



Workshop **4** Home Park

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Blueprints for successful communities





The Home Park Community Design Workshop

**results of a community design
workshop for Home Park,
Atlanta, Georgia**

**A component of The Blueprints for
Successful Communities Initiative
of The Georgia Conservancy in
Partnership with:**

**The Interprofessional Community
Design Collaborative and,
The Georgia Tech Urban
Design Workshop**

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The Blueprints Initiative

Renowned planner Jan Gehl once compared cities to all-night house parties by saying, "Cities, like parties, come in three versions. Some you don't go to unless you have to; some you leave as soon as you can; and others you go and stay for much longer than you planned." When cities, towns and neighborhoods become lost in the morass of sprawl development they begin to feel like places you want to leave as soon as you can.

There is a growing consensus among members of the environmental and business communities that the current trend of low-density, decentralized, automobile-dependent development so common in this country for the past 50 years is a major threat to quality of life. Not only is it expensive for local governments to serve, but the impact that this urban form has on the environment is staggering. Automobile emissions create toxic air pollution. Stormwater surging across miles of asphalt poisons rivers and streams. Thousands of acres of farms, woodlands and open space are lost to strip malls and parking lots.

In Georgia a diverse group of people including home builders, architects, planners, developers, environmentalists and neighborhood leaders are among a growing number of people who are beginning to understand the link between the health of our environment, our economic stability and the way we use land. In 1995, The Georgia Conservancy convened such a group of people to foster public awareness about better ways to grow communities. A coalition was formed called the Successful Communities Partners.

The Successful Communities Partners have been instrumental in raising public awareness in Georgia and in the Atlanta region specifically about alternative land use and transportation strategies that are good for the environment and good for the economy. Part of the work of the partnership includes a project known as the Community Design Workshop. With the Urban Design Workshop of the Georgia Tech College of Architecture and the Interprofessional Community Design Collaborative, the partnership conducts workshops in

selected communities in Georgia to address specific development issues in those communities which may be prototypical for the state in general. The workshops also serve to integrate the Successful Communities Principles that have been established as a result of this initiative.

The Home Park Community Design Workshop was conducted in November 1998. By participating in the design of their own neighborhood, residents were able to create a model to guide the future of their community. This model will hopefully lead to a community designed for people, where walking to the corner store is commonplace, where tree-lined streets and bike paths are the norm, and where traffic congestion and air pollution are minimal.

Successful Communities Principles

Successful Communities:

- work together to produce a high quality of life that they want to sustain;
- work to create regional strategies for transportation, land use and economic growth;
- understand that sustainable community design is based on the effect of the built environment on the natural environment, aesthetics, scale, history and culture;
- promote efficient use of existing infrastructure, energy, water and land;
- incorporate compact integrated land uses which bring people closer to work, to school and shopping and safeguard undeveloped lands for agriculture, greenspace and recreation;
- provide transportation options so that each member of the community has access to goods, services and recreation;
- are designed to be safe, healthy, economically strong, environmentally sound and inclusive.

Objectives of Urban Livability

- Diversity of income.
- Diversity of family/household type (age, size composition).
- Balanced economic growth for both job development and commercial services.
- Diversity of land uses, closely integrated within the community.
- Access by all persons to housing options, including single family, multi-family and extended family opportunities in both rental and ownership formats.
- Access by all persons to transportation options (pedestrian, bicycle, automobile and transit) supported by a fine-grained street system.
- Efficient use of existing physical/social infrastructure.
- Availability of a variety of civic uses and spaces for both social and recreational purposes.
- Preservation and efficient use of historic architectural and landscape character.
- Strong visual community identity through legible neighborhood edges, gateways, and public spaces.