

City of Woodstock
State of Georgia

Council Meeting Date
April 13, 2020

RESOLUTION (ID #)

RESOLUTION

Adoption of the 2020 Woodstock Sustainability Plan

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the City of Woodstock, Georgia first began working toward a sustainable future in 2009, when the City received grant funding to produce a sustainable renovation of the Chambers at City Center with a solar array to power the building and demonstrate the City's interest in sustainability; and

WHEREAS, in 2010, the City attained Bronze Certification through the Atlanta Regional Commission's Green Communities Program; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, the City attained Silver Certification through the Atlanta Regional Commission's Green Communities Program; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, the City attained Gold Certification through the Atlanta Regional Commission's Green Communities Program; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, the City maintained Gold Certification, and became re-certified through the Atlanta Regional Commission's Green Communities Program; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, in the interest of attaining Platinum Certification through the Atlanta Regional Commission's Green Communities Program, staff embarked on a two-year long effort to create the 2020 Woodstock Sustainability Plan; and

WHEREAS, this Plan has been created according to the direction set forth by the vision decided by the Woodstock Mayor and City Council, and by the Woodstock community, during a robust public engagement series, and with the help of a Sustainability Committee made up of citizens and city staff; and

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, the City of Woodstock was notified by the Atlanta Regional Commission that the draft Plan has been reviewed and is found to be in conformity with the minimum standards to be awarded credit for the Plan through the Green Communities Program, once it is adopted and a staff committee dedicated to implementation of the plan is in place;


NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Council of the City of Woodstock, Georgia do hereby adopt the final 2020 Woodstock Sustainability Plan, attached hereto as Exhibit "A."

RESOLVED, this 13th day of April, 2020



Donnie Henriques, Mayor

Attest:


Rhonda Pezzello, City Clerk



2020

Woodstock Sustainability Plan

CONTRIBUTIONS

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Special thanks also to the **Atlanta Regional Commission** for being a guiding
force in regional sustainability.

Please consider the environment before printing this document.

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INTRODUCTION

Importance of Plan
Overarching Vision
Past Accomplishments



Importance of Plan

Though well-known for its environmental focus and economic impact, sustainability is a concept that interacts with every aspect of life. To provide our residents with the highest quality of life, the City of Woodstock is committing to the incorporation of sustainable practice into not just policy, but the community's culture as well. The importance of acknowledging social connection comes from the belief that smart growth can only be achieved when a unit acts with intention. Woodstock's citizens and leaders value inclusivity as well as opportunity, and with the amazing civic pride we enjoy, our goals are well within reach.

Overarching Vision

The City of Woodstock will invest in sustainable solutions and reinforce its reputation as a green community by fostering a culture that values informed participation and the connection between environmental protection and economic vitality.

Our community members find value in not only each other, but in future generations and the vibrant city that they will call home. When we become more mindful of how our lives interact with the environment, we invest in a resilient future where all can thrive.



Accomplishments to Date

- 2009** Received stimulus grants for demonstration projects, including a solar array on the Chambers at City Center and solar hot water heaters in Fire Station #10.
- 2010** Attained Bronze certification for the Green Communities program with the adoption of the first Sustainability Policy.
- 2011** Achieved Silver certification with the completion of energy efficiency projects and increasing green building incentives. Woodstock also became the first city in Georgia to offer municipally owned electric vehicle charging stations to the public.
- 2015** Reached Gold certification through continuous improvement in energy efficiency, additional policies and ordinances such as the Complete Streets Policy and Sustainable Parking Ordinance.
- 2018** Awarded a grant from the Atlanta Local Food Initiative to install a small urban orchard in Dupree Park. This is the first ALFI project on the north end of the Greater Atlanta region.
- 2019** Sustained Gold certification with the Green Communities program for the second time.





PUBLIC INPUT SERIES

Building Our Team
Public Events
Community Preferences

Building Our Team

The Public Input Series began after collecting most of the data that would be used in the City's baseline Sustainability Assessment. At this stage, gears shifted towards vision-building and goal-setting to determine how this data could best serve everyday Woodstock.

The Woodstock Sustainability Committee was formed by assembling dedicated staff and residents to take on the task.

The involved residents had previously contacted the Community Development Department for a wide range of reasons and demonstrated an interest in both sustainability and shaping the vision of the City. For a variety of public input purposes, Planning staff keeps a record of these citizens and their various areas of interests. Several people from this list were gracious enough to donate their time to serve on the Sustainability Committee.

The rest of the committee was composed of City employees that are expected to join the staff Sustainability Committee and carry out the majority of this Plan's recommendations. Aiding in this Plan's creation helps generate the buy-in people need to follow through with the hard work of implementation and monitoring.

As the inaugural cohort, the committee members helped determine the Plan's scope by giving feedback on potential goals statements for each Focus Area and by pitching projects of interest during two roundtable discussions. These ideas served as the basis for many of the tasks and strategies found in this Plan.



Public Events

To ensure that the Plan accurately represents the views of the community, the Planning team organized to engage the public at four local events:

Thursday, July 18, 2019 – W DSTK Roots Music Nights

The first event was a free evening concert. An hour and a half before the event began, the team set up a tent and table for the three text boards exercises. The team was able to use the mobile visitor's center to help attract people. Inside, iPads were available for respondents to take the online sustainability survey if they wished. Members of the staff and citizen Sustainability Committees attended the event, helping to explain the project and gather input from the public. People at this event seemed generally enthusiastic about sustainability in Woodstock.

Saturday, July 27, 2019 – Farmer's Market

On a very busy farmer's market morning, two staff members on the Sustainability Committee set up a tent and table in line with the other vendors. At this event, there was a lot of discussion about local healthy food access and the ability to use EBT at the farmer's market. Almost every member of the public engaged at this event said they would bring recyclables to a drop center if one existed near downtown. Some downtown merchants commented that they would be interested in finding a way to have commercial composting.

Friday, August 2, 2019 – Friday Night Live

Two staff members set up a table on the sidewalk in front of the visitor's center on Main Street for this round of public input. This event had a Harry Potter theme and activities like face painting and live music, with businesses staying open late and offering specials. It was clear from this event that Woodstock's youth is enthusiastic about sustainability.



Tuesday, August 6, 2019 – National Night Out

Three staff committee members attended this public safety focused event and set up a tent and table next to the other city tables. It was great to see from this event that a crowd totally different from the farmer's market is just as interested in sustainability. Now a common trend, almost every person engaged was positive and excited about Woodstock's sustainability efforts.

Discovering Community Preferences

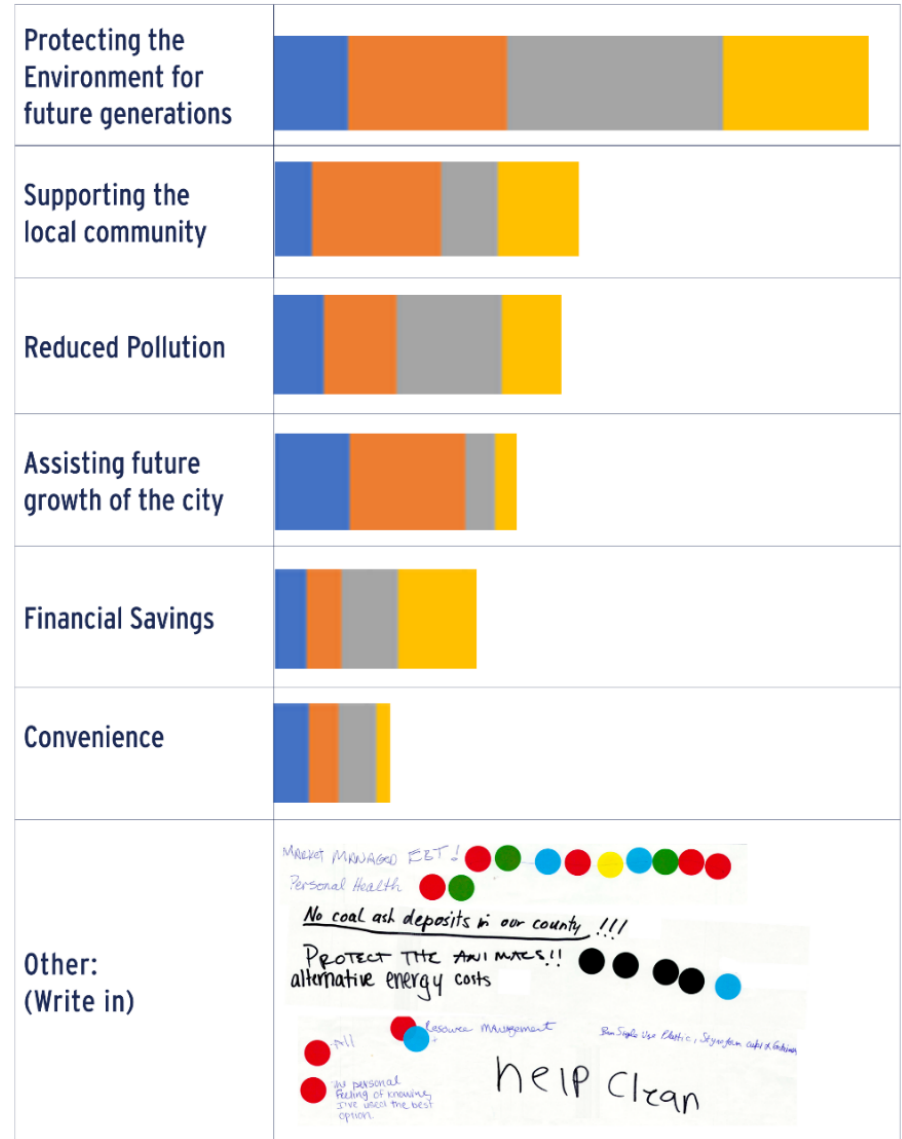
At each of these events, members of the Sustainability Committee set up three exercises for the public to complete. Two poster boards were populated with multiple choice questions that 72 people answered by distributing their allotted number of dots on the board among their preferred answers. These boards asked participants to prioritize their motivations for practicing sustainability as shown in the illustration at the right.

At the bottom of these text boards, we left a blank row for participants to write in reasons for practicing sustainability that were not on the board. Elementary school children and adults alike made additions, and later participants placed their dots beside those entries to show that they had the same priority. Thanks to their clarity and practicality, these ideas served as an inspiration for many of the recommended Tasks and Strategies found later in this Plan.

Overall, it is clear that Woodstock is moved to practice sustainability by the idea of leaving behind a healthy natural environment for generations to come. Within this notion are strong connections to quality of life and resource conservation.



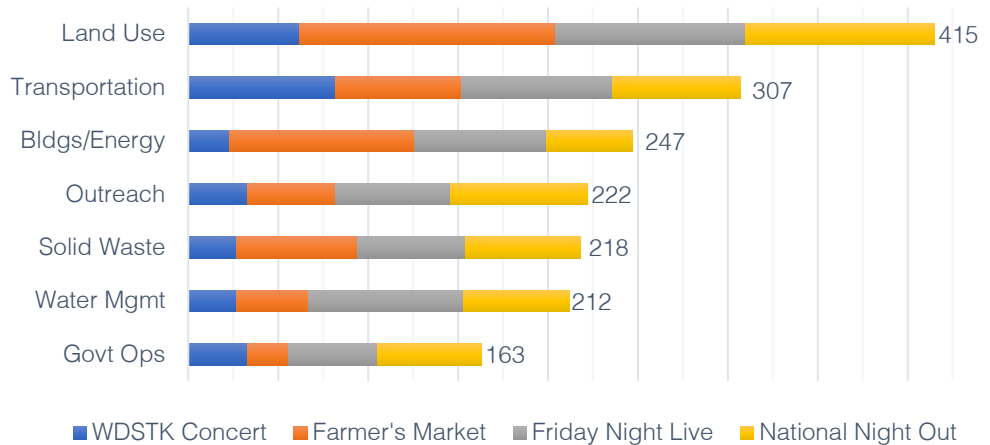
When you practice sustainability, what are your top two reasons for doing it?



Another board used at these public events was a tax allocation game where participants distributed 10 colored slips of paper, each of equal value, among the Focus Areas they would like to support with their tax dollars.

With 179 participants, the results of this activity showed that residents prioritize initiatives related to Land Use when weighing the 7 Focus Areas against themselves. Transportation came in as first runner-up for these participants, and the chart below shows the total number of votes each Focus Area won across the four-day series.

Envelope Board on Focus Areas



The Public Input Series received over 1700 votes with the tax allocation game.

The final tool used to evaluate community preferences was a digital survey distributed on iPads during the WDSTK Roots Music Night event and displayed for a short time on the Woodstock Planning Facebook page.



With a final count of 141 respondents, this survey aimed to gather more in-depth responses than the board exercises. One question asked about people's willingness to do various things like check social media for sustainable tips or ride in on-street bicycle lanes. Another had the respondent choose which materials they would take to a recycling drop center — or if they would make that trip at all. Additionally, the respondents were asked to check boxes next to a list of potential projects if they felt the idea was worth exploration.

Each of these sections ended with a free response area for suggesting additional initiatives and overall feedback. The majority of these answers mentioned development concerns regarding traffic and land conservation. In the same realm were desires for adjusted speed limits and golf cart friendly infrastructure. Furthermore, there were several inquiries about expanding waste management options, and many people simply thanked the team for making the effort to pursue sustainable initiatives and including the public in the process.

The survey concluded with a focus on contact information:

- **84%** of respondents said they wanted to learn more about sustainability, primarily through social media.
- **84%** get most of their Woodstock news from Facebook, with other web sources and word-of-mouth as their runner-up.
- **63%** of the respondents said they would like to get more involved, especially by attending events and participating in challenges.
- **48%** left their emails for further updates and news

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

Greenhouse Gas Inventory
Performance Metrics



Greenhouse Gas Inventory

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Inventories are essential for any formalized sustainability effort because they are one of best single indicators of a community's impact on the natural environment. In addition to cataloging the sources that produce and remove greenhouse gases, these inventories measure the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other elements in the atmosphere that contribute to the changing of our ecosystem.

Based on the energy usage of City-owned facilities alone, **Woodstock produces about 3388 metric tons (6,876,000 pounds) of CO₂ every year.** That is equal to the amount of emissions produced by powering 719 passenger vehicles or electricity for 2166 homes for an entire year.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) production in certain contexts directly impact a variety of things such as:



Air Quality



Traffic Efficiency

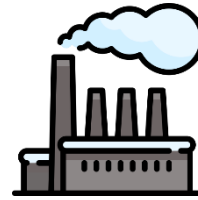


Public Health Factors



Energy Usage

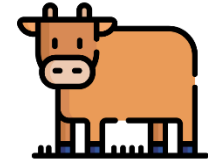
Common man-made sources of GHGs include:



Electricity



Fuel Combustion



Livestock Management



Industry



Forest Removal

Common sinks for GHGs include:



Trees



Oceans

Performance Metrics

Together with the Greenhouse Gas Inventory, this set of Performance Metrics completes Woodstock's Sustainability Assessment by identifying and tracking the places where sustainable development intersects with City priorities.

Each metric addresses elements of everyday sustainability that relate to our 7 chosen Focus Areas: Energy & Buildings, Land Use, Water Management, Solid Waste, Transportation, Public Outreach, and Government Operations.

Presented here are the metrics with reliable, currently available data that will establish Woodstock's performance baseline for future comparison and tracking. This list of metrics is intended to be measured in full every five years, while annual updates will measure a select few.

City Population: 32,234 (2018)

Source: United States Census Bureau

Energy & Buildings

- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
 - City of Woodstock Facilities
Source: Schneider Electric 2018
 - 3388 metric tons CO₂
 - Residential
 - Commercial
- Energy Consumption, 2016
Source: NREL City Energy Profile
<https://apps1.eere.energy.gov/sled>
 - Electricity (MWH)
 - City Facilities
 - Industrial: 54,442
 - Commercial: 111,647
 - Residential: 124,932
 - Natural Gas (MCF)
 - City Facilities
 - Industrial: 140,041
 - Commercial: 104,227
 - Residential: 521,417
 - Renewable Sources
- Average Household Energy Cost
Source: NREL City Energy Profile
 - \$1,450 per year
- Buildings Meeting Green Standards

Land Use

- Tree Canopy Coverage
- Amount of Publicly Owned Greenspace
Source: ARC Green Communities 2019
 - 803 acres total
- Estimated Farmer's Market Attendance
Source: Woodstock Tourism Management
 - 1300 people per market day
- Size of Community Gardens
Source: Woodstock Parks and Recreation
 - Eighteen 10'x10' plots
 - Twenty-four 20'x20' plots

Water Management

- Water Usage by Sector
- Treated Wastewater Used for Secondary Purposes
- Identified Impaired Streams
Source: Woodstock Community Development
 - Little River is impaired from Hwy 140 to Lake Allatoona for Fecal Coliform, TMDL completed in 2009
 - Noonday Creek is impaired from Tate Creek to Lake Allatoona for Bio F (fish), Bio M (macroinvertebrate), and Fecal Coliform; TMDL completed in 2009

- Rubes Creek is impaired from Headwaters to Little River (Cobb and Cherokee) for Bio F (TMDL 2009); TMDL for Fecal Coliform completed in 2004

Solid Waste

- Annual Solid Waste Tonnage
Source: Waste Management Tonnage Data 2017
 - City Annex: 9.35 tons
 - Residential: 9,717.72 tons
 - Total: 13,142.00 tons
- Annual Recycling Tonnage
Source: Waste Management Tonnage Data 2017
 - City Annex: 6.23 tons
 - Residential: 1359.36 tons
 - Total: 1365.59 tons
- Diversion Rate from Waste Stream
Source: Waste Management Tonnage Data 2017
 - City Annex: 40%
 - Residential: 12%
- Greenstock Day Collections, 2017
Source: Woodstock Parks and Recreation
 - Electronics
 - April: 18,575 lbs.
 - November: 11,231 lbs.
 - Batteries
 - April: 925 lbs.
 - November: 930 lbs.

Transportation

- Days Per Year with Less Than “Good” Air Quality
- Asthma Rates, by Age Group
- Mode Split for Work Commutes, 2017
Source: American Comm. Survey (K200801)
 - Single-occupant vehicle: 14,649
 - Carpool: 935
 - Public transportation: 157
 - Taxicab, motorcycle, bicycle, walked, or other: 527
 - Worked at home: 1,556
- On-Street Bike Lanes: 0 miles
Source Woodstock Community Development
- Off-Street Bike Trails: 13.68 miles
Source Woodstock Community Development
- Off-Street Walking Trails: 4.95 miles
Source Woodstock Community Development
- Sidewalks: 132.27 miles
Source Woodstock Community Development
- Streets with ≥ 1 sidewalk: 70%
Source Woodstock Community Development
- Bike/Walk Friendly Community Status
- Pedestrian/Cyclist Casualties
- Public Electric Vehicle Charging
Source: Woodstock Economic Development
 - 2 stations with 2 ports each

Public Outreach

- Businesses Participation
- Sustainability Events Supported by the City of Woodstock
Source: Woodstock Parks and Recreation
 - Bi-annual Greenstock Recycling Day
 - Year-round battery recycling
 - Fall river clean up
 - Mayor’s Recycle Challenge

Government Operations

- Hybrid Vehicles in Fleet
- Type of Paper Purchased
Source: Woodstock Community Development
 - 30% recycled paper
- Staff Trainings/Committee Membership
- Sustainability-Related Affiliations
 - Gold Certified ARC Green Community (2019)
 - Tree City USA (2017)
 - 1 USGBC accredited employee



STRATEGIC SOLUTIONS

Executive Summary

Focus Areas

Energy & Buildings

Land Use

Water Management

Solid Waste

Transportation

Public Outreach

Government Operations

Goals, Tasks, Strategies

Strategic Solutions

The City of Woodstock has identified 7 Focus Areas to define the community's priorities within the wide scope of sustainability. The Goals of this Plan express Woodstock's overarching vision under the theme of each Focus Area. Within these big picture Goals is a set of Tasks that set up measurable objectives composed of various Strategies that recommend specific options or steps that will help realize Woodstock's goals for a more sustainable future.



Energy & Buildings



Land Use



Water Management



Solid Waste



Transportation



Public Outreach



Government Operations

Executive Summary



Energy & Buildings

Goal 1: Increase energy efficiency of new and existing buildings

Task 1 Reduce total electricity consumption

Goal 2: Increase the use of renewable and clean energy sources

Task 2A Identify otherwise unusable land or available rooftops that can house solar

Task 2B Attempt implementation of a residential and/or commercial Solarize program

Task 2C Incentivize incorporation of geothermal power



Land Use

Goal 3: Concentrate density in the most urban parts of the city to allow further conservation of outlying areas

Task 3A Allow increased density in urban mixed-use areas

Task 3B Explore incentives and allowances for sustainable, small dwellings

Goal 4: Maintain healthy ecosystems

Task 4 Promote responsible landscaping practices

Goal 5: Improve public access to greenspace

Task 5A Encourage acquisition and conservation of parkland and underdeveloped properties

Task 5B Promote outdoor recreational opportunities



Water Management

Goal 6: Encourage water conservation and efficiency

Task 6 Reduce potable water consumption

Goal 7: Maintain healthy water ecosystems

Task 7A Incentivize the use of low-impact and sustainable stormwater management strategies for developers

Task 7B Improve impaired waterways and bodies of water



Solid Waste

Goal 8: Diversify waste management options

Task 8A Expand Woodstock's recycling portfolio

Task 8B Explore disposal options for compostable materials

Goal 9: Decrease recycling contamination

Task 9 Educate the public on proper waste disposal practices

Goal 10: Reduce overconsumption & consumption of single-use products

Task 10 Promote the purchase of durable, reusable, and minimally packaged products



Transportation

Goal 11: Reduce health risks caused by vehicle traffic

Task 11 Monitor traffic-related health indicators

Goal 12: Support the Greenprints Plan

Task 12 Transition the Greenprints Trail System to support transportation as well as recreation

Goal 13: Expand other opportunities for alternative transportation

Task 13A Support bicyclists and promote bicycle safety

Task 13B Strengthen electric vehicle (EV) readiness

Task 13C Explore local public transit scaled for the needs of Downtown Woodstock dwellers, workers, and visitors



Public Outreach

Goal 14: Raise public awareness of and participation in the City's sustainability initiatives

Task 14A Document sustainability efforts in Woodstock

Task 14B Strengthen public participation in City sustainability initiatives

Goal 15: Ensure Woodstock grows equitably

Task 15 Increase engagement with underrepresented and underserved communities

Goal 16: Educate and encourage businesses and schools to adopt more sustainable practices

Task 16 Promote Green Building incentives

Goal 17: Engage subject experts

Task 17A Invite sustainability-related subject matter experts to employee trainings, summits, and other speaking engagements

Task 17B Provide green site and building-related training for City employees and the community



Government Operations

Goal 18: Promote sustainable practices within local government operations

Task 18A Form and maintain a staff sustainability committee to carry out the Tasks and Strategies in this Plan

Task 18B Integrate environmental justice concepts into City training opportunities, functions, and decision-making processes

Task 18C Identify grants and other funding opportunities to further the City's sustainability goals

Goal 19: Reduce overall environmental impact of City-owned facilities

Task 19A Defer to more efficient, sustainable practices when making purchases, repairing, or replacing features in City facilities

Task 19B Establish a reduction target for emissions accounted for in the Greenhouse Gas Inventory

Goal 20: Ensure the continuation of established programs

Task 20A Dedicate a full-time staff member to the management of sustainability matters

Task 20B Maintain Green Communities certification at highest attainable level

Task 20C Align the City with sustainability-related commitments and partnerships



Energy & Buildings

What is it & Why does it matter?

Energy use, as an element of electricity, heating, and transportation, is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions¹, which makes it a great impact on the environment. Using renewable means to produce energy not only reduces the effects of commerce and development, but it also creates local jobs and supports national independence. Therefore, addressing buildings in this sense is critical since they are significant energy users. As an added benefit, having green, energy efficient buildings can increase occupant comfort and productivity, offset the environmental effects of the building's existence, and significantly cut operating costs².



Goal 1: Increase energy efficiency of new and existing buildings

Task 1A: Reduce total electricity consumption

Description: The key to this task is practicing and normalizing efficient behaviors. The end result will lead to decreased energy need and corresponding reductions in financial and emissions cost.

Strategy: Continue to promote the purchase of energy efficient ENERGY STAR® products.

Strategy: Encourage the pursuit of green building standards like those in LEED certifications.

Strategy: Transition all lighting fixtures to LEDs.

Strategy: Install automatic light switches and encourage occupants to switch off unnecessary lights.

Strategy: Further reduce lighting levels in offices and in less occupied areas.

Strategy: Ensure HVAC systems are properly maintained and regularly upgraded.

Strategy: Install automatic thermostats where practical.

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

² <https://www.epa.gov/statelocalenergy/local-residential-energy-efficiency>

Goal 2: Increase the use of renewable and clean energy sources.

Task 2A: Identify available rooftops and otherwise unusable land that can support solar energy

Description: By expanding upon the success of the solar array atop the Chambers at City Center, Woodstock can develop its portfolio of renewables to a point where excess power is sold back into the grid for others' use. Cleared, undeveloped land and rooftops can efficiently use land to house these installations.

Strategy: Determine the needs to install various solar panel structures

Strategy: Identify properties suitable for solar installation and encourage their development, whether through city-initiated efforts or as a partnership supporting private developers that add solar installations

Task 2B: Attempt implementation of a residential and/or commercial Solarize program

Description: Solarize campaigns advocate for communities to come together to buy solar panels "in bulk" at a discounted rate. They have been appearing across the nation, from Rhode Island to California, and make alternative energy a practical, affordable part of everyday life.

Strategy: Identify HOAs that allow or prohibit solar panels in their neighborhoods

Strategy: Promote the Solarize program to potential participants

Strategy: Consider developing incentives for solarizing

Task 2C: Incentivize incorporation of geothermal power

Description: Sustainable energy systems often rely on a combination of resources available in their local ecosystem. This setup accommodates a wider range of energy users, minimizes environmental strain, and maximizes resiliency. Small residential developments near Woodstock have already explored the area's geothermal capabilities, and conducting further research opens the door for alternatives to traditional power sourcing while addressing water conservation needs.

Strategy: Identify regions in the Woodstock area that may support geothermal energy systems or retention ponds with incorporated geothermal systems, such as the HARBEC Water Retention Pond³.

Strategy: Incorporate geothermal systems into zoning ordinances as an option to achieve incentives such as bonus parking spaces.

Americans spend about 90% of their time indoors, and energy usage (especially heating and cooling) is the largest single source of greenhouse gas production.

<https://www.epa.gov/report-environment/indoor-air-quality>

³ <https://betterbuildingsinitiative.energy.gov/showcase-projects/harbec-water-retention-pond>



Land Use

What is it & Why does it matter?

Land, animals, and natural resources tend to be the first things people imagine when they hear “sustainability,” likely explaining this Focus Area’s overwhelming popularity during the Public Input Series. Along with greenspace management and trail development, Land Use can address animal-friendly landscaping and urban agriculture. For example, the community gardens and farmer’s markets tracked as Performance Metrics show that, in addition to their efficient use of the environment, utilizing the resources in our own backyards supports local community. Furthermore, responsibly managing communal land supports biodiversity and allows us to leave the planet in good condition for future generations’ use⁴.

Goal 3: Concentrate density in the most urban parts of the city to allow further conservation of outlying areas

Task 3A: Allow increased density in urban mixed-use areas

Description: Density in its essence promotes efficiency and sustainability by requiring resources to be shared. The City allows a fair degree of density in certain zoning districts, therefore incentivizing urban features like shared parking and small dwelling unit sizes. This task further encourages Woodstock’s increased urban density as more parking facilities, grid streets, and other transportation improvements are constructed.



Strategy: Ensure that the Conservation Subdivision Ordinance is adequately incentivizing the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas

Task 3B: Explore incentives and allowances for sustainable, small dwellings

Description: These living spaces, often referred to as “tiny homes,” provide the opportunity to engage sustainability through their significant reduction of physical and material need. Smaller properties favor reliance on renewable energy due to their size, and they even promote walkability due to their ability to be located within close proximity of commercial and recreational areas.

⁴ Biodiversity refers to the variety of living species on Earth, including plants, animals, bacteria, and fungi. Source: [National Geographic](https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/biodiversity/)

Strategy: Research market demand for tiny homes and best practices for related code amendments.

Strategy: Identify areas where tiny homes may be located or eco-villages, a collection of tiny homes, may be formed.

Strategy: Present findings to the Mayor and City Council and potentially move forward with research for a proposed ordinance change.

Goal 4: Maintain healthy ecosystems

Task 4: Promote responsible landscaping practices

Description: As this is a time of development for Woodstock, and the current Tree Ordinance does not include general landscaping standards and best practices, the City is in a position to enhance landscape maintenance and search for opportunities that ensure responsible management of the City's natural and designed landscapes.

Strategy: Consider a development code update to incentivize xeriscaping and require drought-tolerant, Georgia native, and pollinator-friendly⁵ landscaping practices.

Strategy: Establish initial planting conditions and upkeep procedures for vulnerable and higher maintenance species.

Strategy: Protect and enhance tree canopies by reviewing the existing tree list, conducting regular tree risk assessments, and forming a tree stewardship program for citizens that includes educational elements like the energy benefits of residential trees on lawns.

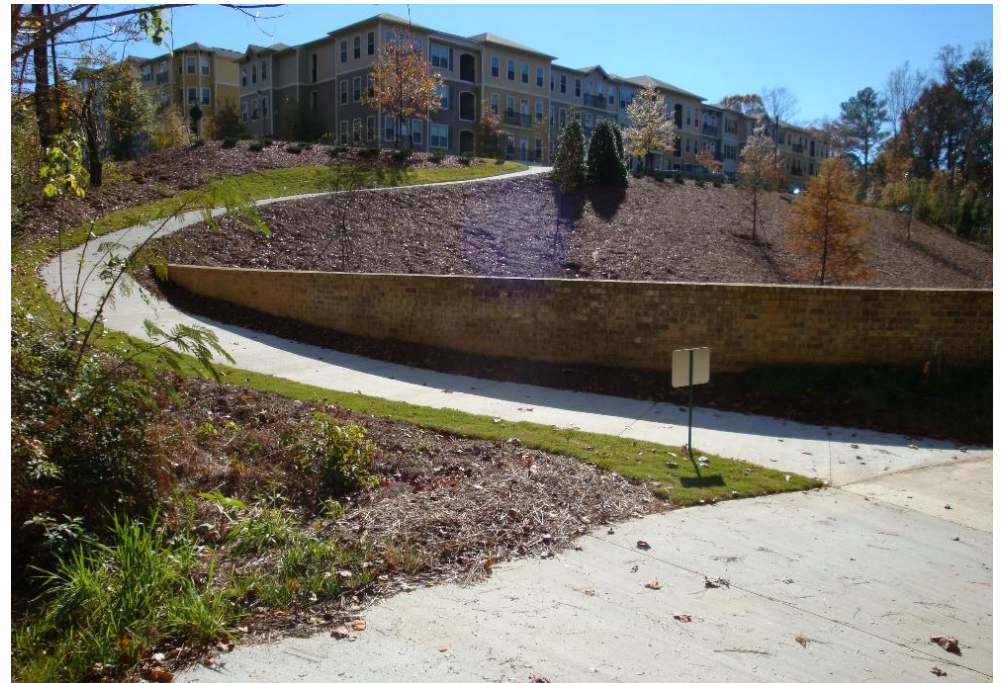
⁵ Pollinator – an animal whose movements help pollinate plants. Examples: bees, butterflies, moths, birds, etc.

Strategy: Amend the Sustainability Policy to require the use of best landscaping practices for government facilities and seek adoption by the Mayor and City Council.

Goal 5: Improve public access to greenspace

Task 5A: Encourage acquisition and conservation of parkland and underdeveloped properties

Description: This task represents a priority voiced during the Public Input Series for this plan. Access to parkland promotes health and vitality in communities while also protecting some properties from development. This allows more room for trees and natural landscapes to exist in this urban center of Cherokee County.





Strategy: Support implementation of the Parks & Recreation Department’s long-range parks goals

Strategy: Implement a schedule for renovating current parks and amenities

Strategy: Investigate the feasibility of developing small properties into localized, “pocket” parks that provide convenient, safe access to greenspace for neighborhoods and urban spaces

Task 5B: Promote outdoor recreational opportunities

Description: Accessible and varied recreational opportunities are important for the physical and emotional health of a community. These activities often foster one’s pride in a place, inspiring community stewardship of the land and a better chance of protecting land from development.

Strategy: Educate the public about the Greenprints Trail System, including existing trail locations, parking, and future trail plans.

Strategy: Support installation of mountain bike trails.

Strategy: Offer new recreational opportunities that are unique to Woodstock such as art installations, playgrounds, gardens, other programmable areas, and open green spaces

Strategy: Support accessibility through strategic development that connects to the trail system



Water Management

What is it & Why does it matter?

Water management revolves around ensuring the water supply is fit to sustain both humans and the local ecosystem. Significant factors that can disrupt this system are drought and irresponsible development practices. This Focus Area has become increasingly critical as water scarcity becomes a more common crisis around the world. In fact, the state of Georgia faces related challenges with access to sufficient fresh water due to its long history in the Tri-State Water Wars with Alabama and Florida.

Goal 6: Encourage water conservation and efficiency

Task 6: Reduce potable water⁶ consumption.

Description: While serving as a resiliency measure against Georgia's increasing risk of drought, this task also makes efforts to minimize a significant source of energy use: heating water.

Strategy: Implement a rain barrel installation program and consider an accompanying design competition for public engagement.

Strategy: Encourage reduction of residential water consumption through various awareness campaigns such as green tips on social media.

Strategy: Encourage commercial greywater systems.



⁶ Potable water – Also known as drinking water; comes from surface and ground sources and is treated to levels that meet state and federal standards for consumption. (Source: watereducation.org)

Goal 7: Maintain healthy water ecosystems

Task 7A: Incentivize the use of low-impact and sustainable stormwater management strategies for developers

Description: These techniques replicate natural systems and provide ecological benefits in ways that common stormwater management practices do not. Though these systems may have higher maintenance requirements, they often take up less space and are more attractive than common facilities, physically reflecting their higher quality.

Strategy: Explore green infrastructure options and accompanying funding opportunities for government-owned properties.

Strategy: Support the Public Works Department in development and implementation of a Green Infrastructure or Low Impact Development Program to begin in 2020, as required by the City's Phase II MS4 Permit.

Strategy: Consider an incentive, policy, or ordinance to reduce runoff from development by using alternative, green stormwater management and filtering techniques.

Task 7B: Improve impaired waterways and bodies of water.

Description: Active care for and repair of Woodstock's water systems is critical for the health of local wildlife and habitats as well as human use. Documenting areas in need and

establishing workdays or recurring programs can revitalize both wildlife and the water we dedicate to community use.

Strategy: Support the establishment of a citizen-run water quality monitoring program like the Alabama Water Watch, which trains volunteers from across the public sphere⁷

Strategy: Annually present the Impaired Waters Monitoring and Implementation Plan to the City Council

Strategy: Join the FEMA Community Rating System, a voluntary program that encourages community floodplain management activities⁸



⁷ <http://www.alabamawaterwatch.org/about-us/history-and-mission/>

⁸ <https://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program-community-rating-system>



Solid Waste

What is it & Why does it matter?

The three R's were meant to be followed in the order they are spoken: First reduce, then reuse, and, if all else fails, recycle. Informed shopping choices can lead to a better alignment with this saying, especially considering the recent changes in processing recyclables that have made recycling a less reliable way to manage solid waste. By choosing to reduce waste and make a habit out of reusing and composting products, we build resiliency into the recycling and manufacturing industries. However, as a popular gateway to practicing sustainability, recycling should not be completely abandoned, but instead refined and carefully executed.



Goal 8: Diversify waste management options

Task 8A: Expand Woodstock's recycling portfolio

Description: The responses from our Public Input Series and growing numbers at the bi-annual Greenstock Recycling event have sparked discussions of the need for better and more convenient recycling options.

Strategy: Expand the list of accepted items at and the frequency of the Greenstock Recycling Day event.

Strategy: Invest in a City-run drop center that collects nontraditional recyclables, particularly e-waste, glass, and household hazardous materials.

Strategy: Contract recycling bins for use at city-sponsored events.

Strategy: Find a workable solution for recycling in the Downtown District.

Strategy: Provide more opportunities for businesses to recycle, such as the Recycle Bank rewards program⁹, or require solid waste servicers operating in Woodstock to provide commercial recycling options for businesses that want to opt-in.

Task 8B: Explore disposal options for compostable materials

Description: Though the majority of everyday waste is organic material (e.g. paper, food scraps, and yard trimmings)¹⁰, not much action has been taken to address its disposal in

⁹ <https://www.recyclebank.com/>

¹⁰ <https://archive.epa.gov/epawaste/nonhaz/municipal/web/html/>

Woodstock. Landfilling waste that harmlessly breaks down on its own delays natural decomposition processes and wastes the opportunity to recycle that waste into a valuable agricultural resource.

Strategy: Explore options for collecting compost and large yard debris.

Strategy: Use community education to encourage the use of compostable products like those made by CompostNow, Eco-Products, etc.

Goal 9: Decrease recycling contamination

Task 9: Educate the public on proper waste disposal practices

Description: Reducing pollution and decreasing the size of landfills were top concerns during the Public Input Series; however, these ideas can only be realized when solid waste is disposed of correctly. Doubts about appropriate practices not only discourage participation but spoil proper efforts. The phenomenon known as “wish-cycling” describes the act of placing seemingly recyclable items (e.g. flimsy plastic wrappers) or contaminated recyclable items (e.g. greasy pizza boxes and paper bags) into recycling bins, thus causing the entire haul to be landfilled. This happens due to the widely lacking capacity to sort out misfit products.

Strategy: Develop a labelling system for all city-owned waste receptacles in the public right of way and at sponsored events once proper services are in place.

Strategy: Explore outreach options like the City of Atlanta’s Feet on the Street¹¹ project that sent staff and volunteers into communities to walk residents through the recycling sorting process.

Strategy: Provide continued community education on the most current information about proper recycling practices and avoiding contamination, as the recycling landscape and market changes.

"We're trying to make consumers understand that recycling isn't just about putting your container in the bin. You also need to buy recycled."

<https://www.npr.org/2019/08/20/750864036/u-s-recycling-industry-is-struggling-to-figure-out-a-future-without-china>

Goal 10: Reduce overconsumption & consumption of single-use products

Task 10: Promote the purchase of durable, reusable, and minimally packaged products

Description: Consumers can benefit as much as the environment when they invest in long-lasting products instead of continuously purchasing disposable items. This task aims to eliminate the wasteful use of resources and minimize the amount of solid waste we send to landfills by discouraging single-use products like plastic packaging and utensils.

¹¹ <https://www.atlantaga.gov/home/showdocument?id=43028>



Strategy: Promote efficient habits, such as the “Pack One More Item” campaign by Walmart.

Strategy: Explore the plastic bag ban in Atlanta, which starts at the city level with a reusable tote subsidy. If City leadership is not in favor of a ban, conduct a public awareness campaign about how to dispose of plastic bags and why to use reusable totes.

Section Highlight

Eco-preferred products:

- Instead of continuously buying traditional dryer sheets, opt for reusable wool laundry balls that help dry clothes faster and can be customized with essential oils!
- Disposable paper towels come wrapped in plastic and can be easily switched out with washable cloth towels for cleaning up small messes!
- Thrift shopping gives clothing a second life and gives your wallet a break. There are also locations where worn and torn fabric can be recycled, like H&M drop boxes!



Transportation

What is it & Why does it matter?

Transportation's importance in our lives makes it equally significant for sustainability. Getting from place to place can be complicated enough before factoring in the environment, so this Focus Area highlights the importance and convenience in doing so. In sprawling, suburban areas like Cherokee County, single-occupant vehicles are the dominant commute option and make transit systems inefficient. Furthermore, highly trafficked and congested areas have been linked to health risks like poor air quality and respiratory issues¹² due to large amounts of vehicle exhaust. Fortunately, Woodstock has the potential to move travelers along a more sustainable path.



¹² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4243514/>

¹³ Externality — a cost or benefit to a third party who has no control over the creation of that cost or benefit (e.g. increased asthma rates in a neighborhood located near a highway)

Goal 11: Reduce health risks caused by vehicle traffic

Task 11: Monitor traffic-related health indicators

Description: As noted in the section introduction, taking direct action to improve Woodstock's transportation system will decrease the risk of health issues related to highly trafficked areas; however, establishing a baseline for these related issues will help gauge effectiveness as well as confirm the multi-faceted benefits of pursuing sustainable practices.

Strategy: Work with the Smart Communities project to identify negative health and environmental externalities¹³ caused or exacerbated by vehicle traffic, and update the list of annually monitored Performance Metrics accordingly

Strategy: Map those who are most at risk or affected by these identified negative health and environmental externalities, then research potential solutions that can be recommended to the Mayor and City Council.

Goal 12: Support the Greenprints plan

Task 12: Transition the Greenprints Trail System to support transportation as well as recreation.

Description: Up until this point, the Greenprints trails have primarily benefitted the community through recreational use; but they have the potential to optimize traffic systems by strategically accommodating travel as well. As a viable part of Woodstock's transportation system, the trails will reduce the number of cars traversing the city and provide public alternatives for single-occupant motor vehicles while meeting

goals envisioned by several long-range Plans (e.g. the 2008 Greenprints Project Plan, the 2012 Update to the Livable Centers Initiative Plan, and the 2018 Comprehensive Plan) along the way.

Strategy: Continue to enforce adherence to requirements in the Greenprints Trail Plan by developers.

Strategy: Encourage connection in all directions, especially with eastbound and westbound trails in the Downtown District.

Strategy: Encourage connections to other communities, such as the Noonday Creek Trail/Cobb County connection, while seeking out intergovernmental partnerships and grant funding opportunities.

Goal 13: Expand other opportunities for alternative transportation

Task 13A: Support bicyclists and promote bicycle safety

Description: Transitioning away from automobile use is only realistic when adequate alternatives are provided. Therefore, it is necessary for potential cyclists to feel safe and see worthwhile convenience in using biking infrastructure.

Strategy: Consider end-of-trip bicycle facilities for government buildings.

Strategy: Encourage bike facilities along city streets, especially those with protected shoulders, bike lanes, or trails.

Strategy: Monitor injury and fatality rates as part of the annual Sustainability Assessment.

Strategy: Pursue certification as a Bike Friendly Community.



Task 13B: Strengthen electric vehicle (EV) readiness

Description: The City supports EVs through its relationship with a vendor in managing the few charging stations in Woodstock on Maple Street and along the public parking lot on Market Street. It would be ideal to expand this network of public EV stations, but other steps can also be taken to facilitate installation of the infrastructure that encourages the use and ownership of these vehicles.

Strategy: Increase the number of public EV stations wherever possible and appropriate.

Strategy: Consider offering new incentives to support the installation of charging equipment and the development of charging station networks.

Task 13C: Explore local public transit scaled for the needs of Downtown Woodstock dwellers, workers, and visitors

Description: The Downtown Trolley was loved by many, but ultimately did not perform in a way that met transportation goals. However, the 2019-2020 Smart Woodstock Strategy & Corridor Study provides the opportunity to explore additional solutions for various transportation, pedestrian, and parking-related issues as well.

Strategy: Host a public input meeting to assess what options are desired by the community.

Strategy: Investigate transit options that include environmentally-preferred transportation, such as autonomous EVs or electric personal transportation vehicle (PTV¹⁴) shuttles, as well as options that explore partnerships

with existing and new private transportation services, such as rideshare and pedicab businesses.

Strategy: Consider strategic curbside management that accommodates pickup, drop-off, and unloading for car sharing, shuttle, and delivery services.



¹⁴ Personal transportation vehicles (PTVs) most often appear as modified golf carts



Public Outreach

What is it & Why does it matter?

The robust Public Input Series shows that Woodstock has a passion for preserving its home and making it a place of pride. To ensure that each community member feels this way, education and inclusion must be prioritized in a way that eliminates the spread of misinformation and creates effective, equitable measures. Knowing that collaboration inspires momentum through the sharing of ideas and resources, this Sustainability Plan aims to equip the people of Woodstock with the tools to practice sustainability beyond these 7 Focus Areas. For example, residents may begin practicing good stewardship by supporting businesses and services that openly commit to responsible, ethical practices.



Goal 14: Raise public awareness of and participation in the City's sustainability initiatives

Task 14A: Document sustainability efforts in Woodstock

Description: Most elements of sustainability can be replicated by any single person or group, making knowledge an essential resource in this field. As new information comes to light and new programs begin to form, showcasing the City's progress helps inspire the larger community by communicating how people can stay informed and get involved.

Strategy: Create and maintain a database of relevant programs, projects, networks, and resources, and consider naming this the Woodstock Sustainability Hub.

Strategy: Highlight current events and share sustainability-related content with the public on social media.

Strategy: Create a sustainability-related brand, possibly including a mascot.

Task 14B: Strengthen public participation in City sustainability initiatives

Description: Since sustainability aims to improve quality of life, it is in the public's best interest to take an active role in shaping that reality. An accurate voice of the people is necessary to truly realize this goal, especially as the City takes on this responsibility with limited manpower.

Strategy: Consider creating a sustainability-focused education program for citizens similar to the Citizens Public Safety Academy. Representatives of each city department can help form the program.

Strategy: Recruit and partner with dedicated community members to volunteer for events and programs.

Strategy: Incorporate service organizations (e.g. Boy/Girl Scouts, honor societies, rotary clubs, etc.) into sustainability initiatives, especially projects that educate others. Sustainability Committee staff members can coordinate this collaboration.

Strategy: Send City representatives to community events to accomplish specific objectives outlined by this Plan.

Goal 15: Ensure Woodstock grows equitably

Task 15: Increase engagement with underrepresented and underserved communities

Description: To fully accept the concept of sustainability, Woodstock must play its part in addressing social inequity. As new conversations begin and more programs are implemented, the City must remember to be intentional, brave, and explicit while pursuing fairness and justice for each member of the community¹⁵.

Strategy: Investigate how to better engage and accommodate minorities and groups identified as protected classes (e.g. age, disability, national origin, pregnancy, race/color, sex, income, etc.)

Strategy: Promote youth engagement by being considerate of school schedules and by offering professional development opportunities for young people.

Strategy: Better accommodate specialized diets at events by advertising menus in advance, avoiding cross contamination, and considering the needs of those with allergies, diabetes, celiac disease, and plant-based diets¹⁶.



Every person is a stakeholder when it comes to sustainability. Every voice deserves a seat at the table.

¹⁵ Based on: A Guide to Equitable, Community-Driven Climate Preparedness Planning: Racial Equity Evaluation Tool, pg. 2. <https://www.usdn.org/products-climate.html>.

¹⁶ These circumstances often have a significantly smaller environmental impact, and they can even cost less than more traditional food options!

Goal 16: Educate and encourage businesses and schools to adopt more sustainable practices

Task 16: Promote Green Building incentives

Description: Since 2010, the City of Woodstock has offered rebates for a percentage of permit fees for obtaining a variety of green building certifications such as LEED, Earthcraft, and ENERGY STAR®. These incentives have never been heavily used, so more work should be done to promote them, and to increase incentives where possible.



Strategy: Periodically review green building incentives to gauge their effectiveness and whether they can be strengthened or modified as certification programs change.

Strategy: Publicize current incentives to target audiences like developers and builders.

Goal 17: Engage subject experts

Task 17A: Invite sustainability-related subject matter experts to employee trainings, summits, and other speaking engagements

Description: When planning City events such as the Transportation Summit, Georgia Cities Week, or Morning Influence, engage sustainability experts to bring related content to these events and help educate the public from a non-governmental perspective.

Task 17B: Provide green site and building-related training for City employees and the community

Description: With the amount of growth Woodstock has been experiencing, green site and building design strategies should be incorporated into the mix of training opportunities to help create better, more efficient projects and with no added cost if properly planned. Furthermore, when individuals are willing to produce green projects, staff must be ready to inspect those projects. Southface Institute, among other entities, offers training to the public and professionals on these green building practices and related topics.



Government Operations

What is it & Why does it matter?

Government is the primary organizing body of a community, giving its actions and priorities the potential to affect sustainability efforts in a major way. There are some projects that, if not led by the government, would not get off the ground for lack of funding or follow-through. When the local government leads by example, the rest of the community will likely see value in engaging in the same activities. By creating and adopting this Sustainability Plan, the City is making a commitment to maintain and enforce these measures. Therefore, as an institution, our own facilities and operations are the best, most logical place to start.



Goal 18: Promote sustainable practices within local government operations.

Task 18A: Form and maintain a staff Sustainability Committee to carry out the Tasks and Strategies in this Plan

Description: Leaders from each department will need to contribute for successful implementation of this extensive Plan. The City Manager may appoint members to formalize the committee; however, all City staff are welcomed as regularly scheduled meetings are convened to carry out these recommended Tasks and Strategies.

Strategy: Provide training on the Sustainability Plan and the Sustainability Policy to all City employees.

Strategy: Formalize an in-house procedure for tracking key performance metrics, and formulate new Tasks and Strategies as needed while updating the Mayor and City Council regularly.

Strategy: Consider incentivizing participation by rewarding employees who are active on this committee and/or its initiatives.

Task 18B: Integrate environmental justice concepts into City training opportunities, functions, and decision-making processes

Description: Negative impacts on a society almost always have disproportionate effects on certain members of that community, and this pattern applies to environmental concerns as well. Protected classes were identified and considered in federal policies to provide insight on which people face increased risks. These populations live in less resilient circumstances than their counterparts, due to

systematic and now unconscious exclusion and discrimination. As a servant of the entire Woodstock community, the City government must commit to addressing these issues.

Strategy: Explore strategies within the Atlanta Regional Commission’s policies on Regional Equity and Inclusion¹⁷ and develop an appropriate action plan for implementing this task.

Task 18C: Identify grants and other funding opportunities to further the City’s sustainability goals

Description: Several departments are capable of winning grant funding to further the City’s sustainability goals, especially Planning, Public Works, and Parks & Recreation. Members of the Sustainability Committee should continuously identify potential opportunities and attempt to budget for matching funds each year.

Goal 19: Reduce overall environmental impact of City-owned facilities

Task 19A: Defer to more efficient, sustainable practices when making purchases, repairing, or replacing features in City facilities

Description: When high quality upgrades become common practice, we reduce our need to make repairs in the first place and ensure that each replacement increases productivity in addition to being functional. We also normalize making responsible, intentional choices that side with our values instead of just serving our basic needs.

¹⁷ <https://atlantaregional.org/regional-equity-and-inclusion/>

¹⁸ <https://www.carbonreductionchallenge.org/home/past-projects>

Strategy: Adopt a policy formalizing this practice with input from the Staff Sustainability Committee and provide training to all city employees who maintain City facilities or handle purchases.

Task 19B: Establish a reduction target for emissions accounted for in the Greenhouse Gas Inventory

Description: The Greenhouse Gas Inventory in this Plan accounts for emissions produced by City of Woodstock facilities and is not a full inventory of the emissions produced within the bounds of the City limits. Once an accurate measure of Woodstock’s carbon footprint is reported, we must take appropriate action to assess and reduce our impact as a community.

Strategy: Hire a consultant and/or require training for at least one staff member to perform a comprehensive GHG inventory for City facilities.

Strategy: Begin converting non-emergency vehicles for alternative fuel use.

Strategy: Identify other opportunities to reduce the carbon footprint of City operations such as the Carbon Reduction Challenge database¹⁸, which contains scalable case studies that may even be pursued by the community at large.



Goal 20: Ensure the continuation of established programs

Task 20A: Dedicate a full-time staff member to the management of sustainability matters

Description: As the City builds and pursues such an extensive portfolio of sustainability initiatives, a dedicated coordinator becomes increasingly necessary to assure successful policy implementation, conduct regular quality checks, and propose new measures to make advancements and avoid stagnation. This task is recommended to be completed in phases.

Phase 1: Incorporate sustainability into the job description of a specific staff member in each department.

Phase 2: Hire a part-time staff member or student intern to establish and maintain tracking systems for sustainability-related efforts.

Phase 3: Establish a full-time job position that is primarily concentrated on the advancement of sustainability efforts.



Task 20B: Maintain Green Communities certification at the highest attainable level

Description: For the past decade, the Green Communities Manual has served as Woodstock's sustainability roadmap. As the ARC raises its standards with each manual update, the Green Communities program remains the best outside benchmark to measure the City's progress in sustainability.

Strategy: Amend the Performance Metrics to include actively pursued and progressing measures.

Strategy: Align new projects and programs with unfulfilled measures in the Green Communities Manual.

Strategy: Develop a system for regularly creating educational material on pursued Green Communities measures.

Task 20C: Align the City with sustainability-related commitments and partnerships

Description: True to the overarching vision, this final Goal and Task of the Sustainability Plan explicitly call for the creation of a lasting legacy for the City of Woodstock. By exploring related networks and joining appropriate pledges, the City may further institutionalize Woodstock's commitment to the challenge and responsibility of protecting the future of humanity, ensuring these living standards to all residents even as governing structures may change.

Strategy: Consider new partnerships with sustainability-focused networks (e.g. UN RCE Greater Atlanta¹⁹, 100 Resilient Cities, ICLEI - Local Governments Organizing for Sustainability, Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, the Southeast Sustainability Directors Network, etc.)

¹⁹ United Nations Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development

FUTURE EFFORTS

Plan Update Process
Tracking & Reporting



Plan Update Process

After the adoption of this Plan, the citizen and staff Sustainability Committees will convene in 5 years to update the Plan's goals, tasks, and vision as needed. The updated Plan will be presented to the Woodstock Mayor and City Council for adoption and will include a report of accomplishments and new recommendations.

Tracking & Reporting

The Sustainability Committee will be responsible for creating a Short-Term Work Program for the implementation of this Plan. Green Communities measures and other tracking-related recommendations should be prioritized so that annual updates may be presented to the Mayor and Council.

