# Smart Growth in the Southeast:

## New Approaches for Guiding Development

Southern Environmental Law Center

**Environmental Law Institute** 

#### Southern Environmental Law Center

SELC is a non-profit advocacy group dedicated to protecting the natural areas and resources of the South. Working closely with a wide range of partner groups, SELC provides legal and policy expertise, strategic leadership, and education on issues relating to transportation and land use, forests, coastal and wetland ecosystems, energy, and air and water quality. SELC's Land and Community Project promotes sensible growth and better land use and transportation decisions throughout the South.

#### The Environmental Law Institute

ELI is a nationally recognized center for research and education on environmental policy, law, and management. An independent, nonpartisan institution, ELI provides information, research, and policy analysis to a broad constituency of professionals in law, government, finance, business, advocacy organizations, and academia. ELI's Sustainable Use of Land Program addresses law and policy solutions to achieve sustainable use of land through revitalization of communities and environmental conservation.

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Cover Design Tan Branch Graphics

Printed on 100% recycled paper, 20% post-consumer waste.

ISBN: 0-911937-90-0

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#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The Environmental Law Institute (ELI) and the Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC) gratefully acknowledge the generous financial support that made this project possible. The Turner Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Virginia Environmental Endowment supported ELI's contributions, while the Surdna Foundation supported SELC's work on this project.

The report was written by Trip Pollard and Sandra Pattie Wood of SELC and by Susan Casey-Lefkowitz and Heidi Hallman of ELI. SELC and ELI thank the many people who contributed information from their years of experience in working with land use planning, environmental conservation, and economic development throughout the Southeast. Special thanks to reviewers Terrell Arline, 1000 Friends of Florida; Pat Byington, Southern Environmental Center; Molly Diggins, North Carolina Sierra Club; Mary English, Energy, Environment and Resources Center, University of Tennessee; Jolly de Give, Piedmont Environmental Council; Ellen Keys, The Georgia Conservancy; Sam Passmore, South Carolina Coastal Conservation League; and John Sherman, Headwaters Group. The authors also gratefully acknowledge the comments and input from Kay Slaughter and Wesley Woolf of SELC and Linda Breggin and Jim McElfish of ELI.

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#### INTRODUCTION

The Southeast has a rich legacy of vibrant communities with a strong sense of identity and place. Historic cities such as Charleston, Savannah, and Alexandria are national treasures, and numerous distinctive smaller communities define the character of the region. The Southeast is also blessed with tremendous natural beauty and diversity. The forests blanketing the Southern Appalachian mountains, the Atlantic and Gulf coasts and coastal plains, wild and scenic rivers, and the rolling Piedmont all shape the region. And the Southeast boasts sweeping rural landscapes where human activities blend harmoniously with nature, featuring productive farmland and strong communities.

These resources contribute to the quality of life that has made the Southeast a desirable place to live and work, and has helped fuel rapid economic and population growth in the region. This dynamic growth has brought jobs, a higher standard of living, increased tax revenues, and other benefits.

Unfortunately, much of this growth has been poorly-planned, and has led to strip malls, parking lots, highways, and subdivisions that spread further and further out, consuming the countryside and draining investment from existing communities. The costs of this sprawling, haphazard development are escalating. From traffic congestion to tax hikes to serve new growth, from lost farmland to declining air and water quality, from longer commutes to the loss of treasured places, poorly-planned development poses a long-term threat to our economy, our communities, our health, and our environment.

The problems caused by current growth patterns are not limited to large urban areas and to small communities in the path of juggernauts such as Atlanta. Nearly every community in the region has experienced some of the harm sprawling development brings, and people throughout the Southeast are increasingly concerned about the costs of this type of growth.

There is a broad-based, growing effort by public officials, conservationists, taxpayer groups, historic preservationists, health and social justice groups, alternative transportation advocates, as well as businesses and developers, to create a new approach to land use and transportation. This approach does not seek to prevent development, but to capture the benefits of growth without overwhelming communities, taxpayers, and the environment. A key to these efforts is the recognition that haphazard development is less the product of the free market than the result of federal, state, and local government investments, subsidies, and

regulations that, intentionally and unintentionally, promote inefficient and destructive growth. Smart growth depends on reversing these policies and offering a broader range of housing and transportation alternatives.

Although there is a sizeable body of literature on growth issues and strategies, there is relatively little information on trends and solutions in the Southeast. This report provides an overview of land use and transportation trends in seven southeastern states – Alabama, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. It then examines tools and strategies to guide the location, pace, and scale of growth that are being successfully implemented in the region. These strategies include offering incentives to preserve open space and farmland, offering incentives and revising regulations to encourage development that preserves and revitalizes communities, and focusing public investment in roads and other infrastructure within existing communities.

There are abundant opportunities to develop smarter growth policies. Some of the tools and strategies discussed in this report need to be adopted at the state level; others can be implemented by localities; still others require cooperation among a variety of jurisdictions. Most can be adapted to benefit large metropolitan areas, smaller cities and towns, and rural communities. Moreover, most of these strategies can be applied in communities that are thriving or in declining areas that need revitalization. Each community should develop a comprehensive approach to guiding growth that is geared to its own goals, social background, and physical surroundings. With creativity, commitment, and perseverance, southeastern states and localities can create and maintain healthy, vibrant communities, preserve open space and farmland, and protect environmental quality.

#### THE CHALLENGE OF GROWTH

The Southeast is experiencing explosive population growth and economic development. Despite the benefits of this growth, there is increasing awareness throughout the region that poorly-planned development is altering our beautiful southern landscapes, harming the air we breathe and the water we drink, destroying productive farmland, increasing traffic congestion, raising taxes, undermining our sense of community, and harming the quality of life in our communities.

Before examining specific strategies to promote more sensible patterns of development, it is important to step back and examine current growth patterns and policies in the Southeast. This section looks at the land use and transportation trends that are transforming our region, as well as the impacts of these trends. It then provides an overview of some of the governmental subsidies and regulations that shape development patterns.

#### Land Use Trends

The Southeast is the fastest growing region in the country. The overall population of the region is projected to grow by approximately 24% between 1995 and 2015, and five of the nation's ten fastest growing counties are in the Southeast.

Although population growth is a factor spurring development in the Southeast, the problem is less that we are growing, than how we are growing. Rather than creating vibrant communities, where work and home are close to each other, and protecting rural land, all too often we are building scattered strip malls and subdivisions that consume acres and acres of land far beyond city centers. This trend is exemplified by the amount of land being urbanized compared to population growth. For example, between 1973 and 1994, the population of the Charleston tri-county region increased by 41%, but its urban area grew 255%. Mobile saw a 25% increase in population between 1975 and 1995, while its urban area increased by 100%.

In a recent national ranking by the Sierra Club, which looked at trends in population growth, land area growth, and traffic congestion, eight of the 20 cities most affected by sprawl were in the Southeast. Atlanta was ranked number one, and Washington, D.C. and Fort Lauderdale were also among the top ten large cities in the country threatened by sprawl.

Orlando and West Palm Beach were two of the five most threatened mid-size cities, and Raleigh, Pensacola, and Daytona Beach were among the five most threatened smaller cities.<sup>5</sup>

Productive farm and forest land, recreation areas, and scenic open space are rapidly being converted into residential and commercial uses. In Atlanta, approximately 500 acres of open space are converted each week – arguably the fastest rate of growth of any metropolitan region in human history. Other areas in the region do not lag far behind. In Northern Virginia, for example, 28 acres a day are developed. While the nation as a whole lost 6% of its farmland between 1982 and 1997, the Southeast lost 14% – over 10 million acres. Current land use trends are also taking a heavy toll on natural areas such as wetlands. Between June 1998 and February 1999, more than 6500 acres of wetlands were drained for development in North Carolina alone.

#### Transportation Trends

As we live further and further from where we work, play, and shop, automobile use escalates. The number of miles we drive far surpasses growth in population. For example, between 1987 and 1997, North Carolina's population increased by 14.5%, but the number of miles driven increased by 44.1%. Similarly, between 1980 and 1990, Virginia's population increased by 16%, while the number of miles driven grew by 60%. People in Atlanta drive more miles each year (100 million miles a day) and more miles per person each day (34 miles) than anywhere else in the country. Several other southern cities are close behind, with Raleigh drivers averaging 32.2 miles per person per day, Birmingham drivers 32 miles per person, and Nashville drivers 31 miles per person.

Traffic congestion is also escalating. Three of the 10 most congested areas in the country are in the Southeast – the Washington, D.C. metro area, Atlanta, and Miami. <sup>14</sup> Drivers in the Washington area lost 231 million hours stuck in traffic in 1996, while drivers in Atlanta lost 133 million hours. <sup>15</sup> The time lost to traffic delay tripled in Charlotte between 1982 and 1993. <sup>16</sup> This is not just a big city problem. The amount of time commuters waste in traffic in small and medium sized cities has quadrupled since 1982 and has grown at a far faster rate than it has in larger cities. <sup>17</sup>

The rise in traffic congestion continues despite the massive amount of money spent on road-building in the Southeast. In metropolitan Atlanta, for example, the highway system grew 16% faster than population between 1982 and 1996 – yet congestion continued to rise. <sup>18</sup>

The Southeast cannot build its way out of congestion. Although new roads may provide temporary traffic relief, new road capacity spurs new development in outlying areas, which in turn lengthens and increases the number of automobile trips, which increases congestion and leads to calls for new roads. It is a vicious circle, yet the region is in the midst of a road-building boom that includes numerous expensive, damaging, and unnecessary projects. In fact, a recent study by two national organizations, Taxpayers for Common Sense and Friends of the Earth, concluded that the Southeast had eight of the most wasteful and destructive highway proposals in the country.<sup>19</sup>

#### Impacts of Current Trends

The land use and road construction patterns that characterize much of the Southeast carry substantial fiscal, social, health, and environmental costs. The following costs reduce our quality of life, and have profound impacts on our communities and natural surroundings.

- Individuals share the costs of sprawl when taxes rise to cover the high cost of
  providing infrastructure and services to new development on the fringes of existing
  communities. Moreover, the time we waste in traffic jams and longer commutes
  means less time for our families, friends, and neighbors.
- Rural economies are weakened by the loss of productive farm and forest land which is paved for subdivisions and strip malls, as well as by the loss of scenic landscapes and recreation areas that attract vital tourist spending. The Southeast lost over 10 million acres of its farmland between 1982 and 1997. Tremendous amounts of additional farmland estimated to be equal to the amount lost is idled as farmers fail to invest in machinery and repairs due to the uncertain future for agriculture as non-compatible development expands in their area.<sup>22</sup>
- More driving means more air pollution from motor vehicles. Areas in the Southeast failed the one-hour federal health standard for ozone 175 times in 1998.<sup>23</sup> The American Lung Association estimates that at least 4.6 million people in the Southeast particularly children, the elderly, and people with asthma face additional health risks from excessive pollution.<sup>24</sup>

- Water quality is affected by nitrogen pollution from sources such as motor vehicle exhaust (through rain) and urban and suburban runoff from rooftops, roads, and parking lots. Nitrogen pollution poses a major threat to productive estuaries such as the Chesapeake Bay. In addition, land bulldozed for new construction deposits silt in rivers and streams, and projects consume acres of forests, farms, and wetlands that would otherwise filter water. A study by the Charleston Harbor Project that analyzed two different development patterns for the same property found that a sprawl development scenario would cause 43% more runoff, containing three times more sediment, than a traditional town development.<sup>25</sup>
- The Southeast's rich and economically valuable historic heritage is often damaged by poorly-planned growth. Historic buildings, battlefields, and rural areas are covered or transformed by new development, and investment in far-flung suburbs can drain the economic vitality of historic downtowns.

#### Subsidizing Sprawl

Current land use and transportation trends are not merely the result of consumer choice, nor are they a necessary cost of economic growth. The causes of these trends are numerous and complex. However, the pace, scale, and location of development is determined significantly by government subsidies, regulations, and decisions, which in many cases have promoted scattered development, with the unintended consequences discussed above.

Understandably, developers tend to build where it is easiest and cheapest. Homeowners tend to buy homes where there are good schools, newer and affordable housing, and safe neighborhoods. A host of current federal, state, and local policies typically lead developers and homeowners to build and buy new buildings on the ever-expanding fringes of existing communities.

For example, taxpayers subsidize the additional infrastructure (such as road, water, and sewer facilities) and public services (such as education and police and fire protection) that new housing and commercial areas require. There is increasing evidence that certain development often does not pay for itself, but drives up local taxes and strains local government budgets. In Prince William County, Virginia, residents pay the highest property tax rate in the state, yet it costs the county an average of \$1,688 more to provide services to each new house built than it receives in taxes.<sup>26</sup> Since taxpayers pick up the tab for these services, there is little or no incentive to build where infrastructure already exists.

A mixture of other planning, zoning, transportation, and tax policies contribute to our unsustainable land use and transportation patterns, including the following:

- Most localities primarily depend on property taxes to raise revenue, which has led
  them to encourage and compete for new projects without adequately considering the
  costs of development.
- Planning and zoning policies that segregate commercial and residential uses into different geographic areas detract from easy access to amenities and require people to use automobiles to get to work or to shopping areas, or to conduct other activities.
- Localities often zone much more land for suburban types of growth than is needed for decades to come. As a result, they effectively forfeit control over the pace and location of development.
- Transportation policies emphasize building new roads that open rural areas to development and contribute to the decline of existing communities.
- Federal, state, and local tax policies, such as property taxes and inheritance taxes, make it difficult to afford to keep land in uses such as agriculture.

#### Opportunities for Smarter Growth

There are better ways to grow. We can change unwise governmental subsidies and regulations, and promote policies that create healthier, more livable communities, preserve farmland and open space, reduce the cost of infrastructure and services, protect the environment, and provide efficient mobility – all without spurring sprawl.

There is strong public support for such change. Opinion polls consistently show deep concern about the consequences of current growth patterns, and strong support for preserving open space and farmland, and for revitalizing existing communities. Among the findings of recent polls in Virginia, for example, are that 70% of the respondents believe that traffic problems caused by rapid development should be met by managing new growth so that existing roads and mass transit can meet transportation needs, and that 59% believe that the loss of open space is a problem the state should try to prevent and is not the inevitable result of market forces. These opinions are increasingly evident at the ballot box. In November 1998, over 200 proposals to curb sprawl and to spend a total of approximately \$7 billion to preserve open space were voted on in 31 states. Almost three-fourths of these proposals passed. Almost three-fourths of these

We must meet the challenge of growth. As long as we grow wisely, the Southeast can continue to enjoy a strong, healthy economy and a high quality of life.

### STRATEGIES FOR GUIDING GROWTH

States and localities make choices every day that affect the type of communities we build and the land we preserve, such as where to build a road, whether to fund a sewer line extension, how dense to allow a community to become, whether to permit a new subdivision, or at what rate to tax farmland in areas where land values are rising. Increasingly, southeastern states and localities are searching for the right combination of strategies to guide these choices in order to ensure their economic vitality while retaining a high quality of life and a healthy environment. Through a mixture of planning and zoning, financial incentives, public investments, provision of information, design standards, and regulations, they strive to create attractive, healthy places where people want to work, live, shop and play.

For most of this century, land use planning and zoning have been the primary tools for managing growth. However, these requirements generally have proven to be inadequate and often ineffective instruments for encouraging desirable development. Even places with strong comprehensive plans and thoughtful zoning regulations can suffer from unsustainable land use practices.

More and more, states and localities are seeking new approaches that will allow them to grow in a way that makes fiscal, economic, social and environmental sense. Citizens and decision-makers have begun to develop and experiment with a wealth of tools and strategies to help communities foster sensible growth. These new approaches, which build upon current planning and zoning, include incentives to encourage community revitalization and preservation, the promotion of rural economies and protection of natural areas, equitable cost-sharing and more careful timing of infrastructure investments, and transportation decision-making that focuses on providing mobility and access to desired activities while reducing the adverse impacts of roads and motor vehicles.

This section outlines tools and strategies that can help communities guide growth in four key ways – preservation, revitalization, infrastructure investment, and transportation – and offers examples of how these measures are being used in the Southeast. When coordinated and carefully adapted to the specific circumstances of a particular area, these tools can become part of a broader strategy for smarter growth.

#### Preserving the Rural Economy and Natural Heritage

The Southeast's rural economy and natural heritage is an important part of the region's economic vitality and environmental health. Rural and natural areas protect water and air quality, contain important wildlife habitats and historic resources, and provide valuable agricultural products. Yet many rural regions in the Southeast are rapidly being transformed and face intense pressure from low-density residential development and commercial investment that often is not compatible with rural economic needs or natural resource protection.

As growth pressures increase at the fringe of urban areas, owners of farms, forests, and open space are selling their land in greater numbers. Farmers and other rural landowners question how they can afford to continue to work and conserve the land. Tools such as current use valuation and taxation, conservation easements, and transfer and purchase of development rights can help landowners maintain rural and conservation uses of the land.

Many southeastern states have experienced a loss of agricultural and other rural lands due to landowners being forced by economic pressures to sell their land for development. Such sales can be precipitated by taxes based on the potential for conversion to another use, rather than on the value of the land in its current use. One way to help these landowners is through *current use valuation and taxation*.

Current use valuation and taxation

The Tennessee Agricultural, Forest and Open Space Land Act provides for this type of assessment and taxation of certain agricultural, forest, and open space lands, that are taxed at a lower rate than adjacent property not in the program.<sup>29</sup> This program has successfully eased the tax burden on Tennessee farmers,

including those in areas experiencing development pressures: a 1998 statewide assessment showed a difference in market and use appraisals for agriculture, open space, and forest land of approximately eight billion

The Tennessee current use valuation and taxation program has eased the tax burden on local farmers experiencing development pressures.

dollars.<sup>30</sup> Fear that current use assessment and taxation programs could provide a tax break for speculators who keep land idle while waiting to develop it has led most programs to include penalties for land that ceases to qualify for inclusion in the program through conversion to other uses. Tennessee requires a landowner converting land in the program to other uses to pay the locality a rollback tax based on the difference between the current use and the market value tax assessments over preceding three years for agricultural and forest land and five years for open space land.

## Conservation easements

States and localities can use tax and other incentives to encourage donation of *conservation easements* from private landowners. Conservation easements, including those for agriculture, historic or scenic preservation, public recreation, or wildlife habitat, are voluntary legal agreements between a land owner and a government agency or private land trust limiting certain uses of the land in order to protect its conservation value. In addition to guaranteeing preservation of their land, the landowners usually receive significant financial benefits from donation of permanent conservation easements, including reduced federal and state income taxes, capital gains taxes, and estate taxes. For example, North Carolina provides a state income tax credit for the donation of conservation easements. In 1999, the maximum tax credit was increased to \$250,000 for individuals and to \$500,000 for corporations.<sup>31</sup>

Under conservation easements, the landowner continues to use and own the land, while a public or private land trust holds, monitors, and enforces the terms of the conservation agreement. There are a variety of national, state, and local trusts throughout the country.

Conservation easements have preserved more than 100,000 acres in the Virginia Piedmont.

Virginia is one of the few states with a statewide public land trust. The Virginia Outdoors Foundation is a quasi-governmental land trust that holds conservation easements and has the ability to monitor and enforce the terms of the

easements. It often works in partnership with local conservation organizations and local private land trusts. For example, cooperation between the Foundation and the Piedmont Environmental Council has encouraged landowners to place more than 100,000 acres of land under permanent easement in a nine-county region of the Virginia Piedmont – one of the highest concentrations of privately protected land anywhere in the nation.<sup>32</sup>

## Purchase of development rights

Some localities are adopting another approach that leaves land in private hands while systematically promoting conservation by establishing programs for the *purchase of development rights* (PDR). PDR programs typically entail the voluntary sale and legal retirement of the land's development rights through a conservation easement. These programs have been implemented successfully to reduce residential densities, protect natural resources, and retain tourism assets. For example, the City of Virginia Beach's Agricultural Reserve Program acquires development rights in designated areas within the rural portion of the City. Since 1995, the City has entered 27 agreements, purchasing the development rights of almost 4,000 acres and directly preserving approximately 350 sites from non-agricultural development. The City of Virginia Beach attributes the program's success to its reflection of farm, conservation, business and civic interests, as well as the use of 100% fair market value of the land minus its agricultural value in the calculation of the price of the development rights.<sup>33</sup>

A less frequently used and more complex tool to protect rural, agricultural, or natural areas is to encourage *transfer of development rights* (TDR). TDR programs permit the transfer of development potential from lands the community designates to protect (sending areas) to areas designated for growth (receiving areas). This requires zoning of both areas to create a market for the development rights. TDR programs need several factors to work well, including political will, property owner acceptance, market demand, and few alternative ways of increasing density in the receiving areas.<sup>34</sup>

Transfer of development rights

Land

acquisition

Since 1992, Palm Beach County, Florida has operated a TDR Bank to receive development rights and transfer them to private investors for use in growth-designated areas. <sup>35</sup> The purchaser of the development rights is then able to build at a higher density than otherwise permitted, upon approval by the Board of County Commissioners. Until the development rights are purchased, landowners can use them as collateral to facilitate bank loans. This strategy primarily has been used by farmers who bank the development rights and take out commercial loans using them as collateral for purchase of new equipment or other farming needs. To encourage use of the program, the County recently made it more difficult for developers to obtain increased density through any other method than transfer of development rights. <sup>36</sup>

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Outright purchase of land is an additional tool for conservation that can complement conservation easements or the purchase or transfer of development rights. At times, governments and private organizations turn to *land acquisition* to protect especially sensitive areas or to ensure the long-term preservation of the land through the creation of buffer zones,

parks, or other types of conservation areas. In Tennessee, the Foothills Land Conservancy, a private, nonprofit land trust, has undertaken a series of land acquisition projects designed to create a buffer zone for wildlife and recreation between Great Smoky Mountains National

The Foothills Land Conservancy in Tennessee is buying land to create a buffer zone between the suburban sprawl of Knoxville and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Park and the suburban sprawl of the Greater Knoxville Metropolitan Area.<sup>37</sup> The Conservancy's main competitors for land acquisition in this area are private investors interested in holding the land for speculative purposes or future development. Recently these investors have been willing to pay more than the appraised value of the land.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, it is crucial that private land acquisition programs be matched and supported by public funds whenever possible.

## Conservation financing

Whether for land acquisition, conservation easements, or purchase of development rights, state and local governments need sources for *conservation financing* to protect, conserve, and improve parks, open space, farmlands, historic resources, watersheds, and greenways. The City of Virginia Beach uses a dedicated portion of its property tax and cellular phone tax, as well as a payment in lieu of taxes from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to finance

More than one million acres have been preserved under Florida's land acquisition program. its PDR program discussed earlier. These three sources provide approximately \$3.5 million in annual funding. Other common conservation financing mechanisms include bonds or real estate

transfer taxes. In November 1998, voters supported ballot measures to increase conservation funding in several southeastern states.<sup>39</sup> These measures included a constitutional amendment authorizing \$110 million in general obligation bonds in Alabama, bonds for land acquisition in the Virginia counties of Arlington, Fairfax, and Prince William, and a \$12 million general obligation bond in Hilton Head, South Carolina. Florida voters approved a constitutional amendment to continue funding the state's land acquisition program through state government bonds backed by a fee applied to the sale of property. Since 1990 more than one million acres of land have been preserved under the Florida program.

#### **Strengthening Communities**

Communities throughout the Southeast – urban and rural, large and small – share common goals of being economically vital and environmentally healthy places to live. Revitalization and preservation of existing communities not only helps them to achieve the economic success and quality of life they seek, but it also reduces pressure on undeveloped areas by providing attractive, alternative places to live and work. Further, encouraging growth in areas already served by public roads, schools, water, and sewers can make more efficient use of existing infrastructure rather than incurring the expense of new infrastructure to serve development in outlying areas. For all of these reasons, strengthening communities is a cornerstone of smarter growth.

There is no shortage of opportunities for community revitalization and preservation. Cities, towns, inner suburbs, and rural communities have many underused sites and aging buildings and districts in need of rehabilitation. These areas could support a much higher level of development and quality of life. However, as discussed earlier, governmental policies typically encourage new growth to bypass existing communities by making it cheaper and easier for developers, businesses, and homeowners to build or locate in undeveloped areas. This section examines tools states and localities can use to reverse the impact of these

policies by guiding growth to existing areas, encouraging the reuse of buildings and land, and facilitating building and neighborhood development that promotes healthy, vibrant communities.

#### Designating Development Areas

Establishing designated development areas allows a community to nurture residential development, commercial economic growth, and the necessary capital improvements within a concentrated, manageable area. Delineating growth areas also has the effect of conserving natural resources and preserving rural economic activities and landscapes outside these areas. This tool is most effective at strengthening communities, however, when it is coupled with "carrots and sticks" to encourage development in these areas, such as incentives for historic preservation, traditional neighborhood design, and transit-oriented development discussed later in this section.

Some communities have chosen to designate *urban growth boundaries*, establishing a dividing line between areas desired for urban and suburban densities and areas appropriate for agricultural, rural, and natural resource uses. Boundaries are set for a long period of time, such as twenty years, to provide consistency for the development market and for budgeting capital improvements and infrastructure investment.

Urban growth boundaries

For example, in 1979, Virginia Beach adopted a "Green Line" across the city that is the basis for the city's land use and capital improvement planning. Since 1991, Virginia Beach has

added 160,000 residents in the urban area and only a handful in the rural area. Likewise, a new Tennessee law requires localities to designate urban growth boundaries to guide

Since 1991, virtually all growth in Virginia Beach has occurred within the area designated for commercial and residential development.

development for the next 20 years. The law further requires localities to develop growth plans that encourage compact and contiguous development in the planned growth areas, while protecting agricultural, forest, recreation, and wildlife management areas outside. <sup>40</sup> Putting this vision into practice will depend on the ability of localities not only to develop, but also to implement effective growth plans.

Each southeastern state has programs to designate specific *revitalization areas* to stimulate business and industrial growth in distressed urban and rural areas. These areas typically have low median income, high unemployment, or a high vacancy rate of industrial and commercial properties. Designating revitalization areas within existing communities allows states and localities to group several incentive programs together to promote private

Revitalization areas

development of a specific neighborhood. The Alabama enterprise zone program focuses primarily on revitalizing small towns in rural communities through a corporate income tax credit to help encourage investment in areas that are considered economically depressed. In Virginia, localities typically provide additional incentives to the state package. For example, the Cedarville Enterprise Zone in Warren County offers businesses a five-year partial rebate of business license fees; cash grants; five-year partial credits of building, planning and zoning permit fees; accelerated permit review process; and a five-year partial credit of real estate taxes for certain rehabilitation of older property. Since the establishment of the Cedarville Enterprise Zone in 1995, three large companies have located there and created approximately 800 jobs. The program is credited with providing the incentive to these companies to locate in the enterprise area as opposed to surrounding rural areas.

#### Reusing Buildings and Land

In addition to encouraging growth to take place in designated areas, localities can offer incentives that facilitate the reuse of buildings or land. Restoration of historic districts, rehabilitation of aging or abandoned buildings and former industrial properties, and development of vacant lands within existing communities increase property values and the attractiveness of neighborhoods.

Historic preservation incentives

Historic preservation incentives promote an attractive alternative to sprawl development and have been one of the most common approaches to encourage revitalization in the Southeast. The historic cities, towns, and rural areas of the Southeast are one of the region's most valuable and defining features. Unlike many new developments, older towns and cities possess a strong sense of community. They provide pedestrian-friendly environments with a mix of residential and commercial buildings that allow people to live near most activities, thereby reducing dependence on the automobile. In addition, historic areas typically contain a greater diversity in housing options, providing more opportunities for affordable housing. Further, historic preservation tends to improve the economy of downtown areas, increase tourism, increase property values, and create jobs. As a study of Staunton, Virginia found, while non-historic commercial properties appreciated in value 25.2% between 1987 and 1995, commercial properties in the city's five historic districts increased by 27.7 to 256%. 43

Despite the many benefits of historic preservation, it is often cheaper and easier to build new residential and commercial buildings than to renovate an aging structure. To level the playing field, many states and localities in the Southeast offer a mixture of incentives to encourage the rehabilitation and reuse of historic properties, such as tax credits, tax abatements, and rehabilitation loans or grants. North Carolina historic preservation tax credits provide a useful tool to encourage rehabilitation of historic buildings. For example,

North Carolina developers have indicated that 67% of the projects completed under the tax credit program for historic income-producing buildings would not have been undertaken

otherwise.<sup>44</sup> In addition, as of 1998, North Carolina offers a tax credit based on qualified rehabilitation expenditures for owners of non-income producing historic buildings. The state hopes that by focusing on downtown properties and

In North Carolina, 67% of projects renovating historic commercial space would not have been undertaken without the state's historic preservation tax credit.

neighborhoods, it can encourage a greater mix of residential and commercial uses, for example through stimulating second and third floor conversions of downtown buildings for residential use.

Less common than incentives for historic renovation are incentives for *rehabilitation of aging buildings* that are not necessarily historic structures. Fairfax County, Virginia provides a tax abatement incentive to improve and maintain the quality of aging housing and commercial building stock.<sup>45</sup> To be included in the program, the structure must be at least twenty-five years old and undergo renovation. The owner receives a full abatement of the increase in value from renovation for 10 years, after which the abatement is phased out over the following four years. Since September 1997, 25 commercial and 84 residential property owners have taken advantage of the program. A recent ordinance provides additional incentives for rehabilitation of commercial buildings located within specially designated revitalization districts and focuses on revitalizing smaller and more affordable homes. <sup>46</sup> The tax abatement is only one component of the area's revitalization incentives package: in addition to the establishment of five commercial revitalization districts, Fairfax County has increased the flexibility of the zoning application process regarding revitalization projects.<sup>47</sup>

Rehabilitation of aging buildings

The *split rate property tax*, also known as the land value or two-tiered real estate tax, sometimes is used to encourage historic renovation, building rehabilitation, and development of vacant land in existing communities. Under a split rate tax system, land is taxed at a higher level than buildings in areas where the community wishes to encourage investment. Although not yet used in the Southeast, other parts of the country are experimenting with a split rate tax to discourage holding land idle in urban areas. Under most tax systems, property owners are penalized whenever they increase their property's value through new building, rehabilitation or repair because as their building value increases so does their tax liability. Under the split-rate tax system, owners who improve their properties are not penalized, because the building and its improvements are taxed at a lower rate than the underlying property. Split rate taxes thus help provide affordable rental spaces, since the cost of developing commercial and residential space is reduced. Harrisburg, Pennsylvania has used the two-tiered real estate tax for several years and the Mayor endorses the system as

Split rate tax

rewarding the best use of land in the city, discouraging land speculation, and providing a concrete incentive for development.<sup>48</sup>

## Brownfields programs

States and localities can encourage private investors to turn former industrial sites, known as brownfields, into productive parts of the community again through targeted programs for cleanup and redevelopment. *Brownfields programs* combine incentives, technical assistance, and community participation to develop cleanup standards and new uses for urban industrial and commercial facilities that are abandoned or underutilized due to environmental contamination or fear of contamination.

Southeastern Florida's "Eastward Ho!" revitalization program has taken advantage of the state voluntary cleanup tax credit, low interest loans, and streamlined permitting to encourage brownfields cleanup and redevelopment. One of the Eastward Ho brownfields sites designated for revitalization is the Poinciana Industrial Center. This 30-acre, county-owned property was formerly used for various industrial and commercial purposes, and is in a low-income area experiencing high levels of under-employment. The site will have access to a local revolving loan fund to support environmental assessments and a state voluntary cleanup tax credit to help finance cleanup. Under the Florida voluntary tax credit, an eligible applicant can receive up to 35% of the costs of a voluntary cleanup activity that is integral to site rehabilitation at a state-designated brownfields area. The tax credit is limited to \$250,000 per site and can be applied toward corporate income tax or intangible personal property tax liabilities in Florida.

States and localities can also structure other economic development incentives to encourage redevelopment of brownfields. For example, Florida has a program to provide bonuses to industries creating jobs that offers additional bonuses for jobs created in a brownfields area.<sup>51</sup> This additional bonus is credited with directing industry interested in locating or expanding in Florida to brownfields, rather than to rural undeveloped sites.

#### Designing for Livability

Well-designed communities provide potential residents and investors with a concrete alternative to newer neighborhoods on the fringes of cities and towns. Encouraging development of vacant lands and rehabilitation of buildings in existing urban and suburban areas alone is not sufficient to attract the residential and commercial populations needed to make revitalization efforts work in practice. Especially in communities with dense and mixed commercial and residential areas, the design of the physical features of the built environment is a very important factor in the livability of a neighborhood.

Primary reasons for the economic success and popularity of older areas such as Charleston, Savannah, and Alexandria include the proximity of residences to stores and jobs, the pedestrian scale, and the attractiveness of buildings and parks. *Traditional neighborhood development* (TND) seeks to apply the designs that influenced most developments in this country until the past fifty years. TND typically emphasizes mixing commercial and residential land uses, as well as the use of design elements such as grid street patterns, sidewalks, and community open spaces. Communities have found that TND typically improves traffic flow, provides a variety of housing options, reduces the amount of land required for development, and encourages alternative transportation modes. Many existing zoning ordinances, however, make TND difficult to implement by requiring segregation of commercial and residential uses, large lot sizes, deep setbacks, and off-street parking. In order to implement TND, local governments may need to change some of these standards or establish an overlay district with specialized design standards.

Traditional neighborhood development

TND design standards were implemented to guide redevelopment and downtown infill in the historic town center of Port Royal, South Carolina through an extensive process of community involvement. The creation of an overlay district in 1997 promoted mixed use, pedestrian-friendly street improvements, development of new infill buildings, and renovation of existing buildings. While the overlay district tightly regulates design to preserve Port Royal's historic character, it also allows a flexible approach to land use. For example, instead of deep setbacks, landowners are allowed to build up to the property line, leaving room for parking lots or garages in the rear. Approximately 50 new housing units have been constructed according to the plan, including small cottages, affordable detached houses, rowhouses, and apartments. The town also constructed numerous civic buildings, including a town hall square, seniors center, fire station, renovated elementary school, and community theaters.

Transit-oriented development

In addition to specific design standards such as those found in TND, many communities are using transit stations as the focal point for urban redevelopment. *Transit-oriented development (TOD)* is another tool to create alternative growth patterns. TOD seeks to design vibrant communities with access to mass transit, as well as a variety of other transportation options, at their center. To encourage investment around transit stations, localities typically provide a mixture of incentives including density bonuses, reduction of parking space requirements, and expedited review of planning and building permits.

Approximately 20 years ago, Arlington County, Virginia placed its public transit stations at frequent intervals along Wilson Boulevard, an aging commercial corridor, and used community participation to help develop specific plans for the zoning, utility, transportation, community facilities, and design standards. Individuals tend to fear that high density will

bring congestion, crime, and poverty to an area while threatening open space and other amenities. In Arlington County, extensive community participation in the planning stage created a safe, pedestrian-friendly, well-designed area immediately surrounding the transit

In the past 20 years, more than 23,400,000 square feet of commercial space and 20,000 new homes have been built in Arlington County, Virginia around transit centers.

stations. Community participation also encouraged private investment by providing clear and consistent options for developers. Since the opening of the stations in the late 1970's, more than 23,400,000 square feet of commercial

development and 20,000 new residential units have been built, double the rate in the 20 years prior to 1977.<sup>54</sup> More than 95% of office space and 67% of retail in the County is now within walking distance of transit.

#### **Guiding Public Investment**

As states and localities in the Southeast analyze projected costs for infrastructure such as roads, sewer systems, water supply systems, schools, recreation areas, and libraries, they are realizing that infrastructure costs can be significantly reduced by guiding growth. For example, a 1997 South Carolina infrastructure study showed that directing future development to existing areas would make use of infrastructure already in place and could save the state \$2.7 billion over the next twenty years. There are several mechanisms to guide public investments, including creatively funding maintenance of existing infrastructure, timing new projects to coincide with investments in adequate public infrastructure, and equitably sharing the costs for the additional public infrastructure that new development requires.

Tax increment financing

One hindrance to revitalization in older urban and suburban centers is aging infrastructure such as sidewalks, roads, and parking. *Tax increment financing* is an increasingly used tool

Greenville, South Carolina has used tax increment financing to revitalize a variety of areas, including a business district, a historic district, and a lower income residential neighborhood.

to encourage private investment in these areas while financing needed rehabilitation of existing infrastructure without depleting public coffers. Tax increment financing uses future projected taxes to finance current infrastructure

investments, such as revitalization of older commercial and residential areas. The locality projects the amount of additional property and other taxes it would receive if the area were revitalized and uses that funding for public improvements to help revitalization take place.

The City of Greenville, South Carolina Department of Economic Development promotes private investment in three development areas through tax increment financing of street improvements, landscaping, acquisition of property, public buildings, and parking structures. The first tax increment financing district was established for the Central Business District and already brings in more than enough additional tax revenues to pay for the improvements. The second includes a historic district and is experiencing significant revitalization as an arts/theater district. The most recent tax increment financing district, Viola Street, has been created in a lower income residential neighborhood.<sup>56</sup>

Adequate public facilities requirements help communities to phase in new development, setting minimum level of service standards as a basis for evaluating proposed projects. For example, Florida requires that necessary roads, drainage, solid waste, potable water, sanitary sewer, parks and recreation, and mass transit be in place before localities may issue a development order or permit. Adequate public facilities standards need to be carefully designed to be location-appropriate. The Florida standards for road capacity used to be the same in urban and rural areas. This had the unintended consequence of limiting downtown development due to lack of road capacity and pushing that development to the urban fringe and rural areas where road capacity existed. Revisions to the law allow higher traffic volumes in urban areas, ensuring that the adequate public facilities standard no longer functions as a barrier to redevelopment of existing communities.

To ensure that growth in rural areas does not unduly impact taxpayers and the maintenance needs of existing infrastructure, some communities are charging developers *impact fees* to help pay for the public capital infrastructure costs associated with their projects. Impact fees aid localities in meeting the additional costs of providing public services for proposed development. The fees can reduce community-wide fiscal burdens and provide indirect incentives for developers to invest in areas with infrastructure capacity. However, impact fees need to be carefully applied and coordinated among neighboring jurisdictions to be effective. In Georgia, local governments may require developers to pay fees for roads, sewer, water, parks, stormwater, flood control, public safety, and libraries, as long as they have a comprehensive plan with provisions for capital improvements in effect. In practice, the City of Atlanta has been the main jurisdiction to implement impact fees, creating a perverse incentive for developers to move to the surrounding counties where impact fees are generally not in place. Coordination and cooperation among jurisdictions is essential to avoid this type of unintended consequence.

The City of White House, Tennessee began requiring developers to pay impact fees in 1995 and its neighbors, Robson County and Sumner County, soon followed this example, creating an even playing field among the three jurisdictions. An impact fee study conducted by the

Adequate public facilities

Impact fees

City of White House in 1995 led to the adoption of the impact fee structure covering new

The use of impact fees in White House, Tennessee has led to increased development in areas with infrastructure. residential, commercial, and industrial development for such projects as roads, drainage, lighting, police and fire protection, and recreation improvements. White House's program has been accepted by developers as a tool to strengthen infrastructure and

has led to increased investment in areas with existing infrastructure.<sup>59</sup>

Development impact assessment

Accurate information concerning the fiscal, demographic, economic, and environmental impacts of development is an important tool to help communities determine the relative costs and benefits of proposed new projects. Communities are increasingly using some type of *development impact assessment* to determine the costs and benefits of a proposal.

In Fauquier County, Virginia, local officials based their decision concerning a proposed residential project on development impact assessments that included fiscal impact analysis, as well as consideration of water and sewer infrastructure, transportation, and compatibility with the semi-rural character of the area. The developer proposed to build 1600 single family housing units, as well as 70,000 square feet of commercial space in a rural area zoned for 150-250 single family units. When fiscal impact analyses were conducted by the Piedmont Environmental Council, the developer, and the Northern Virginia Building Industry Association with differing results, the county did its own site specific analysis and found that the proposal would have a negative fiscal impact. Coupled with its other impact assessments, the county decided to allow only 667 single family units and 40,000 square feet of commercial space. Each of the county decided to allow only 667 single family units and 40,000 square feet of commercial space.

#### Transportation Strategies for Smarter Growth

Carefully-formulated transportation policies can provide the mobility the growing southeastern economy requires, without sacrificing the quality of life and sense of community the region also needs. Yet throughout the Southeast, ill-conceived transportation projects, coupled with poor land use planning, transform natural and agricultural areas. In addition, by making it easier for people to live further away from existing communities, new and expanded roads can draw away residents and businesses, harming towns, cities, and inner suburbs.

Poorly-planned roads can also physically divide neighborhoods and harm the quality of life in communities by generating noise, pollution, and hazards to pedestrians. Even worse, new road construction increasingly fails to solve transportation problems. People in the Southeast are driving further, yet spending more time stuck in traffic, despite billions of tax dollars devoted to build roads.

This section describes a range of transportation strategies to strengthen communities, reduce congestion, reduce the need for costly new infrastructure, and minimize the adverse impacts of roads and motor vehicles on our natural and historic resources.

#### Reducing Transportation Subsidies for Sprawl

Virtually every state in the Southeast spends the lion's share of its transportation budget on roads, and the bulk of its road budget on new construction. At the same time, roads within cities and towns are often in poor condition, contributing to the decline of these communities. For example, although 84% of Virginia's urban highways are not in good condition, the majority of the state's road budget goes to new construction. <sup>63</sup>

By making the most of existing infrastructure, states and localities can reduce the enormous cost of current transportation programs. A "fix it first" policy to maintain and improve the efficiency of existing roads before building new ones can avoid billions of dollars on new projects. Upgrades and modest improvements to the existing road network often effectively address transportation problems. In addition to reducing transportation costs, fix it first policies help guide development to cities, towns, and older suburbs by ensuring that roads are well-maintained and able to meet ever-changing traffic demands.

Carefully-planned *transportation management strategies* also can reduce the need for costly road projects. Some of these strategies seek to improve the performance of existing infrastructure by increasing the number of vehicles roads can carry, such as making some travel lanes reversible, or by reducing congestion, such as providing high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes. Virginia combined two of these strategies along the I-95/I-395 corridor just south of Washington, D.C when it opened two HOV lanes to northbound traffic in the morning and southbound traffic in the afternoon. These measures can reduce the number of miles we drive by encouraging carpooling, as well as reduce the need for new roads.

Other transportation management strategies seek to reduce or reorient motor vehicle use by eliminating some of the subsidies for driving. Localities can offer preferential parking for carpools, reduce minimum parking standards, or adopt maximum

Alexandria, Virginia requires large developments to adopt a transportation management plan in order to be approved.

parking standards. They also can adopt regulations or offer incentives to encourage

Fix it first policies

Transportation management strategies

businesses to reduce the traffic they generate. For example, in 1987, Alexandria, Virginia passed an ordinance requiring proposed residential and commercial projects to adopt a transportation management plan, outlining the steps that will be taken to reduce the traffic and related impacts of the proposed use.<sup>64</sup> These steps can include preferential parking for van- and car-pools, shuttles to public transit stations, installation of bus shelters, variable work hours or flex hours for employees, dedication of land for public transit facilities, or the provision of bicycle parking, shower, and locker facilities.

#### Providing More Transportation Choices

Transportation systems and land use patterns in the Southeast require most people to drive to work, shop, study, or play. Yet alternative modes of transportation are often less costly, less polluting, more efficient, and more effective. Recognizing this, recent changes to federal law seek to provide more transportation choices. The 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21), and it's predecessor the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), mark a shift in the federal transportation program from a highway-centered to a more balanced approach containing significant support for transportation alternatives.<sup>65</sup>

Southeastern states, however, remain heavily focused on roads, and current policies do not create a level playing field for transportation alternatives. For example, in Virginia, federal and state funds pay virtually all of the costs to build and improve roads, but pay less than 75% of public transit capital costs and under 25% of operating costs. <sup>66</sup> This imbalance offers substantial incentives for localities to select new road construction over transit alternatives.

State redistribution of transportation funds can develop a balanced, diverse, interconnected transportation network that complements automobiles with other efficient, safe, and

When Tampa installed bicycle racks on all of its buses, monthly use of the racks quickly increased from 250 riders to approximately 4000.

convenient options. In addition, alternative transportation facilities and programs need to be carefully designed. For instance, linking different forms of transportation can significantly improve

the efficiency of the overall system and increase the attractiveness of alternatives. When Tampa installed bicycle racks on all of its buses, linking public transit and bicycle networks, monthly use of the racks increased from 250 initially to approximately 4000 after the first two years.<sup>67</sup>

#### Public transit

The many forms of *public transit*, such as light rail, commuter rail, bus, mini-bus, and shuttle services, are less polluting and more energy efficient than automobiles, and require

far less land for their operation. Transit also can relieve traffic congestion. It has been estimated that transit has removed over 250,000 cars from the roads in the Washington D.C. area, eliminating the need for 1,364 more lane miles of freeways. Atlanta, Miami, Richmond, Memphis, and Charlotte would have to increase their miles of freeway lanes by 10 to over 35 percent to replace current levels of transit. And transit can pay off handsomely: a study of the effect of Metrorail in Northern Virginia concluded that it increased the scale and quality of development, generating jobs and billions of dollars of tax revenue.

Different types of transit make sense for different urban, suburban, and rural areas. For instance, certain forms of transit require sufficient population density to be feasible. The variety of public transit options, however, enables the vehicle type and frequency of service to be tailored to local conditions, and tools such as transit oriented development can help create the density to support transit. In addition, there are a wide range of steps to improve the accessibility and convenience of transit, such as adding more types of vehicles, adding more routes, increasing the frequency of service, and reducing travel time. Even simple steps such as adding bus shelters or providing route maps and schedules at each stop can make transit a more viable option.

There has been renewed interest in transit in the Southeast. Various forms of rail transit systems are under consideration within localities and linking localities such as Atlanta-

Athens, Atlanta-Macon, the Charlotte metro area, the Nashville metro area, Norfolk-Virginia Beach, and Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill. Memphis opened a successful streetcar line through its central business district that is integrated with the

Georgia is considering several rail projects to link urban centers, including Atlanta-Athens and Atlanta-Macon.

rest of the transit system, and plans to extend the line to another large employment center. Chattanooga uses fees collected at park-and-ride lots to provide free bus service to and throughout downtown. And Orlando's public transit system has doubled its ridership since 1992.<sup>71</sup>

Transportation planning also has tended to slight *bicycling and walking* as viable options. By overlooking the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists, states and localities have made it more difficult and dangerous to use these forms of transportation.<sup>72</sup> Yet walking is the second most popular form of transportation in the country, after driving.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, over one-fourth of all trips in the United States are less than one mile, and could easily be made by foot or bicycle.<sup>74</sup>

Bicycling and walking

Due largely to federal funding under ISTEA and TEA-21, there has been a significant increase in pedestrian and bicycle projects in the Southeast, and evidence is mounting that people will choose these alternatives when practical, as long as safe, convenient facilities are available. Many of the improvements needed to build networks of bicycle and pedestrian pathways are relatively easy and inexpensive. They include adding and widening sidewalks, providing safe and convenient street crossings, adding landscaped planter strips to separate pedestrians from motor vehicle lanes, providing bicycle lanes, and offering bicycle parking.

The City of Mountain Brook, a residential community south of Birmingham, Alabama, illustrates this trend toward pedestrian-friendly communities. Built in the 1920s and 1930s around three retail villages, the community had few sidewalks. In the past six years, the City

Mountain Brook, Alabama found that creating a pedestrian-friendly environment helped increase retail sales by 25%.

has invested \$850,000 to build 15 miles of sidewalks linking town centers, neighborhoods, parks, and schools. Another 20 miles of sidewalks are proposed, and additional projects have been completed to renovate the retail villages and make them more pedestrian-friendly. As a result of these and other

investments, retail sales in the villages have increased by approximately 25% in the past two years. The Mountain Brook improvements were coordinated with a \$15 million comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plan for the Birmingham metropolitan area.<sup>75</sup>

## Reducing the Adverse Impacts of Roads and Motor Vehicles

Healthier, more vibrant communities also require reduction of the adverse impacts of roads and motor vehicles on rural, urban, and suburban areas. Poorly-designed roads destroy natural, scenic, and historic characteristics, encourage speeding, increase the number of miles driven, increase congestion, create hazards for pedestrians, and contribute to the decline of neighborhoods.

Interconnected streets

The system of cul-de-sac streets that force drivers onto a handful of roads in most suburban areas almost inevitably results in congestion on the collector roads. Comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances can address this problem by promoting or requiring a network of *interconnected streets* that provides alternative routes to any destination and distributes traffic over a broader number of roads.

Orlando's growth management plan, for example, states that the City "shall ensure that existing and new residential development are connected by roadways, bikeways, and pedestrian systems that encourage travel

between neighborhoods and access to transit without requiring use of the major thoroughfare system."<sup>76</sup> This is not to say that all streets should be straight and form a rigid grid, nor even that all cul-de-sacs need to be

Orlando requires residential developments to be connected by roadways, bikeways, and pedestrian systems that encourage travel between neighborhoods.

eliminated. Moreover, it is important to design streets for the desired travel speed (see traffic calming and flexible design strategies below) and to provide sidewalks and other measures to enhance pedestrian safety so that connecting streets are compatible with safe and pleasant neighborhoods.

Another tool to reduce the impacts of roads is to allow *flexible road design*. All too often, when roads are built, straightened, or widened, little consideration is given to how a project affects the residents, or the historic, scenic, or natural features of the surrounding area. This results in wasteful projects that are out of context with their surroundings and that destroy characteristics integral to the community's economy, safety, comfort, or identity. In a recent case, the Virginia Department of Transportation planned to widen roads and bridges damaged by a flood of the Moormans River in rural central Virginia. By working with the Department, citizens concerned about traffic speed, pedestrian safety, and the scenic beauty of the area were able to preserve trees along the riverbank and limit new construction to a narrower road and bridges that matched the pre-existing wooden, one-lane bridges.<sup>77</sup>

Road design elements that need flexibility include the width of roads, sidewalks, bike lanes, shoulders, and medians; the number of road lanes; and the inclusion of bike lanes and sidewalks. Changes to Main Street in Greenville, South Carolina illustrate the tremendous impact street design can have on the economic vitality of a community, particularly when coupled with other measures. In 1979, the City reduced Main Street from four lanes to two

and added angled parking, pedestrian-scale lighting, landscaping, parks, and plazas as part of a comprehensive plan to revitalize downtown Greenville. The results have surpassed expectations, as total employment

Greenville, South Carolina dramatically increased employment and commercial occupancy rates after redesigning Main Street.

downtown has doubled since 1981, commercial occupancy rates have increased from 74 to 96 percent, and food sales increased by 80 percent from 1993 to 1998.<sup>78</sup>

Roads often are built for excessive speed, creating an unpleasant living environment that harms communities and is dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. *Traffic calming* 

Flexible road design

Traffic calming

measures address these problems through a variety of physical modifications in and along roadways that decrease the travel speed of motorists. In addition, experience has shown that slowing the speed of drivers can be the simplest and most cost-effective way to reduce congestion on certain types of streets, thus avoiding the need for new or wider roads. Decreasing travel speed can increase the number of vehicles roads carry, as drivers do not need to maintain as great a distance between vehicles traveling at lower speeds.<sup>79</sup>

Most traffic calming measures are inexpensive and uncomplicated, such as narrowing streets, installing speed humps or traffic circles, and raising crosswalks and intersections. In addition, adding landscaping along roadways and using different paving materials at intersections reminds motorists they are in an area where slower speeds are necessary.

Communities throughout the Southeast have begun to reclaim neighborhoods, improve the vitality of historic and downtown areas, and ease the effects of motor vehicles by taking steps to slow traffic. West Palm Beach, Florida has adopted a resolution that traffic calming be done as part of any work that requires the street to be modified or repaired. 80 Since 1996, the City has budgeted \$3.4 million to implement traffic calming measures. The effects have been far-reaching: motor vehicle speeds, collisions, and street-related crimes such as prostitution and drug offenses have all decreased, and streets are more pedestrian-friendly and aesthetically-pleasing, creating a greater sense of community.<sup>81</sup>

#### Integrating Transportation and Land Use Decisions

Transportation improvements shape the location and pace of development. It also works the other way – local land use plans and development can impact the need for transportation facilities. Yet transportation and land use planning typically operate independently of one another. Arguing that they are merely responding to demand, transportation planning decision-makers often do not consider the land use impacts of projects they design. Land use planning is primarily performed by localities that in turn often do not consider the transportation impacts of land use decisions.

Some southeastern states and communities have begun to recognize the link between

**Transportation** support sensible

strategies that

land use

**Charlotte and Mecklenburg** County, North Carolina voters agreed to fund a 25vear transit and land use plan.

transportation and land use planning by adopting transportation strategies that support sensible land use. Florida law, for example, requires the state's long-range transportation plan to consider the effect of transportation decisions on land development and on regional and local land use plans. 82 Another tool for

sensible growth is to consider alternatives to road projects that combine transportation and

land use improvements. In North Carolina, Charlotte and Mecklenburg County voters have approved a referendum to fund a 25-year, integrated transit and land use plan. This plan proposes \$1 billion of transit improvements, including light rail and rapid bus service, coupled with concentrating major commercial and residential development at transit stations.<sup>83</sup>

Recent federal transportation law seeks to promote the integration of transportation and land use as well. It requires the creation of regional entities called Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in areas with populations over 50,000 people. Comprised primarily of local government officials, MPOs are charged with integrating land use considerations into decisions regarding federally-funded transportation projects. Still another strategy to link transportation and land use is to limit or give priority to transportation investments in areas that have adopted sensible land use policies. The federal government, for example, now ranks applications for transit projects on the basis of how well the locality has integrated the project with its land use plans.

Adopting *land use tools that support sensible transportation* is also an essential component of sustainable growth policies. There are many tools and strategies to foster land use patterns that support a more balanced and efficient transportation system, such as designation of development areas, transit-oriented development, development impact assessment, and other tools discussed in earlier sections. Efforts to develop transportation alternatives and to accommodate the motor vehicles will have limited success unless land use policies that increase automobile dependence are changed. For example, most zoning ordinances promote frequent and lengthy automobile trips by geographically separating different land uses. This is easily remedied by allowing a mix of uses.

As discussed earlier, traditional, compact neighborhoods where places of employment, shopping, and other activities are close together can generate the ridership needed for mass transit, as well as the density that allows a single stop to serve several destinations. In

addition, this form of development offers the proximity to destinations that makes walking and cycling feasible. As a result, traditional neighborhoods require fewer roads, as well as fewer and shorter car trips. A study

Virginia Beach found that traditional neighborhood development would reduce the number of miles traveled by 65%.

commissioned by the City of Virginia Beach found that between 1990 and 2010, if the city developed in a more traditional, compact manner, it could have the same increase in housing units, but cut the number of new lane miles needed in half and reduce the number of miles driven by roughly 65%.<sup>84</sup>

Land use tools that support sensible transportation

#### SEEING THE BIG PICTURE

Throughout the Southeast, citizens, government officials, business leaders, developers, and others are working together to explore new approaches to the challenge of growth. Although this report begins by outlining the formidable challenges we face, it also describes a wide range of strategies to foster growth that is less costly, preserves a high quality of life, and protects natural resources. These strategies are most effective when integrated and tailored to fit the size, goals, and political reality of a particular state or locality. Because smart growth requires coordination of many different strategies at many different levels of government and in many different sectors, success depends as much on public support, political leadership, and coordination among different governmental players, as on any one specific policy or regulatory technique.

States and localities where coalitions have come together to define how their area should grow are better able to adapt their policies and investments to achieve that vision. For example, by forming coalitions and strong private-public partnerships in its redevelopment efforts, Chattanooga was able to undergo an unprecedented change from a polluted city in economic decline to a clean city with a high quality of life and a thriving economy. This would not have been possible without the cooperation and commitment of a wide range of parties to develop a new vision for the city. Chattanooga's turnaround has inspired smart growth efforts throughout Tennessee, and indeed, across the entire country.

In addition to requiring a community vision, strong leadership, and political will, smart growth strategies work best when localities and agencies cooperate with each other in their planning and implementation. All too often, jurisdictions and agencies plan their growth with little consideration of each other. For example, a county allows a major new residential development and shopping mall to be built directly next to a neighboring jurisdiction's protected natural area, or a state transportation agency plans to widen a small town main street to relieve congestion without realizing that local plans for traffic calming are underway. Affirmative channels for coordination are necessary to guide growth effectively.

Beyond consultation and coordination, smart growth is enhanced by regional approaches to land use and transportation planning and to public investments. These approaches provide a broader perspective and permit more comprehensive solutions to problems that extend across political boundaries. For example, Atlanta's severe traffic congestion, suburban sprawl, and air quality problems are shared by 13 counties, competing for development. In early 1999,

Georgia created a regional transportation authority that will have the power to implement and enforce transportation decisions throughout this area. 87

Decisions made today about how and where to grow will have a long-lasting impact on our communities, our health, our natural resources, and our continued economic vitality. Prosperity in the Southeast depends not only on economic growth, but also on a continuing high quality of life for residents, including time for family and friends, attractive, strong communities, and a healthy environment. We have many rich assets upon which to build and many opportunities for smart growth. As the Southeast moves forward, our challenge will be to guide growth to benefit our urban and rural communities and to preserve our natural heritage for generations to come.

#### **Endnotes**

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- <sup>26</sup> Eric Lipton and Manuel Perez-Rivas, "Suburban Budgeters Sound a Red Alert as Needs Rise and Revenue Falls," *The Washington Post*, January 7, 1996, pp. A1, A20.
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- <sup>30</sup> Tennessee Statewide 1998 Assessment Summary, excluding Davidson, Hamilton, Knox, Shelby, and Unicoi counties, Comptroller of the Treasury, Division of Property Assessments, State of Tennessee.
- <sup>31</sup> For more information see the Conservation Trust of North Carolina's web page, http://metalab.unc.edu/ctnc.
- <sup>32</sup> Piedmont Environmental Council, 1997-1998 Annual Report, p. 3.
- <sup>33</sup> Interview with Melvin Atkinson, Agriculture Reserve Program Coordinator, Virginia Beach Agriculture Department (April 1999).
- <sup>34</sup> Interview with Aimee Angelique Craig, Planner II, Palm Beach County, Planning, Zoning and Building Department (April 1999).
- <sup>35</sup> Palm Beach County Florida Unified Land Development Code, Section 6.10 Transfer of Development Rights – Special Density Program.
- <sup>36</sup> In Palm Beach County, to receive higher density, in addition to justifying their request and demonstrating a need, builders must now also show that the current land use designation is inappropriate.
- <sup>37</sup> For more information on the Foothills Land Conservancy, see www.foothillsLand.org
- <sup>38</sup> Interview with Randy Brown, Foothills Land Conservancy, Tennessee (April 1999).
- <sup>39</sup> Phyllis Myers, *Livability at the Ballot Box: State and Local Referenda on Parks, Conservation, and Smarter Growth, Election Day 1998*, Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, the Brookings Institute, 1999.
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- <sup>41</sup> Alabama Enterprise Zone Act, Sections 41-23-20 et seq. Code of Alabama 1975.
- <sup>42</sup> Interview with Marla Jones, Warren County Economic Development Authority (April 1999).
- <sup>43</sup> Preservation Alliance of Virginia, Virginia's Economy and Historic Preservation: The Impact of Preservation on Jobs, Business, and Community, 1996, p.9.
- <sup>44</sup> "The Economic Impact of the Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit Program in North Carolina," North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, December 31, 1995.
- <sup>45</sup> Tax Exemptions and Credits for Rehabilitated Residential, Commercial, or Industrial Structures, Va. Code, Section 58.1-3220 *et seq.*
- <sup>46</sup> Tax Abatement Ordinance Amendment, enacted on April 5, 1999, Fairfax County Code, Article 24, Chapter 4.
- <sup>47</sup> Interview with Lonnie Bryan, Supervising Appraiser, Real Estate Division, Department of Tax Administration, Fairfax, Virginia (April 1999).
- <sup>48</sup> Letter from Stephen R. Reed, Mayor, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania to Anthony Williams, Mayor, Washington, D.C., December 29, 1998.
- <sup>49</sup> Interview with Terry Manning, South Florida Regional Planning Council (April 1999). See also, the Brownfields Redevelopment Act, Chapter 97-277, L.O.F. amended by chapter 98-75, L.O.F.
- <sup>50</sup> Interview with Roger Register, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (April 1999). For additional information on Florida's Voluntary Tax Credit refer to Chapter 62-788, F.A.C.
- <sup>51</sup> Florida Code, Section 288.107, Brownfield redevelopment bonus refunds.
- <sup>52</sup> See, www.portroyal.org for more information.
- <sup>53</sup> Port Royal, South Carolina Traditional Town Overlay District Code, 1997.
- <sup>54</sup> This data comes from the Arlington County Public Works Department, 1998.
- <sup>55</sup> Burchell, Robert W., et. al., *South Carolina Infrastructure Study: Projections of Statewide Infrastructure Costs, Savings, and Financing Alternatives, 1995-2015*, State of South Carolina State Budget and Control Board Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Rutgers University, Wilbur Smith & Associates, Siemon, Larsen & Marsh, Sandstone Environmental Associates, Inc. (May 1997)
- <sup>56</sup> Interview with Greg Strait, Greenville, South Carolina Office of Economic Development (April 1999).
- <sup>57</sup> Florida Concurrency Provisions, Section 163.3180 Fla. Stats. 1998.
- <sup>58</sup> Georgia Impact Fees, Ga. Code, Sections 36-71-2 et seq. 1998.
- <sup>59</sup> Interview with Larry Allen, City Planner, City of White House, Tennessee (April 1999).
- <sup>60</sup> Interview with John Tuohy, Finance Director, Fauquier County, Virginia (April 1999).
- <sup>61</sup> The county's model showed schools to be one of the primary public costs associated with the proposed development; for example each child would entail \$4,800 in local operating expenses.
- <sup>62</sup> The decision to allow a development of 667 units was taken in 1998, including a rezoning. To date the development has not been built due to financial difficulties.
- <sup>63</sup> Surface Transportation Policy Project, *Potholes and Politics 1998* (Washington, D.C.: November 1998), p. 10.
- <sup>64</sup> Alexandria Zoning Ordinance, Section 11-703 (O).

- <sup>65</sup> TEA-21 authorizes \$41 billion of funding for transit over six years (compared to \$173.1 billion for highways) and \$620 million a year for transportation enhancement projects that foster diverse travel modes, such as bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- <sup>66</sup> Virginia Transit Association, "Public Transportation Moves People," Richmond, VA.
- <sup>67</sup> Reid Ewing, *Best Development Practices: A Primer for Smart Growth*, Smart Growth Network, 1997, p. 47.
- <sup>68</sup> Donald Camph, *Dollars and Sense: The Economic Case for Public Transportation in America*, 1997, p. 9.
- <sup>69</sup> *Id.*, p. 9-10.
- <sup>70</sup> *Id.*, p. 50.
- <sup>71</sup> Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority (CFRTA); see <a href="https://www.golynx.com">www.golynx.com</a> for more information.
- <sup>72</sup> In fact, the Southeast has five of the 10 most dangerous metropolitan areas for pedestrians in the country: Orlando, Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, Miami-Ft. Lauderdale, Atlanta, GA, and Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC. Surface Transportation Policy Project, *Mean Streets* '98, (Washington, D.C.: July 1998).
- <sup>73</sup> It has been estimated that 8% of all trips made each day are walking trips. Surface Transportation Policy Project, *Progress*, April 1997, p. 1.
- <sup>74</sup> Constance Beaumont, *Smart States, Better Communities: How State and Governments Can Help Citizens Preserve Their Communities* (Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1996), p. 225.
- <sup>75</sup> Interview with Nim Long and Joel Eliason from Nimrod Long and Associates, and Margaret Scully from Birmingham Regional Planning Commission (March and April 1999).
- <sup>76</sup> City of Orlando, Growth Management Plan, Transportation Element Policy 1.10.1, January 26, 1998.
- <sup>77</sup> Interview with Sally Thomas, member of Albemarle County Board of Supervisors (May 1999).
- <sup>78</sup> City of Greenville, Economic Development Department, "Remaking Main Street," 1998.
- <sup>79</sup> David Engwicht, *Reclaiming our Cities and Towns: Better Living with Less Traffic* (Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers: 1993), p. 44.
- 80 City of West Palm Beach, Resolution Number 230-98.
- <sup>81</sup> Interview with Timothy Stillings, Senior Transportation Planner, City of West Palm Beach, (May 1999).
- <sup>82</sup> Fla. Stat. Section 339.155(2)(n).
- <sup>83</sup> 2025 Integrated Transit/Land-Use Plan for Charlotte-Mecklenburg, October, 1998.
- <sup>84</sup> Siemen, Larsen, & Purdy, Rogers, Goldern & Halpern, Inc,. and Hammer, Sile, George Associates, *Crossroads: Two Growth Alternatives for Virginia Beach*, March 19, 1990.
- 85 Brendan I. Koerner, "Cities That Work," U.S. News, June 8, 1998.
- <sup>86</sup> See, the Chattanooga Institute website at www.csc2.org.
- <sup>87</sup> Georgia Regional Transportation Authority Act, Senate Bill 57 (signed April 1999).

## Readings

Information on how to order or download the following documents can be found at the mentioned web sites.

**Best Development Practices: A Primer for Smart Growth**, by Reid Ewing with Robert Hodder (1998): Describes land use practices for smart growth, including mixed land use, cluster development, strategic use of high density, compact city centers, and traffic calming. 30 pages. *Smart Growth Network at www.smartgrowth.org* 

**Brownfields Redevelopment: A Guidebook for Local Governments and Communities** (1997): Examines the major issues that local governments and communities will confront in reusing brownfields, from liability to public financing to community involvement. 325 pages. *Northeast-Midwest Institute at www.nemw.org, International City/County Management Association at www.icma.org* 

CityRoutes, CityRights: Building Livable Neighborhoods and Environmental Justice by Fixing Transportation (1998): Citizen's guide to transportation improvements such as traffic calming, rebuilding streets for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users, expanding public transit, and building walkable neighborhood centers around transit stations. 81 pages. Conservation Law Foundation at www.clf.org

The Dark Side of the American Dream: The Costs and Consequences of Suburban Sprawl (1998): Describes the costs of suburban sprawl and ranks the 30 most sprawl-threatened cities in the United States. 25 pages. Sierra Club at www.sierraclub.org

**How Smart Growth Can Stop Sprawl,** by David Bollier (Essential Books, 1998): Examines the hidden subsidies and long-term costs of sprawl and then describes strategies that can revitalize cities and arrest sprawl. 90 pages. *Sprawl Watch Clearinghouse at www.sprawlwatch.org* 

Once There Were Greenfields: How Urban Sprawl is Undermining America's Environment, Economy and Social Fabric, by F. Kaid Benfield, Matthew D. Raimi and Donald D.T. Chen (1999): Documents the consequences of sprawling growth patterns nationally, looking at economic, social and environmental trends. 215 pages. *Natural Resources Defense Council at www.nrdc.org* 

**Saving American Farmland: What Works** (1997): Examines public policies and programs that give landowners alternatives to selling farm and ranch lands for development, including success stories detailing how local communities have built programs to protect farmland. 334 pages. *American Farmland Trust at www.farmland.org* 

Smart States, Better Communities: How State Governments Can Help Citizens Preserve Their Communities, by Constance E. Beaumont (1996): Presents case studies from states across the U.S. to describe tools for preservation, community revitalization, transportation, alternatives to sprawl, and property rights. 394 pages. *National Trust for Historic Preservation at www.nthp.org* 

#### Florida

**Building on Success: A Report from Eastward Ho!** (1998): This booklet describes the Eastward Ho! Process for developing a smart growth strategy for South Florida, including ways to encourage infill and redevelopment of lands not adjacent to the Everglades. 42 pages. South Florida Regional Planning Council at www.sfrpc.com

Planning for Tomorrow: A Citizen's Guide to Smarter Growth in Florida (1999): This guide describes the state's nationally recognized approach to smart planning for the future and outlines how citizens can help. 30 pages. 1000 Friends of Florida at www.1000fof.usf.edu

#### Georgia

An Unlevel Playing Field: How Public Policies Favor Suburban Sprawl Over Downtown Development in Metropolitan Atlanta (1999): Summarizes the results of a technical economic research paper and the ensuing roundtable meeting of local private and public leaders concerning policies that give the suburbs a competitive edge over downtown development. 17 pages. American Farmland Trust at www.farmland.org, The Georgia Conservancy at www.gaconservancy.org

#### North Carolina

**Quality Growth in North Carolina: Achieving a Sustainable Future** (1994): Describes the growth management problems in the state and provides a 12 point action plan to move North Carolina towards a sustainable future. 47 pages. *North Carolina Chapter of the Sierra Club at www.sierraclub-nc.org* 

#### *Tennessee*

Smart Growth for Tennessee Towns and Counties: A Process Guide (1999): Describes processes and tools to plan for smart growth in Tennessee. 180 pages. *University of Tennessee Energy, Environment and Resources Center at http://eerc.ra.utk.edu/smart.htm* 

#### Virginia

**Beyond Asphalt: Creating a Better Transportation Future for Virginia** (1999): Surveys Virginia's transportation program and its effects on the economy and environment and recommends improvements looking at the state focus, funding, public participation, project analyses, coordination, and incentives for smart growth. 24 pages. *Southern Environmental Law Center at www.southernenvironment.org* 

Guiding Growth in Virginia: Local Incentives for Revitalization and Preservation (1998): Analyzes tools for revitalizing communities, recycling land and buildings, ensuring adequate public facilities, and preserving the rural economy and natural heritage as they are being used in Virginia. 60 pages. *Environmental Law Institute at www.eli.org* 

Sprawl Costs Us All: A Guide to the Costs of Suburban Sprawl and How to Create Livable Communities in Virginia (1997): Examines the differences in benefits and costs between land use decisions that stimulate low-density development at the outer edge of urban centers and alternatives which would result in smarter growth. 20 pages. Virginia Chapter of the Sierra Club at www.geocities.com/RainForest/Vines/7077

## Gateways to Further Resources

**Alabama Environmental Council** is the state's oldest nonprofit environmental organization. AEC acts as a citizen's network, collecting information, monitoring situations and negotiating with government and private organizations on complex conservation issues. <a href="http://www.alenvironmentalcouncil.org">http://www.alenvironmentalcouncil.org</a>

State Resources

**1000 Friends of Florida's** mission is to protect and improve Florida's quality of life by advocating responsible planning for the state's population growth. 1000 Friends works to protect natural areas, fight urban sprawl, promote sensible development patterns, and provide affordable housing. <a href="http://www.1000fof.usf.edu">http://www.1000fof.usf.edu</a>

**The Georgia Conservancy** is a non-profit organization dedicated to the responsible stewardship of Georgia's natural resources. Over the past few years, the Conservancy has addressed many issues concerning smart growth, including community revitalization, natural resource conservation, and transportation. <a href="http://www.gaconservancy.org">http://www.gaconservancy.org</a>

**Conservation Council of North Carolina** is a statewide nonprofit organization committed to protecting the environmental resources of North Carolina that works, among other things, to reduce the adverse impacts of land use and transportation policies. <a href="https://www.serve.com/ccnc">www.serve.com/ccnc</a>

**South Carolina Coastal Conservation League** is a grassroots, non-profit organization - backed by 4,000 members - dedicated to protecting state and coastal resources through lobbying, advocacy, and field projects to balance community and nature. <a href="http://www.scccl.org">http://www.scccl.org</a>

**Tennessee Environmental Council** is a statewide, non-profit advocacy group concerned with the cleanliness of Tennessee's air and water, conservation of forests, sustainable growth and improvements in environmental policy. TEC is a member of the Tennessee Smart Growth Coalition. <a href="http://nashville.citysearch.com/E/G/NASTN/0000/00/64/">http://nashville.citysearch.com/E/G/NASTN/0000/00/64/</a>

**Piedmont Environmental Council** is a non-profit rural land conservation organization serving nine counties in the Virginia Piedmont. PEC is committed to protecting farms, forests, wetlands and open spaces, in addition to promoting a rural economy. <a href="http://www.pec-va.org">http://www.pec-va.org</a>

**Southern Environmental Law Center** is a non-profit, regional organization dedicated to protecting the natural areas and resources of Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. SELC's Land and Community Project promotes sensible growth and better transportation and land use decisions. SELC has offices in North Carolina, Virginia and Georgia. <a href="http://www.southernenvironment.org">http://www.southernenvironment.org</a>

Regional Resources

#### National Resources

Many of these organizations have state-specific information.

**American Farmland Trust** is a national nonprofit conservation group that works to stop the loss of productive farmland. The organization does extensive research on various mechanisms to protect farmland. <a href="http://www.farmland.org">http://www.farmland.org</a>

**American Planning Association** is a national nonprofit organization that works to encourage planning that will contribute to the public well being. The Association's Growing Smart Initiative helps states modernize statutes affecting planning and growth management. <a href="http://www.planning.org">http://www.planning.org</a>

**Environmental Law Institute** is a nonprofit research and education organization devoted to advancing environmental policy. The Institute addresses sprawl at the state and national level as it relates to the sustainable use of lands, brownfields, wetlands, non-point source pollution, public infrastructure, and other issues. <a href="http://www.eli.org">http://www.eli.org</a>

**National Trust for Historic Preservation** focuses on historic, community, and open space preservation. Resources relating to sprawl are available through the National Trust's Law and Public Policy Department. <a href="http://www.nthp.org">http://www.nthp.org</a>

**Sierra Club** is a non-profit, member-supported public interest organization that promotes conservation of the natural environment by influencing public policy. The Sierra Club has launched a nationwide campaign on sprawl-related issues and its Southeast offices have been very active on these issues in the region. <a href="http://www.sierraclub.org">http://www.sierraclub.org</a>

**Smart Growth Network** is a coalition of public, private, and citizen partners coordinated by the U.S. EPA's Urban and Economic Development Division that helps to create national, regional and local partnerships to encourage environmentally, economically and socially smart development. <a href="http://www.smartgrowth.org">http://www.smartgrowth.org</a>

**Sprawlwatch Clearinghouse** is a newly established resource center on smart growth related issues, linking citizens, decision-makers, and others to local, state, and federal information available on growth issues. <a href="http://www.sprawlwatch.org">http://www.sprawlwatch.org</a>

**Surface Transportation Policy Project** is a coalition of over 200 organizations and individuals whose focus it is to ensure that transportation policy and investment protect the environment, the economy, and community. <a href="http://transact.org">http://transact.org</a>

**Urban Land Institute** is a nonprofit educational and research institution with smart growth as one of its top policy issues. Its membership includes professionals and academics committed to responsible leadership in urban planning, growth, and development. <a href="http://www.uli.org">http://www.uli.org</a>

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