

## 7.8 – ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY & PROGRAM

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**Standard:**

The agency shall have an established policy on environmental sustainability that states the agency position on energy and resource conservation. The policy should address sustainable product purchasing; reduction and handling of waste; wise use and protection of land, air, water and wildlife; and sustainable design/construction of buildings and facilities.

**Evidence of Compliance:**

Gwinnett County launched the Gwinnett Environmental Sustainability Program in 2009 to enhance efficiency in the use of valuable resources and reduce the impact of our local government operations on the environment. This environmentally friendly initiative promotes protection and restoration of the community's natural resources through water and energy conservation, and reduction in air pollution and waste.

- [Gwinnett County Environmental Sustainability Program & Procedures](#)
- [Gwinnett Anti-Idling Policy](#)

For more information on Gwinnett County's policies and procedures related to environmental sustainability, visit [SustainableGwinnett.com](http://SustainableGwinnett.com).

## Gwinnett County Environmental Sustainability Program & Procedures

Gwinnett County launched the Gwinnett Environmental Sustainability Program in 2009 to enhance efficiency in the use of valuable resources and reduce the impact of our local government operations on the environment. This environmentally friendly initiative promotes protection and restoration of the community's natural resources through water and energy conservation, and reduction in air pollution and waste.

### **Policies:**

- Community Energy Code Enforcement Policy
- Community Green Building Incentive Policy
- Community Outdoor Lighting Efficiency Policy
- Community Shade Coverage Requirements Policy
- Community Electric Vehicle Policy
- Community Solar Energy Policy

### Community Energy Code Enforcement Policy

The design and construction of buildings in Gwinnett County for the effective use of energy are regulated by the Georgia State Minimum Standard Energy Code.

The International Energy Conservation Code, published by the International Code Council and adopted by the state of Georgia with Georgia Supplements and Amendments, constitutes the official "Georgia State Minimum Standard Energy Code", herein referred to as "the energy code". The energy code contains the mandatory requirements for buildings which establish the basis for this policy.

### **Regulations:**

- Building envelope and insulation requirements.
- Mechanical systems and controls.
- Electrical power and lighting systems.

### Community Green Building Incentive Policy

Gwinnett County's policy for encouraging the construction of sustainable "green" buildings is promoted by the building permit fee reduction incentive as defined in the "Gwinnett County Land Development and Other Services Fee Schedule." The policy establishes a financial incentive to promote the construction of sustainable "green" buildings in Gwinnett County.

Gwinnett Planning and Development offers a "Green Building Credit" for new commercial and residential construction:

- A 5% reduction of the building permit fee shall be applied to new commercial building projects that indicate application and certification compliance with the LEED certification for commercial buildings.
- A 5% reduction of the building permit fee shall be applied to new multifamily residential building projects that indicate application and certification compliance with the EarthCraft Multifamily certification for multifamily residential buildings.
- A 5% reduction of the building permit fee shall be applied to new single family residential building projects that indicate application and certification compliance with the EarthCraft House certification for single family residential buildings.

LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is the most widely used green building rating system in the world. LEED certification is a globally recognized symbol of sustainability achievement. Projects pursuing LEED certification earn points across several categories, including energy use and air quality. Based on the number of points achieved, a project then earns one of four LEED rating levels: Certified, Silver, Gold or Platinum.

The EarthCraft Multifamily program provides certifications for low-rise and mid-rise multifamily projects, including new construction and renovation. Multifamily standards address a wide range of sustainability considerations, including environmental performance, indoor air quality, building durability, comfort and affordability.

The EarthCraft House program certifies homes that are sourced, constructed and designed to reduce environmental impacts. EarthCraft homes also save homeowners a projected 30 percent on their energy bills, relative to comparable buildings that use standard construction methods.

LEED certified buildings include, but are not limited to:

- Gwinnett County Public Library Hamilton Mill Branch
- Centerville Senior Center
- Gwinnett County Medical Examiner's Office

### Community Outdoor Lighting Efficiency Policy

#### **Regulations:**

- Georgia State Minimum Standard Energy Code
- Gwinnett County Unified Development Ordinance

#### **Policy Goals:**

- Lighting power densities for building exteriors
- Allowable illumination levels
- Point by point photometrics
- Direction of light

### Community Shade Coverage Requirements Policy

Gwinnett County administers a Unified Development Ordinance that contains provisions for shade coverage on developed sites. The Ordinance specifies plantings requirements for parking lots, tree density units, tree canopy measurements, buffers, specimen trees, and landscape strips.

- For parking lots, one canopy tree is required for every seven parking spaces.
- For parking lots, all parking spaces must be located within 60 feet of a canopy tree.
- 200 square feet minimum planting area island is required for one canopy tree with an additional 80 square feet required for each additional canopy tree within that island.
- 100 square feet minimum planting area island is required for one small tree with an additional 40 square feet required for each additional small tree within the island.
- For single-family detached residential sites and commercial sites, 16 tree density units per acre are required which amounts to 32 2-inch caliper trees to be planted or 32 3-inch existing trees to be preserved per acre.
- For commercial sites within an Activity Center Corridor Overlay District, 20 tree density units per acre are required with amounts to 40 2-inch caliper trees to be planted or 40 3-inch existing trees to be preserved per acre.

## Community Electric Vehicle Policy

### **Policy goals:**

- To promote and encourage an eco-friendly environment and improve the future use of renewable energy, Gwinnett County shall require commercial and residential developments to provide electrical infrastructure for electrical vehicle charging.

Note: Georgia is ranked fourth in the nation for registered PEV,s per 1,000 people and ranked second in the nation for total electric vehicle sales.

### **Regulations:**

- Require new commercial developments to provide electrical panel space reserved for vehicle charging systems.
- Require new commercial developments and redevelopments that exceed 49 parking spaces to provide one electric vehicle charging equipment station (pedestal) for each 50 parking spaces.
- Require new multifamily residential developments to provide electrical panel space reserved for vehicle charging systems.
- Require new residential units to provide electrical panel space reserved for vehicle charging systems.

## Community Solar Energy Policy

To encourage and recognize increasing levels of on-site renewable energy self-supply to reduce environmental and economic impacts associated with fossil fuel energy use, Gwinnett County encourages the construction of solar panel energy installations by offering permit fee reductions and expedited reviews for solar energy installations on new and existing commercial buildings.

### **Policy:**

- Gwinnett Planning and Development offers a “Green Building Credit” for commercial new building construction or existing building renovation that installs solar panels. The “Green Building Credit” is a 5% reduction of the building permit fee.
- Gwinnett Planning and Development offers an expedited plan review for building projects that include solar panel installations.

## APPENDIX I: ANTI-IDLING POLICY

**I.1. Application of Policy:** The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines to eliminate the unnecessary idling of County vehicles and other rolling stock as part of an ongoing effort to reduce fuel consumption. This policy statement is applicable to all County employees who have been assigned or operate a County owned vehicle or other rolling stock powered by gasoline and, in limited instances, by diesel. The intent of this policy is to help protect the long-term health and wellness and environmental sustainability of the community and to manage the cost of fuel expenditures.

**I.2. Why Idling is a Problem:** An idling vehicle gets 0 miles per gallon. Vehicles with larger engines typically waste more gas at idle than do cars with smaller engines. Idling vehicles produces unnecessary pollution that contributes to climate change, smog and health problems, causes premature engine wear and wastes fuel which increases costs to out taxpayers. It is every County employee's responsibility to minimize fleet operating costs while reducing harmful effects to the environment.

### **I.3. Appropriate Use of County Vehicles and Rolling Stock:**

**I.3.1.** County fleet vehicles will not be parked with the engine operating for more than two minutes unless it is essential for performance of work.

**I.3.2.** Initial "warm up" idling should be minimized. Start driving after no more than 30seconds of idling, assuming your vehicle's windows are clear.

**I.3.3.** If you are going to be stopped for more than 30 seconds, except as required while operating the vehicle in routine traffic, turn off your engine. As mentioned previously, idling a vehicle longer than 10 seconds uses more fuel that it would take to restart the vehicle.

**I.3.4.** Vehicles with diesel engines should not be shut down unless the vehicle is going to idle for more than 20 minutes because stopping and starting a diesel engine numerous times, such as might be required when repairing potholes or picking up garbage/recycling containers, is hard on the engine.

**I.4. Exceptions to the Policy:** Due to the diverse nature of the County's vehicle fleet, there may need to be exceptions to this Anti-Idling Policy. Subsequently, the provisions of this policy do not apply to:

**I.4.1.** Emergency vehicles, such as fire trucks, while engaged in operational activities;

**I.4.2.** Vehicles that are required to idle in order to power ancillary equipment mounted on the vehicle without risking damage to the battery, i.e.; warning devices, sampler hoists, lift gates, hydraulic equipment or lights;

**I.4.3.** Public safety vehicles performing emergency operations, but only when the vehicle must be operating for the warning devices or emergency systems to function;

**I.4.4.** Vehicles equipped with temperature sensitive equipment;

**I.4.5.** A public safety vehicle, particularly when transporting patients, prisoners, victims, or witnesses, or when performing traffic control;

**I.4.6.** The primary propulsion engine of a motor vehicle providing a power source necessary for mechanical operation, not including propulsion, and/or passenger compartment heating, or air conditioning;

**I.4.7.** A motor vehicle forced to remain motionless because of traffic conditions over which the operator has no control;

**I.4.8.** The primary engine of a motor vehicle being operated for maintenance or diagnostic problem;

**I.4.9.** The primary engine of a motor vehicle being operated solely to defrost a windshield.

**I have read the Gwinnett County Fleet Management Anti-Idling Policy and agree to its terms as a condition of my use of the County vehicle or other similar equipment:**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Printed name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Department:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Attachment A**

**I.5 Idling Myths**

**I.5.1.** “The engine should be warmed before driving.” FALSE – Idling is not an effective way to warm up your vehicle. Once a vehicle is running, the best way to warm it up is to drive it. 30 seconds of warming up your vehicle, even in cold weather, is enough. Today’s vehicles are designed to be driven almost immediately.

**I.5.2.** “Idling is necessary on cold winter days to ensure that all of the vehicle’s components are warm.” FALSE – Many components of the vehicle (including the wheel bearings, tires and suspension system) will warm up only when the vehicle is moving. Only about 30 seconds of idling is needed to get the oil circulating through the engine.

**I.5.3.** “Idling is really only a problem in the winter.” FALSE – Idling is a problem year-round. A recent study revealed that, on any given day in August, Canadians idle their vehicles for a combined total of 46 million minutes per day – equivalent to one vehicle idling for 89 years. The problem is worse in the winter, but there’s never a good time to waste fuel and generate greenhouse gas emissions by idling your vehicle.

**I.5.4.** “Idling is good for your engine.” FALSE – Excessive idling can damage your engine components, including cylinders, spark plugs and the exhaust system.

**I.5.5.** “Shutting off and restarting your vehicle is hard on the engine and uses more gas.” FALSE – Frequent restarting has little impact on engine components. More than 10seconds of idling uses more fuel than restarting the engine.

**I.6. Idling Realities:** NOT IDLING will let us breathe more easily; help us spare our climate and air; reduce engine wear and tear; and save Gwinnett money.