



Fulton County

Leading the Way to Sustainability

In 2010, Fulton 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 Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver certification for the East Atlanta Library in November 2003. The Adamsville Regional Health Center recently became part of Fulton County’s LEED-certified building inventory. The county is also focused on LEED certification for all new and renovated library branches. To date, seven library projects have received LEED Silver certifications, and three have received LEED Gold certifications.

Energy Efficiency



- » Joined the ENERGY STAR partnership in 1994. Continues to make progress on implementing its ENERGY STAR strategy by updating its Energy Plan, sending employees through Certified Energy Manager’s (CEM) training, and expanding the use of building automation systems.
- » Upgraded all traffic signals, pedestrian displays, school zone lights, and flashing caution lights to LED fixtures. In addition to using substantially less power than conventional incandescent bulbs and having a longer effective life, LED signals improve visibility of the signal and safety.
- » Adopted a lights-out/power-down policy requiring employees and maintenance staff to switch off lights and all non-essential electronic equipment when not in use. The county has installed occupancy sensors in several government buildings to enforce this policy.
- » Installed ENERGY STAR-rated cool roofs at the following locations: North Fulton Service Center, South Fulton Service Center, Welcome All Parks & Recreation Complex, and Aviation Community Cultural Center. Flyers educate visitors to the Aviation Community Cultural Center about the benefits of cool roofs.

- » Replaced more than 300 “exit” light fixtures with LED fixtures in the Government Center and any building renovated or constructed since 2008. Retrofitting existing exit signs with LED fixtures reduces energy use by 90 percent; by replacing just 300 signs, the county estimates it will save almost 92,000 kWh per year.
- » Adopted a night sky ordinance to limit the use of excess lighting, which unnecessarily wastes energy and degrades the nighttime visual environment. A recent example of a facility carrying out this ordinance is Wolf Creek Amphitheatre.

Water Efficiency



- » Leverages rainwater for its reflections fountain and pool at the Fulton County Government Center. Uses reclaimed water for irrigation and for the fire suppression system at the Johns Creek Environmental Campus.
- » Designated a WaterFirst Community by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. WaterFirst Communities demonstrate a strong commitment to water resource stewardship. The county maintains more than 2,300 miles of sanitary sewer mains, more than 1,200 miles of water lines, and provides water and pollution prevention education to residents, schools, communities, and businesses.
- » Built a demonstration rain garden that uses grey water at the South Fulton Maintenance Operations Center, a water-wise and water-quality demonstration landscape at Johns Creek Environmental Campus, and a water-quality/pollinator garden at Feldwood Elementary School in South Fulton.
- » 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.
- » Hosts K-12 students for water festivals, community events, and workshops in partnership with the National Parks Service, Georgia Association of Water Professionals, and others. The county also promotes the Water on Wheels traveling library cart of water books and activities.

Trees & Greenspace



- » Contains an estimated 306 acres of permanently protected greenspace in unincorporated areas of the county, serving approximately 600 residents.
- » Adopted a greenspace plan in 2002 with a goal of protecting 20-percent of the county as greenspace. The South Fulton Greenways and Trails Plan and the Chattahoochee Hill Country Regional Greenway Trail were developed with the goal of connecting neighborhoods, open space, and activity centers throughout the southern part of the county.
- » Provides community gardens at the South Fulton Annex; Adamsville Regional Health Center; Darnell Senior Multipurpose Center; Benson Senior Multipurpose Facility; Mills Senior Multipurpose Facility; Oak Hill Child, Adolescent and Family Center; and Camp Truitt Neighborhood Senior Center.
- » Developed the Fulton Fresh Mobile Market program to provide fresh produce and nutrition education to residents living in communities identified as “food deserts,” which are large geographic areas where mainstream grocery stores are scarce.

Transportation & Air Quality



- » Adopted an anti-idling policy to prevent county vehicles from idling unless in traffic. To remind staff to comply, departments have placed “Be Green! No Unnecessary Idling” stickers in fleet vehicles.
- » Incorporated two hybrid electric vehicles into the county fleet and installed charging stations in the Fulton County Government Services parking deck.
- » Adopted a complete streets policy in 2013 that prioritizes safety for cyclists, pedestrians, and transit riders, as well as drivers — and identified corridors and projects in need of roadway improvements in the 2015 Transportation Capital Improvement Program.
- » Adjusts the timing of traffic signals within coordinated traffic signal systems annually, and at isolated intersections every two years. Completed the upgrade of traffic signals on Fulton Industrial Boulevard, decreasing travel time by 16 percent, reducing VOC emissions by 28 percent, and reducing CO emissions by 24 percent.
- » Acquired \$1 million of dedicated funding for four participating schools in unincorporated Fulton County under the Safe Routes to Schools Program.
- » Adopted the Fulton County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in 1997. This plan addresses existing levels of services, identifies priority networks, and provides recommended improvements and policies. As of 2018, the county had seven improvement projects under design and three under construction to improve safety and infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians.

Recycling & Waste Reduction



- » Provides recycling containers throughout office workplaces to collect paper, cardboard, and plastic and aluminum containers.
- » Provides recycling in government facilities for nontraditional items like electronics, cell phones, batteries, and ink- and laser-toner cartridges.
- » Requires all waste haulers to provide curbside recycling to single-family residents for metal containers, paper, plastics, and corrugated cardboard.
- » Provides a permanent recycling drop-off location for electronic, printer cartridges, and batteries at its Merk Miles Transfer Station.
- » Offers amnesty day recycling events once a year for nontraditional materials such as electronics, cell phones, and batteries.
- » Offers an annual Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection event to local residents. Items collected include: latex-based paints, pesticides, herbicides, gasoline, fluorescent tubes, drain cleaners, roofing tar, and rodent-control products.

Land Use



- » Constructed the East Atlanta Library and Wolf Creek Amphitheatre on remediated brownfield sites. Remediated the Morgan Falls Landfill and helped develop the Blue Heron Golf Course, which is run by a private company.
- » Purchased an abandoned residential home and outparcels as a development site for the new Wolf Creek Library rather than use previously undeveloped land.
- » Received an Opportunity Zone designation for the Fulton Industrial Boulevard corridor. This designation allows businesses in the area to qualify for tax incentives for job creation.

Education



- » Created youth sustainability outreach programs that include Fashion a Forest, Weather Watcher, Enviroscape, and others through the Fulton County Water Services department. Programs are offered free of charge and advertised on the county website.

Innovation



- » Constructed the Johns Creek Environmental Campus to use the most advanced wastewater treatment technologies available, serving as an exemplary treatment facility. The facility has no odor, no noise, and blends seamlessly with surrounding greenspace and neighborhoods. The integrated educational facility provides an up-close understanding of the wastewater treatment process and other features of the facility, including native and drought-tolerant landscaping, water reuse, and best practices and designs for stormwater management.
- » Restored the banks of Burdette Stream, located in the Flint River watershed. The site was once an illegal dumping site encroached upon by an unused parking lot. The project removed the impervious surface and restored the stream bank's natural slope with riprap, live plant stakes, and native plants along the stream buffer. The new greenspace is a less than five-minute walk from a county summer camp — and education staff is now able to use the site as a real-life example of environmental restoration.
- » Reduced energy consumption at Fulton County Jail by adding boiler sequencing control devices. The device shuts down the Jail's six boilers when sensors detect a significantly-reduced demand, such as nighttime hours when laundry and showers are not in use. Since the installation of the devices, the Jail has experienced a 14-percent reduction in its annual natural gas costs, which equates to \$36,000 in utility savings.

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