

EAST LAKE COMMONS
Winner- World Habitat Award 2000
Leicestershire, England
Winner- AIA HUD 2001
Housing and Community Design Award

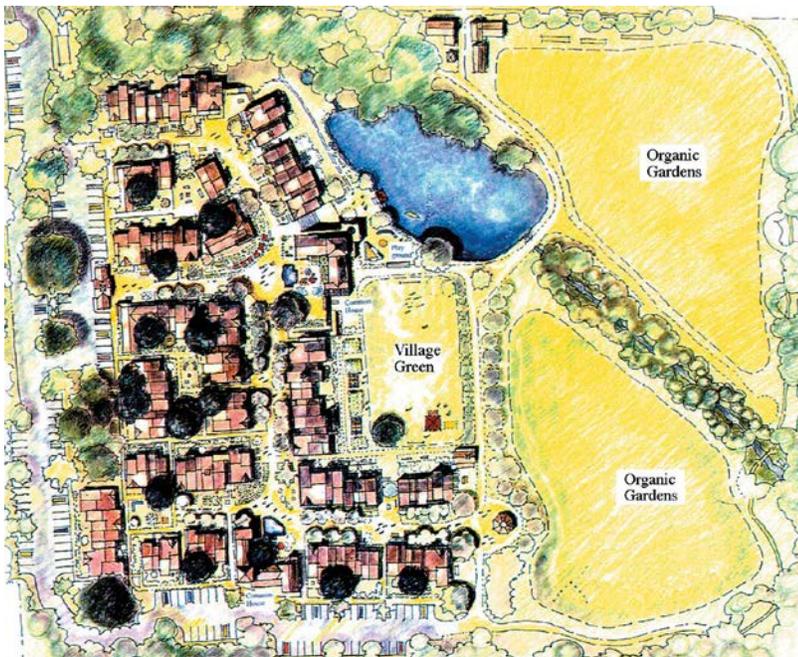
Location	Dekalb County, 4 miles from downtown Atlanta
Property Area	20 Acre,
Land Preserved	12 Acres, 60% of Site
# Units	67
Developer Entity	East Lake Commons Inc.: Non-Profit
Home Ownership	Fee Simple w/ HOA
Home Prices	\$90,000 to \$289,000
Status	All 67 units closed as of December, 2000 Waiting list for resales
Services Provided	Programming, Zoning, Master Plan, Site Plan, Schematic design of homes and community buildings, landscape planning, and community workshops.
Sustainability Features	Land Preservation, pedestrian layout, shared resources, storm water filtration and retention, centralized parking, CSA Farm

The second cohousing community planned by Village Habitat Design in Georgia, East Lake Commons is located in a reemerging area of Atlanta.

The 20 acres were zoned for duplexes on 7500 sq. ft. lots. A zoning variance allowed for the entire 67 homes to be placed on less than 1/2 of the land. The other 60% will be preserved as gardens, woodland, pond, and play field.

The pedestrian layout of the community is an important feature. The safety and security of the residents is increased by keeping the cars at the periphery. Playing children will not be threatened by auto traffic. Visitors to the community will be visible to the residents. The generous courtyards, plazas, and lanes provide pleasant recreation and gathering places for residents of all ages.

The active residents' group has been instrumental in all phases of marketing and developing the project. They have brought a tremendous amount of energy, expertise, and community focus.



View from across the vegetable farm



483 Moreland Avenue, Suite 4
 Atlanta, Georgia 30307
www.VillageHabitat.com
 404-992-4399
gramsey@usa.net

Mixed Used - Mixed Income
Land Preservation

East Lake Commons, developed in Atlanta in 1997, successfully demonstrates how residential development can be carried out in a socially, ecologically and economically sustainable manner. It is located three miles from the Central Business District of the city in a low-income neighbourhood of Dekalb County. The 18 acre plot was originally zoned for 35 **duplex** dwellings but a planned development was permitted to develop 67 homes on eight acres of the plot, with the remaining ten acres set aside for green space. This green space is owned in common and includes a five acre organic farm, woodland areas, a wildlife corridor and stream buffer zones.

Although the project was developed as market-rate housing **with a very broad range of prices**, some of the homes qualified for financial subsidy and this combination of market rate and subsidised housing has proved popular. All houses were sold or rented without any delay and there is a waiting list of people wishing to move into the community. The building cluster has been designed for **wheelchair** 'visitability' - each home has step-less entrances and generous circulation space on the ground floor. This enables those in wheelchairs to have access to all parts of the community, rather than just their own house.

The project consists of three components - the woodland area, the agriculture area and the building cluster. The building cluster contains 67 dwellings, as well as community buildings, plazas and semi-private courtyards. It is placed near the main road in order to reduce the impact on the green space. There is no parking within the building cluster itself and all cars are parked on the perimeter. This enables the pedestrian zones around the dwellings to be used for social interaction and play space for the children.

The reduction in the amount of hard-surfaced roads helps to reduce the rapid run-off of storm water and enables a greater proportion of the water to be collected. Storm water is directed into a retention pond for first flush and bio-swales for in-soak and gradual release into the stream. The stream feeds the pond, used for recreation and irrigation of the agriculture area.

The Common House is the central shared resource of the community. It contains dining areas, kitchens and guest rooms / living areas, a small library, play areas, laundry facilities and a classroom area. By extending the range of facilities available to residents, it allows the individual houses to be smaller and less expensive. Regular community events are held in the Common House, including twice weekly communal evening meals and spontaneous gatherings. Summer camp activities are to be held there for both the children living in East Lake Commons as well as those in the surrounding neighbourhood.

The four acres of farm land are owned by the community and are farmed organically by a local farmer (Joe Reynolds - Love is Love Farm - <http://www.loveislovefarm.com/events>.) Organised as a Community Supported Agriculture program, residents have the option to purchase weekly supplies of organic vegetables and fruits (enough for four people for approximately 40 weeks a year). **The farmer sells his extra produce** in the local farmers markets and to local restaurants. Neighborhood residents in the area are also encouraged to join and the organic farm provides a welcome point of contact with the wider neighbourhood. Outreach education is also provided by the farmer for the children living in the development, as well as those in the surrounding neighbourhood. Weekly supplies are donated to the homeless shelter and small plants are donated to the local community. The farmer prepares a weekly newsletter with up to date information on what is happening on the farm.

East Lake Commons Inc. was established as a not-for-profit company for the development phase of the project. The developer, who already owned the 18 acre plot of land financed the development. All properties have been sold with fee simple ownership and all development costs have been met. The total development cost was \$10m with \$6m being the construction cost of the 67 dwellings. There is a wide variation in the costs of individual dwellings since residents were able to work with the developers to design homes to meet their own specific needs and budgets.

There has been considerable local and national interest in the project with other potential co-housing groups visiting it prior to establishing their own housing projects. It has been the recipient of the international UN World Habitat Award, National American Institute of Architects / Housing and Urban Development Secretary's Award for mixed-use and mixed income development.

EAST LAKE COMMONS



INTOWN AG CONSERVATION- FARM IN ITS 20TH YEAR

EAST LAKE COMMONS



EAST LAKE COMMONS A CONSERVATION COMMUNITY

A Cohousing Community, Farm and Wildlife Habitat
(approximately 20 acres with 60% preserved as wildlife habitat)



INTOWN AG CONSERVATION— CASE STUDY — 20 ACRES
8 ACRES DEVELOPED & 12 ACRES PRESERVED WITH 5 ACRE FARM (GAIA GARDENS)

EAST LAKE COMMONS



COMMUNITY ASPECTS

COHOUSING NEIGHBORHOOD - PEDESTRIAN STREETS, COMMON HOUSE, EVENT GREEN, COMMUNITY GARDENS AND CSA FARM

EAST LAKE COMMONS



FARM FIRST

FARM IS DEVELOPED FIRST – VILLAGE SITE IN BACKGROUND

EAST LAKE COMMONS



VILLAGE IN COURSE OF BEING DEVELOPED
RYAN COHEN – FIRST FARMER



**EAST LAKE COMMONS RESIDENTS ENJOYING THE FRUITS OF THE FARM
JOE REYNOLDS & JUDITH WINFREY CURRENT FARMERS & FARM EVENTS OPERATORS**

EAST LAKE COMMONS



FARM OPERATIONS AND CSA PICKUP

EAST LAKE COMMONS



FARM FESTIVAL

EAST LAKE COMMONS



FARM FIELDS WITH VILLAGE BEYOND

EAST LAKE COMMONS



FARM FESTIVAL ON EVENT GREEN WITH HAY RIDES TO FARM

EAST LAKE COMMONS



COMMON HOUSE, VALUE ADDED KITCHEN & EVENT FIELD

EAST LAKE COMMONS



FARM IRRIGATION AND WILDLIFE POND

GAIA GARDENS FARM

- **Mission:** To provide an opportunity for a farmer to make a living from farming by minimizing the investment needed in land, infrastructure, and implements. The farmer's commitment is to grow a wide variety of organic produce and sell it through a CSA and to local restaurants, as well as educate the public about the movement for local, organic produce by providing tours, workshops and seminars for groups such as Georgia Organics, master gardeners, teachers, and schools.

- **Farm:** The 5 acres of Gaia Gardens are designated as farm and can never be built on. That acreage includes 1 acre of tillable land, an apiary, a shiitake field, a blueberry orchard, a compost area, a garden shed, a greenhouse, a tractor barn, a wash station barn, 2 high tunnels, a shed for beekeeping equipment, and a shed for compost equipment. Water sources include a spring-fed/stream-fed pond, a well, and municipal water.