

III. The Plan

A. Organizational Structure

The sustainability program is currently managed with minimal part-time staff, and there is a need to address whether the substance of the program will be carried out through volunteer hours or whether the program demands increased staffing. While staff has cultured an underlying sustainability program for the City, it is not publically known. The public recognizes a Sustainability Commission and Director of Sustainability but is not aware of other sustainability efforts made by each department. Because the sustainability program is housed within the Community Development Department, it receives less recognition than if it were a stand-alone department where a separate budget, webpage, and staff would make the program more visible and legitimate to the public. Additionally, if the sustainability program for the City of Dunwoody is to grow, more staff resources are required. While the current staffing levels have allowed the City to accomplish a great deal in five years, it is recommended that a full-time, dedicated staff position be established to continue to expand and strengthen the program. Nearby examples of this kind of program include City of Decatur, Georgia Institute of Technology, City of Atlanta, and many of Atlanta's fortune 500 companies, such as Coca-Cola.

Additionally, this Plan will lay out the position staff should hold for sustainability matters—whether staff should be a sustainability advocate or a sustainability conduit. Addressing that fundamental position of staff will inform the remainder of staff's roles and responsibilities moving forward.

Goals for Sustainability:

Expand the capability of the staff to increase the reach and impact of the sustainability program:

- Route decisions from other Departments affecting sustainability through staff for awareness and comment.
- Work with a member from City Council when sustainable policies are proposed.
- Plan for growth of sustainability staff- Hire full-time sustainability staff person in addition to one part-time position.

B. Resource Conservation and Waste Reduction

Current Reality

Members of the community discussed how they perceived the current reality of Resource Conservation and Waste Reduction in the City. Several respondents indicated that there was a lack of regulations and bylaws in the City that have “teeth” in protecting these resources. An additional concern is the negative impact of climate change, as well as associated stormwater issues. Many citizens in the City also have seemingly conflicting concerns regarding sustainability and the preservation of natural resources. They believe actions to accommodate these issues potentially infringe on property rights. There is a fine line, but the City of Dunwoody would like to marry these concepts for people to enjoy their land without causing a detriment to the greater community. Thoughtful application of policies and ordinances and variance procedures will foster this dynamic.

Assets

The group was able to define a plethora of assets, as the Dunwoody community is a testament to sound policy, access to resources, and other assets that preserve and protect the quality of life in the community. While the list of responses was numerous, the most frequently cited were: the Dunwoody Nature Center and all it has to offer (location with natural resources, dedicated staff, and a master plan of their own); access to a number of community recycling drop-offs, as well as free recycling from DeKalb County; the community gardens; intellectual capital (libraries, internet, and environmental blogs); numerous community organizations (e.g.: DHA, Eagle Scouts, etc); Dunwoody Sustainability Commission; and policy and leadership from City Council.

Descriptions of Success

The most common response to what would best define success in the area of Resource Conservation and Waste Reduction was overwhelmingly that community members and visitors act as stewards of the natural environment. Other popular responses were that the City should provide continual learning about natural areas and species to inform appropriate restoration and protection efforts and the broad applicability of sustainability-focused ordinances.

A sustainable city preserves and values the natural resources it has while reducing its waste. The City of Dunwoody wishes to protect its natural resources while preserving property rights and the necessary aspects of beneficial growth and development.

1. Energy

The City of Dunwoody already has begun pursuing initiatives to reduce energy consumption by adopting an outdoor lighting ordinance and LEED® building policy for municipal buildings. In order to further the increased energy efficiency goal, the City strives to:

Goal 1: Amend city actions/purchasing policy to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency

- Action 1: Complete an audit of government buildings to determine where investments in energy savings can be made.

- Action 2: Create timeline/funding goals, sources for efficiency investments.
- Action 3: Work with the Police, Public Works, and Community Development Departments to consider alternatively fueled vehicles for non-emergency fleet.
- Action 4: Create timeline/funding goals, sources for energy efficiency investments.

Goal 2: Amend city policy to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency

- Action 1: Amend the municipal LEED® building policy to require that specific energy savings are used when economics prevents the City from pursuing certification.
- Action 2: Pursue PACE financing, Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) or other ways of working with non-governmental agencies through partnerships to promote residential renewable energy.
- Action 3: Evaluate and pursue incentives for new construction to incorporate educational renewable projects (LEED® innovation credits, development incentives, etc.).

Goal 3: Create educational campaign for city staff and public on renewable options/energy efficiency

- Action 1: Create educational materials, partner with local schools to adopt similar policies of energy efficiency, lights off/power down, and create and utilize other educational resources.
- Action 2: Create educational materials for development community about energy incentives, have materials available on City website, and distribute.

2. Green Building

In order to be competitive, portions of the commercial real estate market would benefit from green building techniques. Especially within the Perimeter office market, tenants often seek LEED® certified or energy efficient buildings that set these spaces apart from competing buildings. The last office building built within Perimeter Center was constructed in 1987. While entitlements exist for new buildings, there has not been any development activity on that scale in many years. It could be many more before those projects materialize. In the meantime Perimeter office space is being compared to newer buildings in Atlanta, Buckhead, and Sandy Springs that do offer LEED® and energy efficiency products. Dunwoody can be a leader in green building by setting up meaningful policies that guide development and retrofits.

Goal 1: Amend Zoning/Land Development Ordinances to incentivize green building

- Action 1: Incentivize green building standards by amending the Zoning/Land Development Ordinances.
- Action 2: Initiate a City green building certification for recognition and promotion of utilizing sustainable building practices.

Goal 2: Provide incentives for green building (outside of LEED)

- Action 1: Research and develop contacts/partnerships at other certifying organizations: Energy Star, Earth Craft (SouthFace).
- Action 2: Pursue ordinance that accommodates additional certifications and provide educational resources to contractors and developers about the ordinance.

3. Recycling

The City of Dunwoody would like to continue its tradition of high recycling participation because of its importance to reducing the waste stream and promoting resource reuse. In summer 2012, DeKalb County removed the \$30 initiation fee for residential recycling to increase participation. The City can capitalize on this decision through increased education and awareness of the program and ease of use. The Sustainability Commission underwent a school recycling initiative that began at the end of the 2011 school year. That initiative wrapped up in 2013 after a program was introduced in each Dunwoody school. Commercial sector recycling is not tracked the same way as residential; therefore, it is difficult to determine the current level of participation. The Committee has now initiated a business recycling program to inform businesses of recycling carrier options and the materials they accept. That program began in fall 2012 in partnership with the Dunwoody Chamber, but Committee members are finding it difficult to effect change at an individual business-level. Additional actions to address the goal of increased participation are enumerated below:

Goal 1: Increase recycling infrastructure

- Action 1: Increase recycling and reduce littering by installing trash and recycling receptacles along streetscapes.
- Action 2: Investigate establishing City municipal sanitation when intergovernmental agreement with DeKalb County expires in 2015.
- Action 3: Work with multi-family developments to provide recycling services and require it in any new developments through an ordinance amendment.

Goal 2: Educate public/commercial businesses about recycling options

- Action 1: Establish a residential recycling campaign to increase recycling participation by 25 percent before 2020.
- Action 2: Develop recycling education initiative for institutional uses when business recycling initiative complete.
- Action 3: Establish a relationship with DeKalb schools and develop a tracking program to ensure recycling programs continue with matriculation of students and their parent/guardian volunteers.

4. Composting

While adding infrastructure and developing a recycling educational program help decrease the waste stream, it does not address a central component of waste in our city: food waste. Food waste accounts for over 27% of waste, and handling it in an environmentally responsible manner can greatly reduce our waste stream, thus lessening the burden on landfills and providing a valuable resource for agriculture and gardening by creating compost.

Goal 1: Educate homeowners/renters and commercial food production facilities about benefits of composting.

- Action 1: Develop a “how to” program in partnership with Dunwoody Nature Center

Goal 2: Provide resources for homeowners for home composting

- Action 1: Develop educational materials
- Action 2: Develop a kitchen counter bin giveaway.

Goal 3: Initiate commercial composting pilot project

- Action 1: Evaluate potential partner facilities and suitable size for pilot project.
- Action 2: Create partnerships with the haulers and 5-10 restaurants, hotels, etc.
- Action 3: Pursue funding and necessary infrastructure for project.

5. Municipal Waste

The City's purchasing policy was adopted by ordinance in 2010. While many beneficial actions have been made as a result of the policy, it should be better integrated into City processes to maximize its effectiveness. Strategies for the integration are as follows:

Goal 1: Develop action strategy for ensuring all existing purchasing policies are followed

- Action 1: Conduct annual trainings to remind staff of those policies and incorporate into new member training.
- Action 2: Develop a policy for certain purchases to be reviewed by the Director of Sustainability to ensure compliance with applicable policies.

Goal 2: Implement traceable standards and tracking systems

- Action 1: Track municipal printing and implement a department printing reduction competition to reduce printing by 25 percent within the first year.
- Action 2: Develop an Environmental Management System to track municipal consumption and adopt reduction goals.

Goal 3: Adjust policy

- Action 1: Adopt a paperless meeting policy for all official public meetings.

6. Trees

Trees are integral to the identity and welfare of Dunwoody. The tornado that struck the City in 1998 destroyed some of the City's most notable tree canopy, where its absence is still recognizable today. With that in mind, trees not only need to be replenished to reestablish those that were lost but also to maintain the existing canopy. The City completed a tree inventory and assessment of trees located on public land. The assessment was adopted as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan in September 2012. The consultants assessed the existing public tree canopy of 988 trees and determined it to be in good health. A maintenance plan has been established as a result of that assessment. Trees are a renewable resource that can be replaced if a careful plan is followed when removed for meaningful development. Additional actions to be taken to maintain and revitalize the canopy are as follows:

Goal: Assess existing conditions on a timeline

- Action 1: Conduct inventory assessments of public property as additional property is acquired and every five years subsequently.

- Action 2: Conduct a tree inventory and assessment of private trees within the City.

Goal 2: Set standards by number or percentage

- Action 1: Increase urban tree canopy by 25 percent before 2030.
- Action 2: Develop educational materials for tree care.

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