



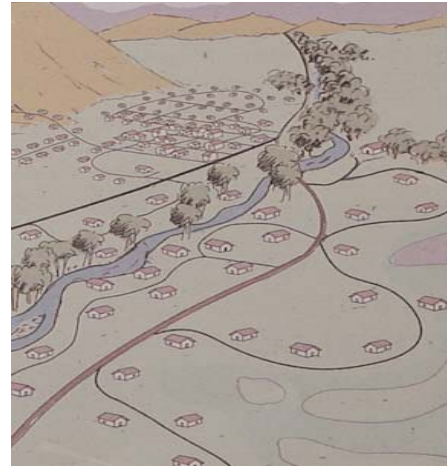
Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) is a cutting-edge tool that encourages greenspace protection while still allowing anticipated development. Our precious north Georgia mountains, valleys and streams are facing enormous development pressure. Future growth is expected to consume much of the existing privately owned open land in this part of the state. While many landowners are deeply motivated to protect their land for future generations, other landowners just about "have to" develop their land in order to recoup its financial value.

A Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program may be the solution, providing north Georgia counties and cities an opportunity to proactively protect open space while respecting private property rights. TDR programs provide cities and counties with a mechanism for encouraging the protection of open spaces while still allowing development. Floodplains, forests, streams, scenic views, agricultural areas, and historic and recreational resources can be preserved, while protecting property values and



Historical Development Pattern

Landscape characteristics of the Etowah region before the onset of sprawling development.



Modern "Conventional" Development Pattern

The rural character of the landscape is replaced with industrial and residential zones, leaving little of the historical rural landscape.

allowing for future growth.

Under a TDR program, development rights are transferred from areas designated for protection (sending zones) to areas designated for future growth (receiving zones). The transfer of development rights from a sending zone to a receiving zone occurs when a landowner, typically a developer, proposes an increase in density on a particular piece of land which normally accompanies a rezoning request. If the local government approves the increase in density, the developer then acquires the development rights from landowners in areas where the community supports greenspace protection. Once a property owner has sold or transferred their development rights, the property is then permanently protected by a deed restriction or conservation easement.

The TDR program offers many benefits:

- ▶ TDRs allows for future growth within a community, while maintaining the rural character of the landscape. As a result, residential sprawl can be averted by directing development to areas that are more appropriate, such as near urban areas where infra-

structure is readily accessible.

▶ TDRs protect open space at no expense to taxpayers. TDRs ensure landowners do not suffer a reduction in property value that can accompany other zoning mechanisms.

▶ TDRs provide conservation-minded landowners with a financial alternative to development by protecting valuable rural, agricultural and forested lands without "taking" property rights.

▶ TDRs promote fairness by allowing landowners and developers to choose between TDR and conventional development, while protecting ultimate build-out populations for cities and counties.

▶ A TDR program holds tremendous potential to protect rural greenspace, including agricultural lands, flood plains, scenic views and recreational access point throughout north Georgia and the Etowah watershed.

Information and graphics for this article from the Wood River Land Trust in Idaho.

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Modern Transfer of Development Alternative

This alternative locates new development in areas that have traditionally been viewed by the community as town centers. As a result, open space is preserved and the landscape retains its rural character while still experiencing economic growth.

The Nature Conservancy 

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