

Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission**Wednesday, December 20, 2023 – 4:30pm**

Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center

75 Langley Drive, Lawrenceville, GA 30046

Conference Room C (Second Floor)

Present: Robert Blatecky, Daniel Hilton, Krupesh Patel, Dr. Marshall Shepherd, Dr. Candace Timpfe

1. Call to Order
Robert Blatecky, Chairperson, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone at 4:30pm.
2. Approval of Agenda
{Action: Approved: Shepherd; Second: Patel; Vote: 5-0; Blatecky-Yes; Hilton-Yes; Patel-Yes; Shepherd-Yes; Timpfe-Yes}
3. Approval of Minutes
The October 18, 2023, meeting minutes were approved.
{Action: Approved: Timpfe; Second: Hilton; Vote: 5-0; Blatecky-Yes; Hilton-Yes; Patel-Yes; Shepherd-Yes; Timpfe-Yes}
4. Vote to Finalize and Submit GCSC Annual Report for 2023
{Action: Approved: Shepherd; Second: Patel; Vote: 5-0; Blatecky-Yes; Hilton-Yes; Patel-Yes; Shepherd-Yes; Timpfe-Yes}
5. Review of Open Meetings Requirements
Theresa Cox, Deputy County Attorney, Gwinnett County Law, presented an overview of the standards for open meetings, open records, and ethics for the GCSC. Ms. Cox mentioned topics including the obligations of the GCSC, conflicts of interest, and the code of ethics.
6. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Discussion at County Properties
Peter Westlake, Senior Consultant, ecoPreserve, presented on the electric vehicle industry and discussed the company's findings and recommendations on EV installation. EcoPreserve offers professional consulting services to advance sustainability and resiliency objectives through global expertise, strategic planning, and local implementation.
7. Public Comments
Jay Bassett spoke on the upcoming climate pollution reduction grant that is managed by the Atlanta Regional Commission. Dr. Scott Presson congratulates the commission

and county for their efforts on sustainability and is looking forward to increased sustainability in 2024.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:44pm.

{Action: Approved: Hilton; Second: Timpte; Vote: 5-0; Blatecky-Yes; Hilton-Yes; Patel-Yes; Shepherd-Yes; Timpte-Yes}



SUSTAINABLE
Gwinnett

Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission
Annual Report: 2023

Second Edition | October 2023

Acknowledgements

Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners

Nicole Love Hendrickson, Chairwoman

Kirkland Dion Carden, District 1

Ben Ku, District 2

Jasper Watkins III, District 3

Matthew Holtkamp, District 4

Gwinnett County Government Environmental Sustainability Team

The Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission appreciates the staff members leading and supporting Gwinnett County Government's internal Environmental Sustainability Team and its technical sub-groups, including, but not limited to:

- **Green Building, Energy Efficiency, and Green Power**
David Mogge, Deputy Director, Department of Support Services
- **Sustainable Sites, Trees & Greenspace, and Land Use**
Marcus Canada, Division Director, Department of Planning & Development
Sarah Barlow, Deputy Division Director, Department of Community Services
- **Water Efficiency and Conservation**
John Butler, Outreach Manager, Department of Water Resources
- **Education and Outreach**
Jeanie Donaldson, Division Director, Communications Department
- **Environmentally Friendly Purchasing**
Kaley Ivins, Purchasing Manager, Department of Financial Services
- **Transportation & Air Quality**
Tom Sever, Assistant Director, Department of Transportation
Ron Adderley, Acting Director, Department of Support Services
- **Recycling & Waste Reduction**
Christopher Fetterman, Section Manager, Department of Support Services
- **Other Key Support Staff**
Carol Speight, Program Analyst, Department of Support Services
Kishan Patel, Program Analyst, Department of Support Services

Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission Appointees



Dr. Candace Timpte
Chairwoman's
Appointee
Through May 2025



Daniel Hilton
District 1
Through May 2024



Krupesh Patel
District 2
Through May 2025



**Dr. Marshall
Shepherd**
District 3
Through May 2024



Robert Blatecky
District 4
Chair
Through May 2025

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Executive Summary

With 437 square miles and approximately one million residents, Gwinnett County has both the opportunity and the responsibility to be an environmental sustainability leader in the South. Sustainability – a key quality of life and social justice issue – is more crucial than ever for better serving our growing and diverse population.

Gwinnett County has begun its journey to leadership, achieving a prestigious designation as one of the Atlanta Regional Commission’s Platinum Green Communities, but many key sustainability measures remain unmet. Residents and stakeholders expect the County to do more to truly achieve the Gwinnett Standard on environmental stewardship.

The Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission was formed in 2021 as a new citizen board focused on helping the County advance in this space. Going forward, our focus is to complete our legacy goals while expanding our outreach through and collaboration with Gwinnett County’s schools, larger employers, and influencers.

For the coming year, our highest priority requests of the Board of Commissioners are to:

1. Budget two or more staff positions in 2024 to support the incoming Sustainability Officer.
2. Budget approximately \$50,000 for a survey of Gwinnett’s business community related to sustainability.
3. Set a plan for County facilities and vehicles to run on 100 percent clean energy by 2035.



2023-24 Sustainability Commission

Recommendations: Recap

For the coming year, our highest priority requests of the Board of Commissioners are to:

- Budget two or more staff positions in 2024 to support the incoming Sustainability Officer
- Budget approximately \$50,000 for a survey of Gwinnett’s business community related to sustainability.
- Set a plan for County facilities and vehicles to run on 100 percent clean energy by 2035.

Lead the Region

- Set a baseline, then meet or exceed program goals for our County facilities to achieve 100 percent clean energy use by 2035 while encouraging other major entities in Gwinnett County to do the same.
- Collaborate with the county’s power utilities on setting rate plans to define and end “Energy Burden” for county LMI households spending an average of more than 10% of their income per month on natural gas and electricity.

(The following topics are sorted by number of comments received in the 2022 public survey)

Recycling & Waste Reduction

- Create and fund programs to promote Gwinnett’s Tap Water for the purpose of reducing non-recycled single use bottles by 1,000,000+ units per year.

Overdevelopment & Loss of Trees and Greenspace

- Work with Gwinnett Planning and Development, Gwinnett Parks and Recreation, developers, and Gwinnett County Tree Advisory Committee to update commercial land development regulations for increasing the number of lost Gwinnett County trees replaced to 1:1.

Green Transportation

- Set five to 10-year funding and electric vehicle adoption goals for County fleet vehicles
- Ramp up code ratios for more electric vehicle chargers across private lots as well as Ride Gwinnett, Planning and Development, Community Services/Parks, and Support Services Departments.

Public Outreach

- Recognizing their importance to Gwinnett County’s future, budget \$50,000 or more for a professional survey of Gwinnett County’s businesses for the purpose of educating and collaborating on the economic/environmental benefits of bundling energy efficiency best practices with photovoltaic solar and electric vehicle and battery storage adoption

About the Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission

Creation

The Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners approved a resolution creating the Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission on April 20, 2021.

Purposes

The purposes of the Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission include:

- Reviewing and considering the environmental sustainability needs of Gwinnett County now and in the future based upon existing and projected growth patterns.
- Reviewing and assessing environmental sustainability options for Gwinnett County, including those suggested by members of the community.
- Reviewing and assessing the feasibility of differing environmental sustainability options in Gwinnett County.
- Reviewing and assessing options for reducing Gwinnett County's environmental impact through its buildings, fleets, and practices.
- Providing public education and outreach on sustainability issues and encourage the community to reduce its environmental impact.

Objectives

The objectives set for the Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission include:

- Upon request, reviewing and providing comments on any sustainability plans in which the County is currently engaged, or in which the County plans to engage.
- Upon request, assessing current and planned infrastructure and programs regarding their level of environmental and economic sustainability, while considering the current and future needs of Gwinnett County's residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Upon request, assessing and providing recommendations for public outreach and education on sustainability issues.
- Preparing at least one annual written report, including recommendations, concerning the County's existing sustainability practices and programs with the goal of maintaining the Gwinnett Standard of being an environmental leader of local governments in Georgia.

Year in Review (2022 – 2023)

Activities

Whereas the 2021 to 2022 first year consisted primarily of information gathering, Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission activities in the 2022 to 2023 second year evolved. Key activities within the most recent year include:

- Continuing to develop recommendations from the inaugural public survey on environmental sustainability
- Successfully recommending the establishment of a County Sustainability Officer position (August 2022)
- Providing feedback and revisions on Gwinnett County's first Sustainability Strategic Plan (October 2022)
- Presenting Year 1 Activities before the Board of Commissioners (November 2022)
- Presentation by ecoPreserve Consulting on county's EV infrastructure (January 2023)
- Presentation by Rowen Development (February 2023)
- Contributing strategic input on position description for the County Sustainability Officer, presentations by Gwinnett Clean and Beautiful on Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, and Gwinnett Transportation on Ride Gwinnett and Transit Development Plan (March 2023)
- Presentation on countywide Solarize Gwinnett program launched by Solar CrowdSource (May 2023)
- Presentation on County's Glass Recycling Program and its Recycling, Waste Reduction, and Diversion Grant, including three locations and 10 proposed locations at County parks in 2023 to 2024. Continuing to engage waste vendors for curbside glass pickup options. (June 2023)
- Presentation on County's Affordable Housing Program goals and grants for onsite solar, energy efficiency, etc. (August 2023)
- Establishing Citizen Advisory Committees on a variety of sustainability topics based upon feedback from the March 2022 Public Survey. Some of these committees are already standing and will be focused on outreach/engagement regarding renewable energy/electric vehicle transportation/low-income energy burden funding, tree canopy, and bike-walking trails.

The establishment of advisory committees was guided by information collected in the 2022 public survey. Four topics emerged for consideration by the County:

1. **Expanding recycling access and outreach.**
The need to improve recycling education, restore convenient (ideally curbside) access to glass recycling, and expand access to hard-to-recycle and hazardous material recycling were topics mentioned the most frequently – at least 300 times.
2. **Curtailing overdevelopment and the loss of trees and greenspace.**
Anger at perceived overdevelopment and loss of trees and greenspace was expressed more than 200 times. The public is concerned about deforestation, habitat loss, and degradation of Gwinnett's scenic beauty as a result of extensive new construction and wants to see better utilization of existing infrastructure.

3. **Increasing green transportation options to reduce traffic and emissions.**

Receiving more than 160 mentions, more sustainable ways of getting around the county are highly desirable. Stakeholders want less congestion, more effective public transportation, and better electric vehicle, bike, and pedestrian infrastructure.

4. **Enhancing public outreach on sustainability.**

Many ideas and comments (approximately 150) referred to a need for greater community engagement on sustainability issues – from enhancing education on pro-environmental behavior to making information more transparent and accessible to increasing enforcement penalties for problematic behavior such as littering, dumping, or unlawful outdoor burning. Stakeholders would like to see the County engaging Gwinnett’s cities and business community on sustainability.

Board Member Updates

In May 2023, inaugural Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission Chairwoman Laura Hernandez announced that she would not seek reappointment due to new career responsibilities. At the May 2023 meeting, Robert Blatecky (District 4) was elected to Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission chairman. In August, Dr. Candace Timpte, was appointed to replace Ms. Hernandez.

Gwinnett County Inaugural Sustainability OfficerThe Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission’s primary recommendation in 2022, which was formally submitted to the Board of Commissioners and County Administrator’s Office on August 18, 2022, was to create a new Director of Environmental Sustainability position in the County Administrator’s Office to lead Gwinnett County’s progress on important sustainability matters going forward. The Chairwoman included this recommendation in her budget proposal, and the Board of Commissioners approved the new budget on January 3, 2023.

The Sustainability Officer, to be afforded adequate financial resources in 2024, is expected to need a staff of two or more – with responsibility for managing, facilitating, and advising on the planning, implementation, monitoring, and improvement of County policies and programs pertaining to sustainability. Importantly, a leader in this role networks with staff (especially the internal Sustainability Employee Teams) on ideas and resources across departments and throughout the community, as well as responds with agility to emerging opportunities, such as those in the Inflation Reduction Act funds, to achieve equitable outcomes supported by a long-term sustainability plan. At the time of this writing (November 2023), the County was still reviewing applicants for the position.

Atlanta Regional Commission Certification

Points-based certification in the Atlanta Regional Commission’s voluntary Green Communities program is a quick determinant of local governments’ progress on sustainability, as well as remaining areas of opportunity to advance sustainability. By submitting documentation of its policies and progress in up to 77 actionable measures across the ARC-defined categories of Green Building, Energy Efficiency, Green Power, Water Efficiency, Trees & Greenspace, Transportation & Air Quality, Recycling & Waste Reduction, Land Use, and Education, a local government receives a score and a level of Green Communities certification.

The ARC was the first entity in the U.S. to promote sustainability through green certification, and Gwinnett County was the first county in the region to achieve the highest (Platinum) certification level in the Green Communities program. Today in metro Atlanta, [17 local governments](#) – 11 cities and six counties – are currently certified under the Green Communities program:

Platinum	Gold	Silver	Bronze
330-495 points	280-329 points	230-279 points	175-229 points
Gwinnett County Cobb County City of Norcross City of Decatur City of Roswell City of Woodstock	City of Alpharetta City of Chamblee City of Dunwoody City of Sandy Springs	Douglas County City of Douglasville City of Milton	City of Peachtree Corners DeKalb County Fulton County Cherokee County

In early 2023, the ARC recertified Gwinnett County at the Platinum level including all previous measures awarded (330 points) and six new measures (for an additional 35 points), applying for a total of 365 out of 495 possible points. **Notable remaining opportunities (and updates) include:**

Water Use Reduction & Efficiency

Measure 26: *(In process. Should be implemented by January 1, 2024)* Adopt local amendments to the Georgia State Minimum Standard Plumbing Code that requires ultra-high efficiency standards for residential bathroom plumbing fixtures. (5 points)

Trees & Greenspace

Measure 27: Meet at least one of the following benchmarks for greenspace: (1) have 20 acres per 1,000 residents, (2) have at least 8 percent of total land protected for greenspace, or (3) all residents live within ½ mile walking distance to a park. (10 points)

Measure 28: Adopt a government no net loss of trees policy for government property. (10 points)

Measure 32: Become a Tree City USA (requires Tree Board or dept to develop a comprehensive tree management program, tree care ordinance, a community forestry program with an annual budget of at least \$2 per capita, Arbor Day observance and proclamation). (5 points)

Transportation & Air Quality

Measure 39: *(Requires financial commitment from HR)* Adopt a Commute Option program for employees that supports alternatives to driving alone or driving at the peak. (10 points)

Measure 43: *(County is partnering with the Atlanta Transit Authority on a zero emission fleet study for Ride Gwinnett)* Produce and/or purchase alternative fuel(s) for government fleet vehicles. (5 points)

Measure 47: *(Would require funding)* Require end-of-trip bicycle facilities at all community facilities. (5 points)

Measure 49: *(Both Measure 49 and 50 will be helped by present DOT infrastructure plans)* Become a Bicycle Friendly Community at the Bronze level or higher. (5 points)

Measure 50: Become a Walk Friendly Community at the Bronze level or higher. (5 points)



Recycling & Waste Reduction

Measure 53: Implement environmentally preferable purchasing program. (10 points)

Education

Measure 72: Establish a historical baseline of energy (electricity and natural gas) and water usage in government buildings and put an ongoing tracking and reporting system into place to monitor and decrease usage long-term. (Remaining 5 points out of 10)

Measure 74: Develop, adopt, and implement a sustainability plan. (*in process*) (10 points)

Measure 76: Develop and implement an outreach program to engage the business community around the benefits of adopting a sustainability ethic and collaborate on sustainability issues. (5 points)

See our 2022 report for other point opportunities



2023-24 Focus and Recommendations

The Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission remains excited to advance economic as well as environmental opportunities as we transition into our third year of activity. **For this coming year, our highest priority requests of the Board of Commissioners are to:**

1. **Budget two or more staff positions in 2024 to support the incoming Sustainability Officer.**
2. **Budget \$50,000+ for a County Business Community Survey on sustainability plans.**
3. **Set a goal for County facilities and vehicles to run on 100% clean energy by 2035.**

Nearly as important, we've integrated and updated recommendations from the 2022 GCSC Annual Report into this 2023 Annual Report. Our complete list of **new** and legacy recommendations follows:

Lead the Region

- **New recommendations include:**
 - Budget two or more staff positions to create a department in 2024 supporting the new Sustainability Officer.
 - Collaborate with the county's power utilities on setting rate plans to define and end "Energy Burden" for county LMI households spending an average of more than 10% of their income per month on natural gas and electricity.
 - Work to determine baselines for present fossil fuel and power use in County vehicles and buildings, then meet or exceed programs goals set by other Georgia counties to achieve 100% clean energy use by 2035, while encouraging other major entities in Gwinnett County to do the same.
 - Engage more with other local, regional, and national Boards and Commissions that have sustainability-related issues, challenges, and solutions.
 - Complete and publish the Gwinnett County Sustainability Plan.
 - Forge partnership with the new County Sustainability Officer and continue to optimize working relationship with the internal County Sustainability Teams. The Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission continues its focus on understanding the appropriate County mechanisms and entry points for engagement on the array of sustainability related activities.
 - Receive more opportunities to respond to internal GC department requests related to 1) assessing current and planned infrastructure and programs regarding their level of environmental sustainability and 2) assessing and providing recommendations for public outreach and education on sustainability issues.
 - Solidify Citizen Advisory Committees: Each Advisory Committee will be chaired by a Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission member and ideally managed by a Sustainability Team County employee. Each committee will be comprised of volunteer stakeholders who live or work in Gwinnett County. Advisory Committees will only research topics and provide recommendations to the Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission serving as opportunities for further community engagement with County sustainability activities.

Recycling & Waste Reduction

- **New recommendations include:**
 - Set goal of reducing non-recycled single use bottles by 1,000,000+ units per year.
 - Branding/promoting Gwinnett's award-winning water in reusable containers, at retail, to help reduce amount of discarded single use containers.
 - Engage Gwinnett County's primary waste management vendors to set baselines and offer the County fees and incentives for additional reduce/reuse/recycle options.
 - Budget a cost/revenue feasibility study for a 5 to 15 cent Gwinnett County container deposit program.
 - Invest in improving recycling education.

Overdevelopment & Loss of Trees and Greenspace

- **New recommendations include working with Department of Planning and Development, developers, residents, and Gwinnett County Tree Board to:**
 - Improve land development regulations and incentives to reduce impervious parking spaces,
 - Increase tree and solar shade requirements,
 - Improve the tree preservation and replacement regulations, *and*
 - Set a three- to five-year ramp-up UDO plan for increasing the number of Gwinnett County trees replaced to 1:1.

Green Transportation & Onsite Power Generation

- **New recommendations include support for the growth of onsite PV Solar and EV Chargers:**
 - Set five- to 10-year transition scheduling goals with Gwinnett County Transportation, Facilities, Fleet, Parks and Recreation, and Grants
 - Revise code to add 220v outlet in new home garages
 - Revise code to require conduit for L2 EVSEs run to 50% of new parking spaces
 - Like Fulton County, have a Gwinnett County requirement for 25% power from PV and 25% EVs by 2030.
 - Encourage power companies to correct higher than average cost and lead-time for permitting, interconnection, and PTO of onsite PV, ES, and EVSE.
 - Where supported by cradle to grave net cost savings, create incentives and schedule for a Countywide transition from internal combustion engine fleet vehicles and landscape maintenance equipment to appropriate quieter and lower emission electric alternatives.
- **Assess County carbon emissions using the new Drawdown Georgia Greenhouse Gas Emissions Tracker and align with Drawdown Georgia solutions strategies.**
- **Work with Gwinnett Parks and Recreation on prioritizing the expansion of connected bike- and pedestrian-friendly corridors.**

Public Outreach

- **New recommendations: Recognizing their importance to Gwinnett County's future, budget at least \$50,000 for professional development and management of a Gwinnett County business-focused sustainability survey targeting our County's largest employers, utilities, nonprofits, and LMI developers for the purpose of:**
 - benchmarking CO₂,
 - understanding and collaborating on advancing best Sustainability practices, and
 - promoting the economic and environmental benefits of bundling energy efficiency + solar + battery storage + EVs.
- **Add a Gwinnett County Public Schools student seat to the Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission.**



Appendix

Recommendations from 2022 still under consideration

- **Recommendation: Invest in improving recycling education.**

Contamination, the presence of non-recyclable material, remains rampant in Gwinnett’s curbside recycling stream and threatens the long-term affordability and viability of our County’s residential recycling system. A historical lack of a meaningful and well-funded recycling education program* has directly contributed to resident confusion and high contamination in Gwinnett’s recycling stream, resulting in rising program costs and a recycling rate of 14% – a dismal figure well below the national average (32%). Gwinnett County needs to allocate more dedicated funding for education to prompt residents to participate in recycling, encourage them to upgrade their recycling bins to free carts to capture more material, and provide regular reminders about which materials do – and do not – belong in curbside recycling. In addition, the County should communicate transparently about the issue of recycling contamination with residents, inviting them to the table to be part of the solution instead of part of the problem.
- **Recommendation: Establish staffed recycling drop-off centers.**

In a county of more than 400 square miles, we currently have one recycling drop-off center that is open to the public, the Snellville Recycling Center, which is generously run by the city. This leaves far too many recyclable materials at risk of entering local landfills, including all metal, paper, plastic, and cardboard from multifamily complexes, the vast majority of which do not offer recycling. Staffed drop-off facilities, emulating the layout of the Snellville Recycling Center and the model of the Centers for Hard to Recycle Materials, or a CHaRM, in [Atlanta](#) and [Athens](#), could help meet resident demand for convenient, year-round access to recycling options for household items, hard-to-recycle materials, and household hazardous waste. They would also mitigate the need for responsible residents to drive 60 to 80 miles round trip to a CHaRM or wait for one of the County’s biannual household hazardous waste events.
- **Recommendation: Restore convenient access to glass recycling.**

Many survey respondents specifically expressed a desire for the return of curbside glass recycling. If curbside glass recycling is not feasible, the public should receive open communication and regular education about why it isn’t, and glass recycling drop-offs should continue to be added to provide ultra-convenient access to this amenity in all regions of the County. This could easily be combined with an initiative to introduce comprehensive staffed recycling drop-off centers.
- **Recommendation: Take action to reduce single-use plastic.**

In a move that would signal Gwinnett’s progressive commitment to sustainability and help tackle a significant concern in our community – [litter](#) – the County can and should take action to tackle single-use plastic, a local and global waste crisis. Bans or fees on the most harmful or single-use plastic items, such as plastic bags, can significantly discourage their use and recover funds for community cleanup. Neighboring communities [Fulton County](#) and the [city of Atlanta](#) have established an admirable precedent for government leadership, ending the sale and use of plastic bags, straws, and Styrofoam in government buildings.

Overdevelopment & Loss of Trees and Greenspace

- **Recommendation: Evaluate and pursue relevant opportunities to mitigate tree and habitat loss as a result of overdevelopment.**

In addition to being a top citizen concern, Trees & Greenspace as a category is tied for having the most ARC measures that remain unmet by Gwinnett County. The County should prioritize the preservation of trees and greenspace in its sustainability plan. It should also make a concerted effort to study the feasibility of implementing ARC measures related to Trees & Greenspace, including Measure 27: “Meet at least one of the following benchmarks for greenspace: (1) have 20 acres per 1,000 residents, (2) have at least 8 percent of total land protected for greenspace, or (3) all residents live within ½ mile walking distance to a park.”

Green Transportation

- **Recommendation: Assess County carbon emissions using the new Drawdown Georgia Greenhouse Gas Emissions Tracker and align with Drawdown Georgia solutions strategies.**
The new [Drawdown Georgia Greenhouse Gas Emissions Tracker](#) should be leveraged to better assess and understand the County’s greenhouse gas emissions related to transportation and other activities. The GCSC also recommends aligning County sustainability strategies, as applicable, with Drawdown Georgia’s list of 20 high-impact, cost-competitive, and market-ready climate solutions that have been identified to dramatically reduce our state’s greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Recommendation: Prioritize the development of bike- and pedestrian-friendly corridors and increase access to electric vehicle charging infrastructure.**
To reduce traffic congestion and carbon emissions in Gwinnett County, and to improve wellness and quality of life, the Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission sees high value in prioritizing the addition of more bike- and pedestrian-friendly corridors connecting residences with desirable destinations, including workplaces, schools, grocery stores, libraries, and places of worship. With electric vehicles set to bring transformative change to the automotive industry and our community, anticipating future changes by expanding electric vehicle charging infrastructure would also be advisable.

Public Outreach

- **Recommendation: Launch a business-focused sustainability survey.**
The initial survey was targeted primarily at people who live, work, or go to school in Gwinnett County. With a business or industry perspective, sustainability takes on different narratives and goals. The Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission proposes a phase 2 survey aimed at the business community.
- **Recommendation: Add a Gwinnett County Public Schools student seat to the Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission.**
To promote broad and diverse public engagement and help garner fresh ideas, the Gwinnett County Sustainability Commission recommends establishing a sixth seat on its Commission which would be allocated to a high school student from Gwinnett County Public Schools.



Gwinnett

Open Meetings, Open Records, & Ethics Presentation

Law Department

Sustainability Commission Purposes

- Review, consider and assess the environmental sustainability needs of Gwinnett now and in the future based upon existing and projected growth patterns.
 - Options for environmental sustainability suggested by members of the community
 - Options for reducing environmental impact through County buildings, fleets, and practices
 - Feasibility of differing environmental sustainability options
- Provide public education and outreach on sustainability issues.
- Encourage the community to reduce its environmental impact.

Sustainability Commission Objectives

- Review and provide comments on any sustainability plans in which the County is currently engaged, or in which the County plans to engage, as requested.
- Assess current and planned infrastructure and programs:
 - With regard to their level of environmental sustainability
 - While considering the current and future needs of Gwinnett County's residents, businesses, and visitors
 - And considering factors such as current and projected population of Gwinnett County and financial feasibility.
- Review and consider multiple sustainability options and review the feasibility of each.
- Assess and provide recommendations for public outreach and education on sustainability issues, as requested.
- Prepare at least one annual written report:
 - Recommendations, with the goal of maintaining the Gwinnett Standard of being an environmental leader of local governments in Georgia.
 - Information that presents the scope of the Commission's environmental sustainability work and the basis for its recommendations, such as infrastructure needs, feasibility of proposed approaches, quality of life, and potential economic benefits and impacts.



Open Meetings Act



Gwinnett

Meeting Defined

Any gathering of:

- A quorum of the members of the governing body of an agency
- A quorum of any committee of the members of the governing body of an agency
- A quorum of any committee created by the governing body

at which official business, policy, or public matter of the agency is formulated, presented, discussed, or voted upon.

Gatherings *not* considered a Meeting

- Inspection of public facilities or property
- Attendance at state-wide, multijurisdictional, or regional meetings
- Meetings with officials of the legislative or executive branch
- Traveling to a meeting
- Social, ceremonial, civic, or religious events

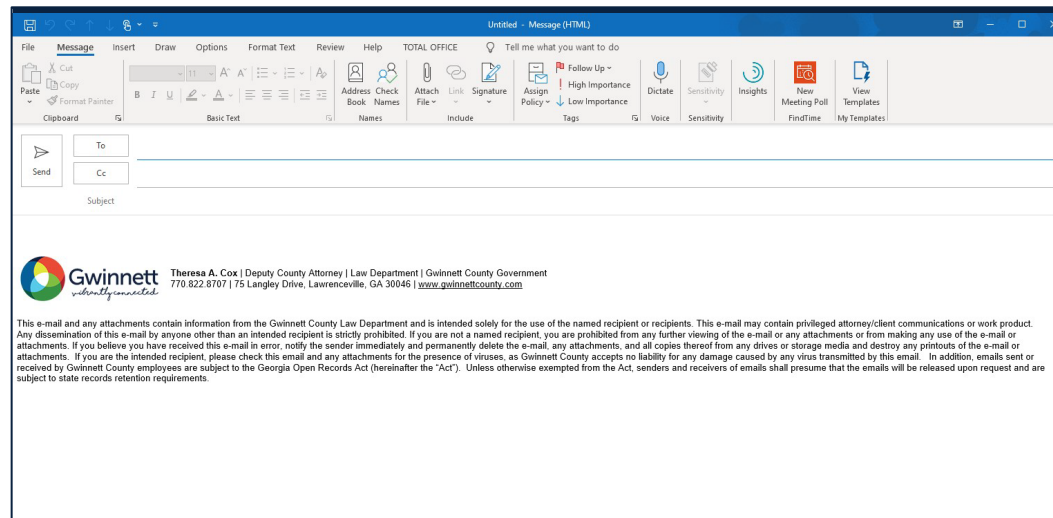


Obligations

- All meetings shall be open to the public
- All votes at any meeting shall be taken in public after due notice of the meeting and compliance with the posting and agenda requirements
 - Prescribe and make available the time, date, and place of regular meetings
 - Post Notice of the meeting at least 1 week in advance
 - Post Agenda within the two-week period immediately prior to the meeting

Emails

- Emails generally do not constitute an open meeting, but **should not** be used to circumvent the Open Meetings Act
- This exemption does not apply to other forms of electronic communication/media





Gwinnett

Open Records Act

Basic Obligation

O.C.G.A. § 50-18-71(a):

All public records shall be open for public inspection and copying unless:

(1) there is a court order prohibiting disclosure; or

(2) there is a specific law exempting the record from disclosure



What are Public Records?

- Any record created or received during your service on the Commission.
- All documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, computer based or generated information, data, data fields, or similar material. O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70(b)(2)
- Location of the record is irrelevant – includes records located on county phones, blackberries, home computers, tablets, personal phones, other personal electronic devices, etc.



Records Retention

- All records created or received in the performance of duty and paid for by public funds are deemed to be public property and shall constitute a record of public acts O.C.G.A. § 50-18-102(a)
- The Georgia Records Act imposes a duty to retain public records for certain time periods set forth in schedules. Retention schedules, once approved, shall be authoritative, directive, and shall have the force and effect of law
- Gwinnett County follows the state local government retention schedules



Emails

- Subject to both the Georgia Open Records Act and the Georgia Records Act
- Retention of emails is based upon the content of the email

Use an archiving system.

Be cautious as to how email is used to conduct Board or Authority business.



Gwinnett

Ethics





Legal Authority

- State Law
 - O.C.G.A. § 45-10-1 (Code of Ethics for Government Service)
- Gwinnett County Code of Ethics



Why Ethics Training?

To be able to:

- Pro-actively identify potential ethical issues;
- Know when to obtain legal guidance; and
- Address conflicts of interest and ethical issues in a manner that is transparent, and which inspires public confidence and trust in the integrity of its leaders.



What is an “Interest”?

- A direct or indirect benefit to an official or employee as a result of a contract or transaction made with the County.
- A County employee or official will be deemed to have an interest in the affairs of:
 - His/her immediate family (the spouse of an official or employee, their parents, children, brothers and sisters related by blood, marriage or adoption); or
 - Any person or business with whom the employee has a contractual relationship; or
 - Any business entity in which the employee is an officer, director, or member who has a financial interest in the business; or
 - A business in which the employee owns more than 5 percent of the total stock or total legal and beneficial ownership.

Conflict of Interest

- A **conflict of interest** exists when an official, employee, or immediate family member has an interest in a County contract or transaction which the official or employee has the authority to impact because of their governmental duties
- Once a conflict of interest has been identified, **abstention** from any further involvement in the matter is required



Abstentions from Participation

Abstentions to avoid conflict of interest.

No county official or employee shall participate in the discussion, deliberation, vote or otherwise take part in the decision-making process on any item before him in which the county official or employee has a conflict of interest.

In the event of a conflict of interest, the county official or employee shall announce his intent to abstain prior to the beginning of the discussion, debate, deliberation or vote and shall abstain from casting a vote.

Code of Ethics Standards

Public Officials

- May not have or acquire an interest in a contract or transaction involving County business
- May not disclose or use confidential information for personal gain
- May not accept or engage in private employment that conflicts with County duties for any business, including the official's or employee's own
- May not request or permit the unauthorized use of County-owned property. Staff resources and time shall not be used to further individual goals or interests
- May not grant any special treatment for anyone
- May not withhold any information which would impair the proper decision making of any County agency
- May not influence or attempt to influence any other County employee to violate the ethical standards set forth in the Code of Ethics
- May not direct the daily administrative or operational actions of County staff
- May not use position for personal gain

Exceptions to the Standards

Exceptions that shall not be deemed a violation of the standards of the ordinance:

- Legitimate salary, benefits, fees, commissions, or expenses associated with an official's or employee's nonpublic business
- An award, or similar item, given in recognition of the official's or employee's civic, charitable, political, professional, or public service
- Food, beverages, or expenses afforded public officials or employees, and members of their immediate families, or others that are associated with normal and customary business or social functions or activities
- Accepting any gift or gifts with a total value of less than \$100 in any calendar year

Gwinnett County Code of Ethics

Recommended Practices:

- View a possible conflict from the perspective of an outsider looking in on the transaction.
- Identify potential conflicts and seek guidance from the Law Department.
- Act to avoid even the appearance of impropriety
- Act with the expectation that all conduct will be scrutinized



Questions



Gwinnett



EV CHARGING STATION CONSULTING BEST PRACTICES

DECEMBER 20, 2023





MEETING
AGENDA

TEAM INTRODUCTION

REVIEW OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

RFP APPROACH

NEXT STEPS



TEAM INTRODUCTIONS



TEAM INTRODUCTIONS
ECOPRESERVE



Pete Westlake
Senior Consultant



Conrad Dobrowolski
EV Consultant



Lois Good
Project Administrator





BEST PRACTICES OVERVIEW



DATA SOURCES

ecoPreserve conducted an analysis of the best practices used in 10 similar local governments:

- City of Atlanta
- Cobb County
- DeKalb County
- City of Orlando
- Miami-Dade County
- Albany County
- City of Rochester
- Cuyahoga County
- City of Denver
- City of Portland

We looked at 5 areas:

- **Sites** (location types, how they select locations, etc.)
- **Procurement** (EVSE/Design services/Installation services/Maintenance)
- **Funding** (sources, partnerships, grants used)
- **Operations** (networked equipment, penalties, etc.)
- **Maintenance** (warranty vs additional maintenance)

BEST PRACTICES OVERVIEW

SUMMARY OF INSTALLATIONS SURVEYED

	Existing L2 Installations	Planned Public L2 Installations	Years of L2 Operation	L2 Access type
City of Atlanta	270	0	6	Public, employee, & fleet
Cobb County	76	3	-	Public, employee, & fleet
DeKalb County	0	0	0	Fleet
City of Orlando	Over 100	"Make Ready" ordinance	At least 1	Public
Miami-Dade County	65	"Make Ready" ordinance	Not long	Public, employee, & fleet
Albany County	34	3	4	Public & employee
City of Rochester	36	1	9	Public & employee
Cuyahoga County	0	84	0	Public
City of Denver	56	120	-	Public & employee
City of Portland	*	*	*	Public

Note: installations represent only City or County owned, there are other public chargers sited in these geographies

BEST PRACTICES OVERVIEW

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

		City of Atlanta	Cobb County	Dekalb County	City of Orlando	Miami-Dade County	Albany County	City of Rochester	Cuyahoga County	City of Portland	City of Denver
Sites	High-utilization	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Equitable deployment				•			•			•
Procurement	RFP for Design, O+M	•	•			•	•	•	•		•
	Purchasing cooperative	•				•			•		
Funding	County	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
	Grant or Utility	•	•		•		•	•	•		•
	Third-Party			•							
Operations	Gov't owned & operated	•	•		•		•	•	•	•	•
	Networked	•	•	•	•		•	•	•		
	Electricity Charges			•	•		•		•	•	
	Penalties for misuse		•		•	•	•	•		•	•
Maintenance	Manufacturer warranty	•	•		•		•	•		•	•

SITES

- **Location types where L2 chargers are being installed**
 - County buildings, parking garages/lots, parks, libraries, recreation centers
- **Priorities for location selection**
 - High utilization
 - Gaps in availability (charging deserts, equitable distribution)
 - High-intensity zoning (mixed multi-family residential and commercial areas)
 - Public locations with longer-term parking

PROCUREMENT

- **RFP**
 - Most common for equipment, design services, and installation services
- **Collaborative purchasing**
 - Two used collaborative purchasing (Sourcewell or State contracts)
- **Utility**
 - Two leveraged utility programs/partnerships for equipment and installation
- **Existing electrical contractors**
 - Some use existing vendors for installation and maintenance

BEST PRACTICES OVERVIEW

FUNDING

- **Grants**
 - Six leveraged grant funding (state and federal)
- **Government budget**
 - Five funded equipment and ongoing costs through internal project budgets
- **Utility**
 - Four used utility programs/partnerships to fund equipment, installation, and/or maintenance, one is planning for future utility program support

BEST PRACTICES OVERVIEW

OPERATIONS

- **Networked chargers**
 - All use networked L2 chargers,
 - In addition some have unnetworked chargers
 - Seven are currently offering free charging, however some let the vendor decide, and some are phasing in future payment requirements
- **Misuse penalties**
 - Most do not have penalties for overstaying past full charge (non-issue)
 - Some have penalties for non-EV parking (ticketing and/or towing)
- **Code/Ordinance support**
 - Three cited EV-Ready code/ordinance language in place

MAINTENANCE

- **Manufacturer warranty**
 - All utilize manufacturer warranties
 - Some have extended warranty agreements or replace equipment once warranties are expired
- **Other maintenance**
 - Some utilize existing electrical contractors to service equipment past warranties



RECOMMENDATIONS



RECOMMENDATIONS

SITES

1. We recommend that all sites be assessed in the following order of priority
 - i. Locations where the existing power supply will handle projected charging stations without upgrades should be considered first.
 - ii. Locations where the public is likely to dwell longer (at least 1-2 hours) - or perhaps where you might want to attract a longer dwell time such as public destinations (museums).
 - iii. Consider where an equitable solution might be required - this way you are ahead of the issue as equity becomes more relevant.
 - iv. Locations where you can share the installed stations with fleet vehicles (i.e., a public park could be used overnight for Parks and Rec fleet vehicles and during the day for patrons).

RECOMMENDATIONS

SITES

2. We recommend, where possible, installing additional “make ready” infrastructure in order to easily expand charging locations. This will be more economic if put in place when you put your first charger in the ground.
3. We recommend co-locating public/employee charging with fleet and e-mobility (bikes, scooters) when possible, especially when use times don’t overlap.
4. Consider locations that will provide benefits to the local economy (locating near local businesses to encourage additional visitation).
5. Consider ADA access to EVSE and locating chargers next to existing ADA spaces.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SITES

2024

GJAC Parking Deck* (Priority 1)

Norcross Library* (Priority 1)

Duluth Library* (Priority 1)

Centerville OneStop* (Priority 1)

Courts Annex (Priority 2)

DWR Central**

2025

Hooper-Renwick Themed Library*

One Justice Square

Entrepreneur Center

OneStop Norcross

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Procurement – Execute an RFP for procurement, installation and maintenance
2. Funding – Existing annual budget for both capital and expenses
3. Managing Business Unit - Operation and Maintenance Department
4. Network – Open network
5. Pricing - \$2.00/hour connected
6. Penalties – no penalties beyond 100% charged, parking infraction for non EV
7. Maintenance – Extended warranty
8. Signage – Use EVCI applications, standard signage and striping at site

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

1. Equipment would be owned and branded by Gwinnett
2. Grants are largely aimed at Level 3 charging, however, Charging Fueling Infrastructure Community grant can be use to offset the cost of Level 2 charging.
Next opportunity March 2024
3. Pace of installation will depend on annual budget allocation
4. EVCI vendor should be capable to address solar and storage when economically feasible



NEXT STEPS



NEXT STEPS

1. Execute RFP for EVCI vendor to install, and maintain
2. Establish budget for year 1
3. Finalize year 1 locations



THANK YOU!

