

# Environmental Sustainability

## SUMMARY

This Community Transformation Strategy is designed for a community trying to create an eco-friendly and sustainable approach to downtown revitalization, keeping in mind that the greenest building is one already built. Utilizing the Four Point Approach™, this strategy should focus on incentivizing green development, create a strong and resilient infrastructure and lay the foundation for policies and ordinances to encourage the highest and best use of existing resources.

## KEY DESCRIPTORS

Recycling, storm water management, resiliency, emergency preparedness, green infrastructure, LEED certification, renewable energy, regionalism, healthy, reuse, environment, renewable, eco-friendly, sustainable, compostable, biodegradable, low carbon footprint, net zero, low VOC, all natural, balanced, alternative, clean, energy-saving, innovative, responsible, salvaged, fair trade, farm-raised, non-toxic, conscious, efficient, waste-reducing, salvaged.



Sustainable development is that which meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

— Gro Harlem Brundtland

## PROS

This strategy aims to reduce lifetime energy costs.  
A goal of this strategy is renewable energy.  
Environmental sustainability encourages community resilience.  
This strategy is forward thinking.

## CONS

This strategy can require a high initial investment.  
This strategy can be political.  
Environmental sustainability needs a champion.

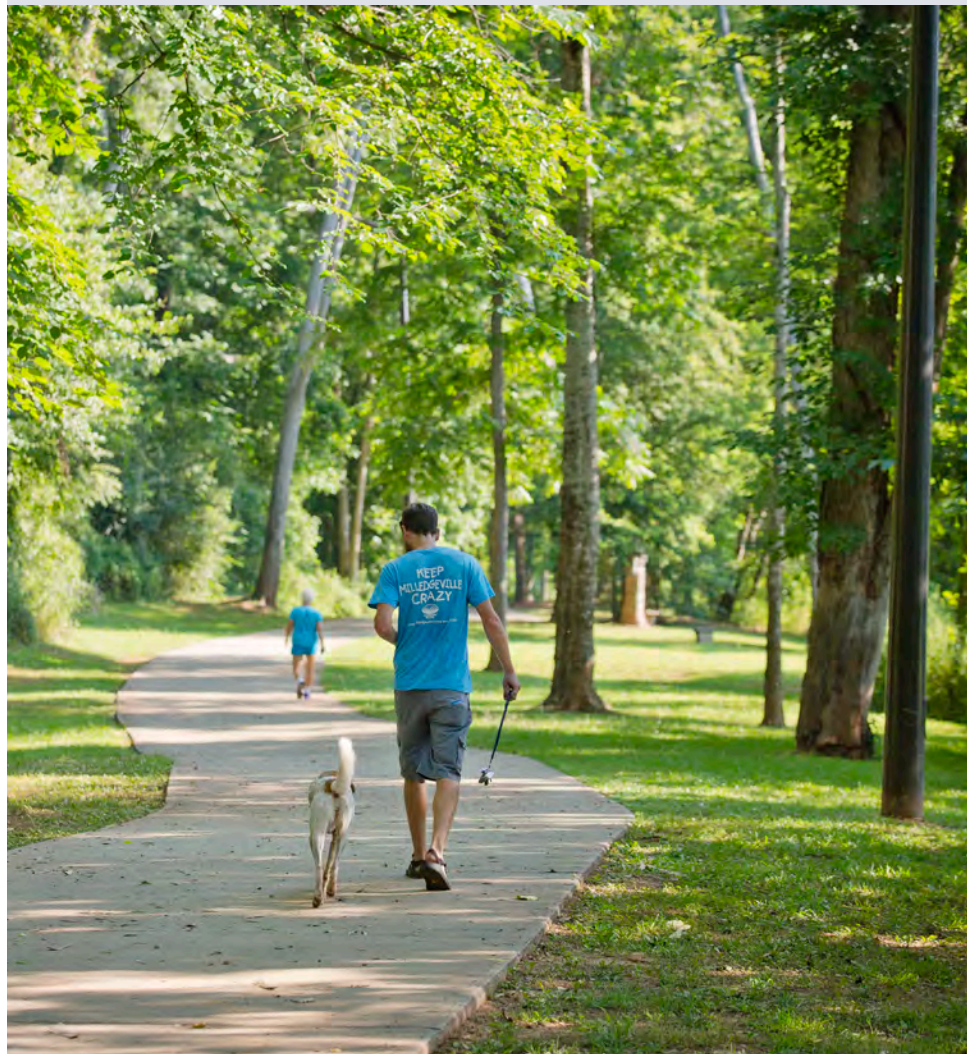
## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

This strategy needs to be marketed to like-minded people and organizations.  
It can be controversial if the scope is not clearly defined.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

What is your community's existing environmental ethic?  
What are your downtown's environmental vulnerabilities?  
Do you have any existing community partners or stakeholders that are already working on this initiative?  
Do you have any good potential adaptive reuse projects?  
Is there sufficient political will to support this strategy?

Milledgeville, ExploreGeorgia.org



# FOUR-POINT APPROACH ACTIVITIES

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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- Develop incentives to encourage preservation sensitive building updates.
- Offer a matching grant or facade grant program to encourage these updates.
- Work with power companies to provide energy audits for downtown businesses and offer a matching grant to those businesses who take advantage of the recommended changes.
- Provide communal grease traps.
- Recruit niche industries that are: zero waste, farm-to-table, regional and/or environmentally friendly.
- Offer tax abatements or tax freezes for newly renovated buildings that become LEED certified.
- Consider using the DDA to purchase historic buildings that have the potential to spark catalytic projects and then redeveloping them in a public-private partnership.
- Promote the rebate program offered through the Georgia Cities Foundation's Green Communities Fund.

## DESIGN

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- Educate local businesses about the positive impact of functional transom windows.
- Encourage the use of native plants and landscaping.
- Add recycling receptacles use by businesses and individual consumers.
- Use bioswales to enhance landscaping and to create positive environmental impact.
- Install a community rain garden and use it to water downtown vegetation.
- Consider permeable pavement for repaving projects downtown.
- Install bike racks.
- Install dog sanitation receptacles.
- Switch all lights downtown to LED bulbs.
- Install vehicle charging stations.
- Plant a pollinator garden.

## PROMOTIONS

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- Develop marketing materials to encourage alternative modes of transportation.
- Develop educational programs to encourage and explain the importance for energy and resource conservation.
- Identify partner organization and associations already doing similar things and see how the Main Street program can work more closely with them.
- Include recycling bins at events and festivals.
- Partner with youth organizations, civic clubs or higher educational institutions to host a litter pickup day.
- Develop a composting competition for local restaurants.
- Host a "dine downtown" week that offers menu items that are locally sourced and encourage farm-to-table eating.
- Encourage experiential tourism with pumpkin patches or Christmas tree lots hosted downtown.

## ORGANIZATION

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- Develop design guidelines to focus on energy efficiency and to encourage sustainable development to support LEED or Earthcraft standards.
- Develop ordinances to support the use of alternative power sources. i.e. solar panels.
- Adopt a tree ordinance.
- Adopt a demolition ordinance that spells out the types of properties and the conditions under which they can be demolished.
- Develop a local downtown composting program.
- Plant a community garden.
- Work with local emergency management services to develop an emergency preparedness plan specific to downtown.

# PARTNERS

Keep America Beautiful

Trees Atlanta

Georgia River Network

Audubon Society

Garden clubs

Land trusts

Forest service

Earthcraft, a program by Southface

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Environmental Protection Agency

Local schools and educational institutions

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Georgia Cities Foundation