

Leading the Way to Sustainability

In 2010, the City of Norcross was one of the first communities to be certified under the Atlanta Regional Commission's Green Communities Program. In 2016, the city reaffirmed its commitment to being green by upgrading to Platinum level certification. The following measures have been implemented by the City of Norcross to reduce its environmental impact and promote sustainability. These measures received points for certification.

Green Building

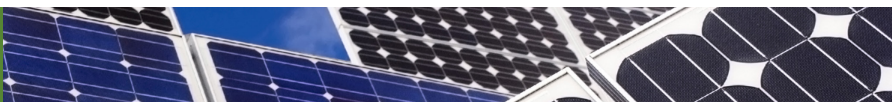
- » Requires all new city-owned buildings greater than 5,000 square feet to be LEED certified.
- » Encourages all new city-owned buildings less than 5,000 square feet to seek LEED for New Construction certification. Where LEED certification is not feasible, buildings will be certified under the Energy Star or Earth Craft Light Commercial program.
- » Requires city building renovations that affect more than 50 percent of occupied space or occupants to achieve LEED for New Construction certification and all other building renovations to achieve LEED for Existing Buildings certification.
- » Encourages residential and commercial buildings to be built green by offering a floor area ratio bonus of 0.25 for projects in the Redevelopment Area Overlay District that achieve LEED silver or higher certification.
- » Offers expedited plan reviews and site inspections for builders of affordable housing developments that seek LEED or EarthCraft certification.

Energy Efficiency

- » Completed energy audits on all city-owned buildings. Programming building thermostats saves \$8,106 in energy costs annually.
- » Adopted an Energy Star purchasing policy to purchase or lease energy-efficient equipment and appliances.
- » Retrofitted all traffic signals with LED signals in conjunction with Gwinnett County. The upgrades use substantially less power and have a longer effective life.

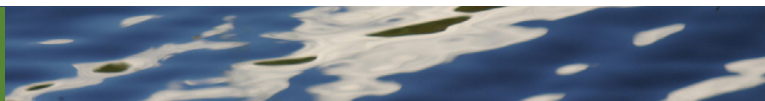
- » Adopted a lights out/power down policy for all city employees and facilities to ensure all non-emergency building lighting and electronic equipment are turned off when not in use and at the end of the work day.
- » Installed Energy Star rated cool roofs on both City Hall and the Public Works building to decrease the urban heat island effect and save on cooling bills.
- » Replaced decorative lighting in the downtown area with LED lights and installed photocells for dusk to dawn operation. The lights on the city Christmas tree were replaced with C9 LED lights. Through these changes, over 57,000 kWh of electricity are saved each year for a cost savings of \$6,400. As part of a pilot project, the city replaced High Intensity Discharge lighting on 11 poles with LED lighting. The city adopted a policy to require the installation of LED fixtures in all security light fixtures when repair is needed. This policy will save 330 kWh per unit annually, as well as \$1,500 per fixture over a ten-year period.
- » Maintains an active inspection program for residential and commercial compliance with the Georgia energy codes.

Green Power



- » Offers expedited plan review and site inspections and reduced permitting fees for solar energy projects.

Water Efficiency



- » Completed energy audits on a majority of the city's buildings and plans to audit the remaining buildings within the next four years.
- » Captures HVAC condensate and rainwater in rain barrels, and uses the water on landscaping at the Norcross Welcome and History Center. A second site at The Rectory of the Norcross Cultural Arts and Community Center collects rain water for use in the adjacent community garden. Workshops for creating and maintaining a rain barrel for home use are offered at both locations.
- » Completed an 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 and inspections for projects that achieve WaterSense certification.

Trees & Greenspace



- » Ensures that all residents are within ½ mile of a publicly accessible park or greenspace.
- » Adopted a no net loss of trees policy for all city-owned property.

- » Adopted the Parks Master Plan in 2011, which includes natural areas, open spaces and greenways and provides for connectivity of greenspaces.
- » Adopted landscaping maintenance specifications for landscape contracts to include integrated pest management, drought-tolerant and native landscape plantings, minimal irrigation with potable water and reduced chemical and fertilizer use.
- » Designated as a Tree City USA Community for the past 12 years. To maintain this designation, the City of Norcross 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 seven parking spaces and provide that no parking space will be more than 40 feet from a canopy tree.
- » Opened the Norcross Community Garden facility at the newly built Discovery Garden Park, giving the community access to raised gardening beds, cooking equipment, a community pavilion and educational programs.
- » Supported the original farmers market for the past seven years by providing the location, utilities, parking, garbage and recycling collection and use of the city's media. Worked with Sustainable Norcross to undertake a survey and feasibility study which led to the creation of the new Norcross Community Market in 2016.

Transportation & Air Quality



- » Offers commute incentives to encourage employees driving alone to consider alternatives. Employees that carpool with at least two passengers can receive \$30 per month and preferred carpool parking.
- » Adopted a green fleet policy to purchase fuel-efficient and lowest emission vehicles with a preference for alternative fuel and/or hybrid fleet vehicles. The city police department has a Smart Car and Nissan Leaf. All police patrol vehicles purchased are V-6, flex-fuel or multi-fuel vehicles which have lower emissions and higher fuel efficiency. A miles-per-gallon tracking system is utilized to monitor the police staff driver performance to ensure efficient driving practices. A number of the city's diesel vehicles are also being retrofitted from diesel to CNG fuel.
- » Adopted an anti-idling policy to prevent city vehicles from idling over thirty seconds when not in traffic.
- » Installed a level II electric vehicle recharging station for the city's fleet vehicles.
- » Adopted a complete streets policy in 2011 to incorporate pedestrian and bike oriented streetscapes throughout the city.
- » Partnered with Gwinnett County to upgrade and incorporate the traffic signals along Buford Highway into a traffic synchronization program managed by the Gwinnett County Traffic Control Center. With the implementation of the Intelligent Transportation System Plan, per corridor annual fuel consumption can be lowered by seven percent, CO by 17 percent and VOCs by 12 percent.
- » Promotes the Safe Routes to School program to the Summerour Middle School. The city has worked with area schools to identify infrastructure projects and has completed a number of these projects to improve the walking and biking environment around the schools.

- » Installed bicycle racks at all existing community facilities, and requires bicycle racks to be installed at all new community facilities.
- » Works with Gwinnett County and other cities in the county to implement the Comprehensive Transportation Plan that includes bicycle and pedestrian policies, specifically in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning section and the Bicycles and Pedestrians section. The city requires bicycle parking at all new developments that require vehicle parking lots.
- » Encourages shared parking in areas with land uses that operate at different times or have variations in peak load requirements.
- » Installed a level II electric vehicle recharging station at City Hall for public use.

Recycling & Waste Reduction



- » Adopted an environmentally preferable purchasing policy to purchase materials, products and services that reduce resource consumption and waste and promote human health and well-being, including products that are recyclable, reusable or contain recycled materials.
- » Provides all employees with desktide bins for recycling paper. Recycling containers are placed throughout city facilities to collect plastic and glass containers, aluminum and steel cans, and cardboard for recycling. The recycling program recycles an estimated 30,591 gallons a year.
- » Collects electronics, ink cartridges, copier toner, batteries and cell phones at city facilities and recycles them through a private vendor.
- » 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 and metal containers, plastic and corrugated cardboard.
- » Provides curbside recycling for commercial properties for paper, glass, metal containers, plastic containers and corrugated cardboard.
- » Hosts drop-off recycling events in the spring and fall for residents to recycle electronics, cell phones and batteries.
- » Offers curbside collection of yard debris that is processed at a local facility into compost, mulch and soil products. These products are then made available to the city for mulching.

Land Use



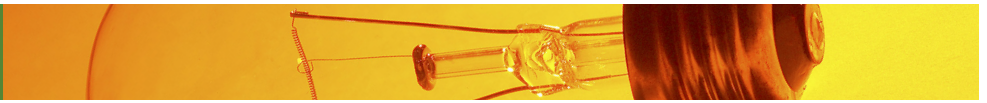
- » Redeveloped Lillian Webb Park, which was previously a historic baseball park in downtown Norcross, into a passive park with fountains, a gazebo and open lawn for concerts and special events. During the redevelopment of this site, a portion of the park was remediated due to contaminated soils that were discovered during the construction of a restroom facility.
- » Purchased and renovated a circa 1930 house that had fallen into disrepair into the Norcross Welcome Center and History Museum. The Cotton Gin Building, which was constructed 145 years ago, was converted from a vacant warehouse into a mixed use facility.
- » Designing and constructing a new parking deck and library on a 1.68 acre infill site at Buford Highway and Britt Street in the heart of the community, rather than constructing the facilities on an undeveloped parcel of land.
- » Promotes smart growth through its Conservation Subdivision Ordinance (CSO) and its Livable Centers Initiative plans. The Adams Vineyard development recently took advantage of the CSO incentives and features 62 homes with 40 percent of its 20 acre parcel protected as greenspace.
- » Incentivizes redevelopment through the Redevelopment Area Overlay District and Opportunity Zone, which encourages the revitalization of underused commercial and residential areas into pedestrian-oriented developments that provide a complementary mix of uses.

Education



- » Educates city employees and elected officials about the city's sustainability efforts at staff meetings, through newsletters, website and e-mail updates.
- » Partners with Sustainable Norcross to maintain a Facebook page to inform residents of the city's sustainability efforts, events, volunteer opportunities and other outreach initiatives. Updates on the city's efforts are posted on displays in the lobby of city hall, signage around the city, the website, social media, through flyers and a monthly newsletter.

Innovation



- » Implemented a paperless policy for all city meetings. Agendas and handouts are no longer provided at city council meetings and work sessions; instead, agendas and handouts are made available in advance on the city website where they can be viewed on council members' tablets and projected on-screen at meetings. In addition, potential vendors are encouraged to respond to RFPs/RFQs electronically.
- » Received a grant from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for special event recycling that included a travel trailer and recycling collection bins. Through volunteer efforts and city council support, recycling is available at all city sponsored special events for beverage containers, plastic bags, cardboard and mixed paper. The success of the special event recycling effort has led to the city's purchase of permanent recycling containers that have been placed throughout downtown Norcross and at parks. These efforts have resulted in an additional 3,375 gallons of waste recycled annually.
- » Reuses materials for artistic purposes through several initiatives. The ReImagine! exhibition combines recycling and environmental awareness through the creative re-use of materials to create innovative, thought-provoking sculptures. Doors of Hope invited artists to create decorative features from used doors from Habitat for Humanity for display during ArtsFest. A kinetic sculpture challenge was issued by the Norcross Public Arts Commission to local art, math and science students in grades 6-12. Requirements included the need for sculptures to have movable parts and an energy source such as solar, wind, human or a combination of sources. Due to school funding restraints, many of the components were recycled or repurposed. Participating classes received awards of money or art supplies.
- » Involved students in the creative reuse of materials. The city's Bicycle Recycle event collected over 60 bicycles and assorted bicycle parts and delivered them to Communicycle in Chamblee. The city then paid for transporting students to Communicycle workshops where they received the newly refurbished bicycles and were mentored by volunteers on bicycle safety and maintenance. In another event, the Mayor's Book Club collected over 40,000 gently used books from the community that would have otherwise been sent to the landfill. The books were made available for students to check out via book mobile and apartment-based mini libraries.

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