



Cherokee County

Leading the Way to Sustainability

In 2010, Cherokee County was one of the first communities to be certified under the Atlanta Regional Commission's Green Communities Program. The county reaffirmed its commitment to being green in 2014 and 2018 when it recertified as a Green Community at the Bronze level. The county has implemented — and received points for — the following measures that reduce its environmental impact and promote sustainability.

Green Building

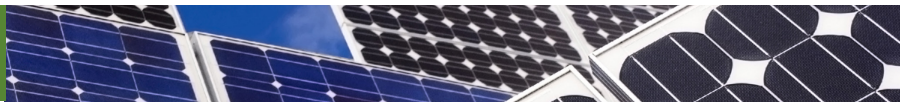
- » Achieved certification of the Cherokee County Administration Building as a Silver-level Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) facility in 2010.
- » Requires local government building renovations to, at minimum, follow LEED guidelines.
- » Encourages residential and commercial buildings to be built green by offering expedited permitting reviews, a 50-percent reduction in most fees, an initial plan review within two days, and priority for meetings with the Plan Approval Team for projects that achieve LEED, ENERGY STAR, or EarthCraft certification.

Energy Efficiency

- » Completed energy audits on all county facilities, which operate under a performance contract for energy efficiency. Energy efficiency improvements include upgrades to energy and facility management software, LED retrofits and HVAC replacements in multiple government facilities, and installing occupancy sensors in mechanical and storage rooms.
- » Adopted an ENERGY STAR purchasing policy for energy-efficient equipment and appliances. New computer desktops, desk telephones, switchboard telephones, and physical servers purchased since 2014 have been ENERGY STAR Certified.
- » Installed LED bulbs in all overhead traffic- and pedestrian signals and requires all new signals to have LED bulbs. Cherokee County has saved an estimated \$10,000 per year as a result of the LED retrofit.

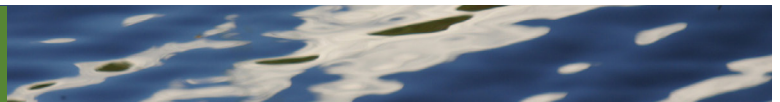
- » Adopted a lights-out/power-down policy for all county employees and facilities, to ensure all non-emergency building lighting, computers, and monitors are switched off when not in use, at the end of the workday, and on weekends. Installed wall-mounted occupancy sensors throughout the Justice Center, Historic Courthouse, Administrative Building, and other facilities to further conserve energy.
- » Installed ENERGY STAR-rated cool roofs on the County Administration and Conference Center, Tax Commissioner's Office, County Justice Center, and Historic Courthouse.
- » Budgeted for LED retrofits in fiscal years 2019 and 2021 for the Twin Creeks Softball Complex and Cherokee County Aquatic Center.
- » Adopted an outdoor lighting and road glare ordinance to encourage the efficient use of outdoor lighting. Some recently-opened facilities that have operated successfully under this ordinance include the Adidas manufacturing and distributing facility, Yanmar America's training facility, and the Papa John's food warehouse.

Green Power



- » Encourages the inclusion of solar energy projects in new construction by offering expedited permitting reviews, a 50-percent reduction in most fees, an initial plan review within two days, and priority in meetings with the plan approval team. To date, eight businesses and six residences have taken advantage of these incentives.

Water Efficiency



- » Captures stormwater runoff at the Cherokee County Fire Training Center for use in its fire suppression trainings. The system pumps an average of 150-thousand gallons per week from the collection pond, which equates to about \$3,000 in savings each month. Additionally, Badger Creek Park is irrigated by onsite detention ponds.
- » Worked with the Upper Etowah River Alliance to renovate a facility near the banks of the Etowah River and install various demonstration projects to control all of the stormwater runoff from the roof and street. These projects included a bioswale system, rain gardens, rainwater collection system with a cistern and barrels, as well as a variety of pervious pavers.
- » Completed an audit with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division and is in compliance with the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's Water Resource Management Plan.

Trees & Greenspace



- » Contains an estimated 23,800 acres of permanently protected greenspace, which equates to approximately 105 acres of greenspace per 1,000 residents.
- » Adopted the Cherokee County Greenspace Protection Program in November 2000, which set a goal of protecting 20-percent of county land as greenspace. The county's Parks, Recreation, and Greenspace Bond allocated \$90 million for greenspace acquisition, which has added more than 1,000 acres of greenspace to date.
- » Offers gardening opportunities for older adults at the Cherokee County Senior Center using raised planter beds. Additionally, the center has an heirloom garden, butterfly garden, scent garden, teaching garden, greenhouse, and rooting bed.

Transportation & Air Quality



- » Adopted a No Idling Policy that prohibits the idling of county vehicles except for emergency public safety vehicles.
- » Monitors and controls traffic signals along Sixes Road, Towne Lake Parkway, and State Route 92 via a traffic control center. All county traffic signals are analyzed every two years for signalization improvements.
- » Adopted a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) that documents existing multimodal networks and connections and proposes new bicycle and pedestrian projects for improved transportation options.
- » Encourages shared and joint parking through a policy that allows new users to occupy existing buildings without recalculating parking requirements. The Village at Sixes and The Arbor are recent examples of this policy.

Recycling & Waste Reduction



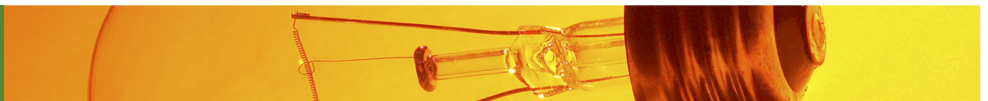
- » Provides recycling in government buildings for paper, cardboard, aluminum containers, and plastics. Recycling bins are located near copiers and fax machines, in break rooms, and at employees' desks. In 2017, roughly 57 tons of recyclables were collected from county buildings.
- » Recycles its used ink cartridges and copier toner through a special mail-in program. Electronics are collected and stored for twice-annual electronics recycling events.
- » Purchases paper with at least 30-percent post-consumer recycled content.
- » Opened two residential glass recycling drop-off centers in response to the discontinuation of glass recycling by private trash haulers. In 2017 alone, these centers collected more than 290 tons of glass.
- » Holds public recycling drop-off events in the fall and spring for items such as electronics, cell phones, and batteries.

Land Use



- » Located a number of facilities, including the Marshal's Office, the Fire Training Center, the Cherokee Area Transportation System (CATS), and the records retention office in renovated buildings that were previously abandoned.
- » Promotes many smart-growth measures through the adopted Bells Ferry Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) plan, such as mixed-use development, bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly designs, mixed-income housing, and diversity of housing types. The Heritage at Towne Lake is a recent development that has resulted from this plan.
- » Identified and implemented policies for revitalization in the Southwest Cherokee Opportunity Zone (SCOZ) and Technology Ridge Opportunity Zone (TROZ). New businesses that redevelop in SCOZ receive an Opportunity Zone tax credit, which grants them \$3,500 per job created. TROZ is a joint effort between the county and the cities of Ball Ground and Canton that has \$83 million in new investments committed, and the potential for 500 new jobs.

Innovation



- » Recycles concrete waste materials from road projects and reuses them for construction and maintenance in projects including sub-grade stabilization and pipe bedding. This saves more than 3,000 tons of material from landfills each year.
- » Transitioned to digital plan submissions in 2012, saving tens of thousands of pages of paper per year, as well as increasing the life of ink cartridges.

For more information on all the certified communities, visit the Green Communities webpage at <http://atlantaregional.org/greencommunities>.