



City of Alpharetta

Leading the Way to Sustainability

In 2010, the City of Alpharetta achieved gold level certification under the Atlanta Regional Commission’s Green Communities Program, two levels higher than its bronze level certification in 2009. The following measures have been implemented by the City of Alpharetta to reduce its environmental impact and promote sustainability. These measures received points for certification.

Green Building



- » Requires all new city-owned buildings greater than 5,000 square feet to be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified.
- » Requires all new city-owned buildings that are not LEED certified to achieve Energy Star or EarthCraft Light Commercial certification.
- » Requires all renovations of city-owned buildings to be Energy Star certified or follow LEED guidelines.
- » Offers expedited plan review, processing and permitting, including expedited building and site inspection, for developers building LEED, EarthCraft or Energy Star certified projects in the city.
- » Offers incentives for affordable and work force housing entities to build green housing developments by offering expedited plan review, processing and permitting, including expedited building and site inspection, for LEED, EarthCraft or Energy Star certified projects.

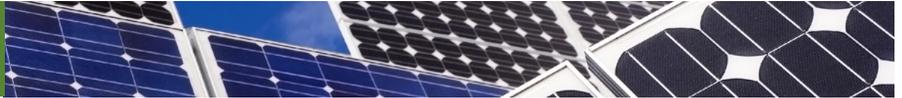
Energy Efficiency



- » Completed energy audits on almost half the city’s buildings with the remaining buildings to be completed within four years.
- » Joined the Energy Star partnership in 2010.
- » Energy Star purchasing policy to purchase energy-efficient equipment and appliances.
- » Retrofitted all of its 115 traffic signals with new LED signal light inserts. The upgrades use substantially less power than conventional incandescent bulbs and have a longer effective life.

- » Adopted a lights out/power down policy requiring employees and maintenance staff to turn off lights and all other non-essential electronic equipment when not in use.
- » City Hall has an Energy Star rated cool roof. The city adopted a policy requiring cool roofs to be installed on all new city projects, where feasible.
- » Active inspection program for residential and commercial compliance with the Georgia energy codes.
- » Night sky ordinance reduces excess lighting which unnecessarily wastes energy and degrades the nighttime visual environment.

Green Power



- » Offers expedited plan review, plan processing and inspections for the installation of new solar systems that are a minimum of 1kWh and meet certain design criteria.

Water Efficiency



- » Completed water audits on almost half the city's buildings with the remaining buildings to be completed within four years.
- » Requires all new city-owned buildings to install high-efficiency plumbing fixtures such as WaterSense certified toilets, urinals and faucets.
- » Captured rainwater at Rock Mill Park is used for irrigation to establish new plantings. At Webb Bridge Park, rainwater is pumped from a retention pond to irrigate the ball fields throughout the park. Rain barrels located on site are used for watering landscaping at the Mansell House/ Recreation Administrative Offices and the Alpharetta Adult Activity Center.
- » Completed audit with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division and is in compliance with the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's Water Supply and Water Conservation Management Plan, Wastewater Management Plan and Watershed Management Plan.
- » Offers expedited plan review, processing and permitting, including expedited building and site inspection, for developers building WaterSense certified new homes.

Trees & Greenspace



- » No net loss of trees policy for all city owned property.
- » The 2025 Comprehensive Land Use Plan includes a future greenspace plan with greenways, a goal for 20 percent of city land to be protected greenspace, open space requirements and tree protection.

- » Demonstration green roof pavilion with hands-on education at Rock Mill Park. There are demonstration tables near the green roof to educate visitors on green roof benefits, materials and plants.
- » Comprehensive landscape management policy includes guidelines for integrated pest management and landscape management.
- » Designated as a Tree City USA Community for the past 20 years. To maintain this designation, the City of Alpharetta has a tree commission, a community tree ordinance, a community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita and an annual Arbor Day observance and proclamation.
- » Encourages 50 percent shade coverage of parking lots through landscape development standards that require a minimum of one canopy tree for every 8 parking spaces and a minimum of 200 square feet of contiguous soil space per overstory tree.
- » Donated space at Wills Park for the Alpharetta Community Garden and provides maintenance of surrounding areas, water and other support (i.e. fence surrounding the garden). Residents can lease a plot for \$50 a season (April-October) and receive soil and three complimentary starter plants.
- » Provides the location and publicity assistance for the Downtown Alpharetta Farmers Market that is held Saturday mornings from May through mid-October.

Transportation & Air Quality



- » Green fleet policy that gives a preference for purchasing fuel-efficient and lowest emission vehicles. Currently, Alpharetta has four hybrid vehicles in the fleet.
- » Adopted an anti-idling policy to prevent city vehicles from idling over three minutes, unless in traffic or on routine stops.
- » Established a traffic control center in 2005. As a result of implementation, peak travel time has been reduced by 21 percent. This has led to an annual estimated savings of 300,000 hours, 223,000 gallons of fuel and a reduction in over 100 tons of vehicle emissions.
- » Safe Routes to School program for elementary and middle schools. The city has worked with the schools to identify infrastructure projects and has completed a number of these projects to improve the walking and biking environment around the schools.
- » Bicycle racks are installed at more than half of existing community facilities with a schedule to have bicycle racks installed at the remaining facilities by 2012. Adopted a policy to require the installation of bicycle facilities at all new community facilities.
- » Conducted an inventory and analysis of existing bicycle and pedestrian routes to determine current and future infrastructure needs. Adopted bicycle and pedestrian friendly policies and standards to improve bicycle and pedestrian accommodations throughout the city.
- » Encourages shared parking through the Unified Development Code by offering a 25 percent reduction in required parking spaces where principal uses will not utilize space during the same hours.

Recycling & Waste Reduction



- » Adopted an environmentally preferable purchasing policy to purchase products that are recyclable, reusable or contain recycled materials, as long as the purchase price does not exceed 10 percent of the cost of a less sustainable product. The product comparison includes life cycle cost considerations, when applicable.
- » Single-stream recycling program for traditional recyclable materials. All employees have a small blue bin at their desk for recycling paper, plastics, metal and glass. Bins are also located in break rooms and near copiers.
- » Electronics are collected throughout the year and stored at the Engineering/Public Works Department until they are recycled at one of the city's semi-annual electronics recycling event days. Cell phones, batteries, fluorescent lights and ink cartridges are collected throughout the year and recycled through private vendors.
- » Purchases paper with at least 30 percent recycled content for copy, computer and fax paper.
- » Provides curbside recycling to single-family residents for paper, glass, metal containers, plastics and corrugated cardboard.
- » Commercial recycling requirement that requires a 25 percent minimum level of recycling at commercial locations.
- » Offers drop-off events for residents to recycle electronics, cell phones and batteries.
- » Holds an annual household hazardous waste and paint collection day for residents to properly dispose of items like paints, thinners, stains, cleaning products, pool and spa chemicals and pesticides. Some of the collected items are processed to be used as alternative fuels.

Land Use



- » Maddox Park is located on the site of a remediated brownfield that was previously an auto repair and fueling station.
- » Several local government facilities are located at previous greyfield sites. Alpharetta renovated an existing shopping center in 1997, and the Community Development Department is located in this renovated complex.
- » The North Point LCI and Alpharetta Downtown Master Plan established smart growth development strategies and policies for the redevelopment of these areas.
- » Analyzed its downtown and assessed what strategies could be used to revitalize the area. Created the City of Alpharetta Downtown Plan and Incentive Zoning Package to inform developers of the incentives available for redeveloping the downtown area. Density bonuses and reduced impact fees are available for redevelopment and buffer reductions are available for mixed-use projects.

Education



- » The city's intranet provides educational information to employees on the city's sustainability efforts through the Green Toolkit. Policies, programs and informational material are available to employees in the Green Toolkit.
- » The environmental education coordinator administers the city's environmental education outreach program for the community. Recently, the Green City Web page was launched to inform its residents on the sustainability measures being implemented for the ARC Green Communities program and can be viewed at <http://www.alpharetta.ga.us/index.php?p=426>.

Innovation



- » The city has an active enforcement program for its 3-year landscape bond requirement on trees and landscaping planted under the Tree Ordinance requirements. Through the Landscaping Inspection Program, city staff inspect newly planted trees throughout the 3-year period; if any trees are unhealthy or dead at the 3rd year inspection and the owner has not responded during this time, the city notifies the surety company that the bond is in default. The company then notifies the client to replace the trees and city staff continue to inspect these trees until they are established and viable. The program finds an average of 80 trees a year that require replacement, and since 2003, 855 trees have been replaced as a result of the program.
- » Requires all new construction and major renovation projects to demonstrate how the project will reduce onsite water use by at least 10 percent. Examples of how this requirement has been met are through the installation of cisterns to capture rainwater for irrigation and through the installation of high-efficiency plumbing fixtures.
- » The development of Rock Mill Park utilized low-impact development and stormwater best management practices, including rain gardens, native and drought tolerant plants, and bioswales. Educational materials are displayed throughout the park to inform visitors of these unique features and explain the benefits of proper stormwater management.

For more information on all the certified communities, visit the Certified Green Communities webpage at <http://atlantaregional.com/environment/green-communities/certified-green-communities>.