

## *Leading the Way to Sustainability*

In 2009, Cobb County was one of the first communities to be certified “Green” under the Atlanta Regional Commission’s Green Communities Program. The county reaffirmed its commitment to being green in 2013, when it recertified as a Green Community at the Silver level. The following measures have been implemented by Cobb County to reduce its environmental impact and promote sustainability. These measures received points for certification.

### **Green Building**



- » Requires all new county-owned buildings greater than 5,000 square feet to be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified.
- » The Cobb County Superior Courthouse is the county’s first LEED certified building. It was completed in 2011 and achieved Gold certification. The Cobb County Regional Transportation Center was also certified LEED Silver in 2011.

### **Energy Efficiency**



- » Energy Star purchasing policy to purchase energy-efficient equipment and appliances. The policy also incorporates a life cycle cost analysis to support purchases of efficient equipment where first cost alone is not sufficient.
- » Replaced all 543 of its traffic signals, 220 school flashers and many pedestrian signals with LED lamps. The estimated annual savings from these replacements is 3.6 million kWh of energy, 2,800 tons of CO2 emissions and \$271,000 in utility savings.
- » Adopted a lights out/power down policy for all county employees and departments to ensure all building lighting and office equipment are turned off at all times when it is not required for county business or safety reasons. The county has also installed more than 1,000 occupancy sensors throughout many of its buildings to increase the operating efficiency of its lighting.

- » Has made the selection of Cool Roofs a standard for roof replacement and new construction. Public Safety Village has an Energy Star rated cool roof on top of the village's main building. Educational materials are posted in the main building to inform visitors of the building's cool roof and the benefits of cool roofs. Powder Springs Station and the Austell Senior Center also have cool roofs.
- » County policy is to install lighting that will provide the optimum mix of energy efficiency, reliability, and both first cycle and life cycle cost. This has led Cobb County to install LED lighting in a variety of facilities, including the new Superior Court parking deck and parking lot, the Mable House Arts Center and the county computer center.

## Water Efficiency



- » Conducted water audits of all government facilities. Upgrades to low-flow and waterless products were made to 479 toilets, 126 urinals, 133 showerheads and 50 sink aerators, resulting in water savings of almost 30 percent in the county's public buildings and eight percent in the detention center, the largest water account. The county also enters water usage data for its facilities into the EnergyStar Portfolio Manager in order to track water usage over time.
- » Requires all new government buildings to install high-efficiency plumbing fixtures such as WaterSense certified toilets, urinals, and faucets. Installs waterless urinals, where feasible.
- » Northwest Wastewater Treatment Facility provides reuse water to the county's Cobblestone Golf Course for irrigation. The total reuse water sent to the golf course was 71.7 million gallons for FY12, which translates to a monthly average of six million gallons, or a daily average of 199,000 gallons per day. The county also provides effluent reuse to the Acworth Sports Complex. The total reuse water sent to the complex was 3.26 million gallons for FY12.
- » Georgia Department of Community Affairs WaterFirst Community since 2005.
- » Completed its 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.

## Trees & Greenspace



- » The Cobb County Greenprint is the County's innovative greenspace planning tool that uses Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to assist the county with greenspace protection, preservation and connectivity.
- » Adopted landscaping and grounds maintenance standards with organic and drought-tolerant landscape practices for government facilities.

- » Partnered with the Cobb County Master Gardeners to create and offer the Green Meadow's Preserve Community Garden to the public. The garden is located at the county's Green Meadow's Preserve, a park space dedicated to green space and community uses and historic preservation and education in west Cobb. The county also provides discounted water to the Mableton Community Garden.
- » Partnered with the Mableton Improvement Coalition to support a seasonal farmers market. The county provides space and free parking for the market at the historic Mable House property.

## Transportation & Air Quality



- » Commute options program for employees that includes reduced transit pass fees at \$30 per month, active participation in the Georgia Commute Options, active partnership with the Clean Air Campaign and designated carpool spaces at government facilities. The county also offers employees compressed work weeks, telecommuting and flexible work schedule options.
- » Green fleet policy that gives preference to alternative fuel or hybrid vehicles. The county fleet currently has compressed natural gas (CNG), biodiesel and propane fuel vehicles and hybrid vehicles. The county recently purchased three new Ford Fusion electric hybrid vehicles.
- » Adopted an anti-idling policy that prohibits unattended county vehicles, except emergency public safety vehicles, from idling. All drivers of county vehicles must sign this policy.
- » Operates CNG, biodiesel and propane fueling stations for fueling its fleet vehicles, including 15 Cobb Community Transit buses.
- » Adopted a Complete Streets policy that has been integrated with the county's transportation and land use policies. The county has also prepared a Complete Streets Guidebook to not only formally document procedures but to also to identify specific corridors or networks to focus and direct limited resources. The Guidebook has been shared with Community Improvement Districts and cities within Cobb.
- » Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) provide for efficient transportation mobility for Cobb County commuters by managing congestion, reducing delay, improving traffic flow and assisting with incident management. The system includes optimized traffic signal timing, the Georgia Navigator System, closed circuit television cameras, changeable message signs, commuter alerts through Twitter and miles of fiber optic cable. The county estimates travel time savings of approximately eight percent, which equates to annual reductions of approximately 329,000 gallons of fuel and 150 tons of CO and VOC emissions.
- » Developed a Safe Routes to School Program in its Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Plan. Currently, there are eight schools participating in the program.
- » Completed a Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Plan in 2010. The plan addresses bicycling and walking conditions on the county's major roads and strategies for improving access to schools, parks, transit facilities and other community and shopping facilities. There are now more than 30 bicycle and pedestrian trails throughout the county, including the Silver Comet Trail, Noonday Creek Trail, and Kennesaw Mountain to Chattahoochee River Trail.
- » Shared parking is encouraged in the Mableton area. The county anticipates facilitating additional shared parking, joint parking and/or reduce parking requirements throughout the county in the future.

# Recycling & Waste Reduction



- » Adopted a purchasing policy that includes a preference for environmentally friendly products. Purchases a number of sustainable products such as recycled content office supplies, cleaning product stations using refillable containers and certified eco-friendly toilet tissue.
- » Provides comingled recycling in government facilities for traditional items, such as paper, plastic, aluminum, glass, and steel.
- » Provides recycling in government facilities for non-traditional items like electronics, ink and laser toner cartridges, cell phones and rechargeable batteries. More than 51,000 pounds of e-waste was recycled by the county from 2011–2013.
- » Residents can recycle electronics, batteries and cell phones at the Solid Waste Transfer Station and regularly scheduled drop-off events. The total e-waste of all types that was collected through the county's permanent recycling center exceeded 93 tons of materials in 2012, up 20 percent from 2011.

# Land Use



- » West Park Government Center is located on a restored brownfield that was previously an abandoned strip mall shopping center with a dry cleaner. The county purchased the site in 2004 and the renovated facility houses the offices of the County Tax Commissioner, Elections Board and Safe Path Children's Advocacy Center. The county has also located its Powder Springs Station facility on a brownfield, which it remediated and restored.
- » Cobb Community Transit and Cobb Works offices are located on a restored greyfield that was previously used for office space and as a warehouse. Powder Springs Station is a former strip shopping center that now houses the county's Community and Property Management departments along with the Senior Services administration offices and Marietta Senior Services Wellness Center.
- » Established Redevelopment Overlay Districts (ROD) that provide for and incentivize smart growth.
- » Encourages infill and reuse development by offering a five-year temporary reduction in ad valorem taxes to property owners who redevelop underperforming and abandoned properties within identified corridors of older commercial and industrial districts.

# Innovation



- » Cobb County Solid Waste Transfer Station accepts concrete and asphalt demolition debris. Patterson Services, Inc. collects this material and recycles it into a reusable construction aggregate product which is available for purchase by Cobb County and local businesses. From 2010 to 2012, nearly 228,000 tons of asphalt, concrete and gravel were recycled.
- » Cobb County Adopt-a-Mile Program through Keep Cobb Beautiful is an exemplary program that keeps more than 109 miles of roads free from litter.
- » Cobb County Green School Initiative is a cooperative effort between Cobb County Water System, Keep Cobb Beautiful and the Cobb County Parks and Recreation Natural Resources Unit to encourage environmental education in schools. The program has grown from eight schools and 126 teachers in the 2007/2008 school year to 32 schools and 449 teachers in the 2011/2012 school year. The 2011/2012 Green Schools represent more than 3,710 hours of environmental education reaching more than 13,500 students.
- » Cobb County developed the PEACH Roads certification program to help recognize and integrate sustainability principles into transportation projects. The first PEACH Roads project, East Cobb Sidewalks, met the requirements of Certified by providing expanded pedestrian and bicycle access for the area, reusing topsoil onsite, utilizing retaining walls to minimize environmental impact and serving as a valuable link in Cobb County's Trail Masterplan. As of March 2013, Cobb County has ranked 37 projects; designating two Gold, six Silver, and 18 Certified.

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