, town homes, and condominiums.
- Let the market pick lot sizes, house sizes, the right number of dwellings per acre, and the right mix of housing.
- Avoid rules that set minimums for lot and house sizes.



## 4. Ease traffic

- Connect streets within and between developments to create a grid that gives drivers a choice of routes to take.
- Build workable networks of sidewalks, trails, and bike lanes that give residents the option of not driving.
- Make new developments transit-friendly so they can be easily served by future transit services.



## 5. Conserve open space

- Conserve and protect as open space at least 30 percent of every development.
- Use conserved land to provide habitat for wildlife and recreational uses for people.
- Choose compact development—conservation subdivisions or villages, for example—that sensibly group homes, stores, and offices.



## 6. Protect the environment

- Protect trees and tree canopies.
- Promote green building techniques.
- Conserve water and improve water quality by limiting the use of septic tanks.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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