



Local Actions for Sustainable Communities: An Interactive Dive into ARC's Green Communities Program



Georgia Planning Association
Fall Conference – Athens, GA
October 9, 2025



ONE
great
REGION

Vision

ONE **great** REGION

Mission

Foster thriving communities for all within the Atlanta region through collaborative, data-informed planning and investments.

Values

Excellence | **Integrity** | **Equity**

Goals

- ▶  **Healthy, safe, livable communities** in the Atlanta Metro area.
- ▶  **Strategic investments** in people, infrastructure, mobility, and preserving natural resources.
- ▶  Regional services delivered with **operational excellence** and **efficiency**.
- ▶  **Diverse stakeholders engage** and take a regional approach to solve local issues.
- ▶  **A competitive economy** that is inclusive, innovative, and resilient.

- 📖 Introductions
- 📖 Envisioning a Green Community
- 📖 Outlining ARC's Green Communities Program
- 📖 Diving into Planning-Related GC Measures
- 📖 Showcasing Your Communities
- 📖 Walking through Potential New GC Measures
- 📖 Identifying What's Missing
- 📖 Q&A

📖 **What will we
cover during
this session?**



Collaborative Visioning

Let's travel to 2050 together...

Join at menti.com | use code 7702 5142

 Mentimeter

What word or short phrase would you use to describe your Green Community?

fast bold
creative
inspiration leader focus
transpiration



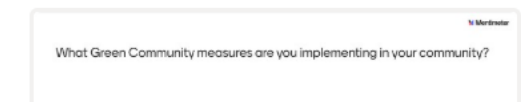
ARCC ✓

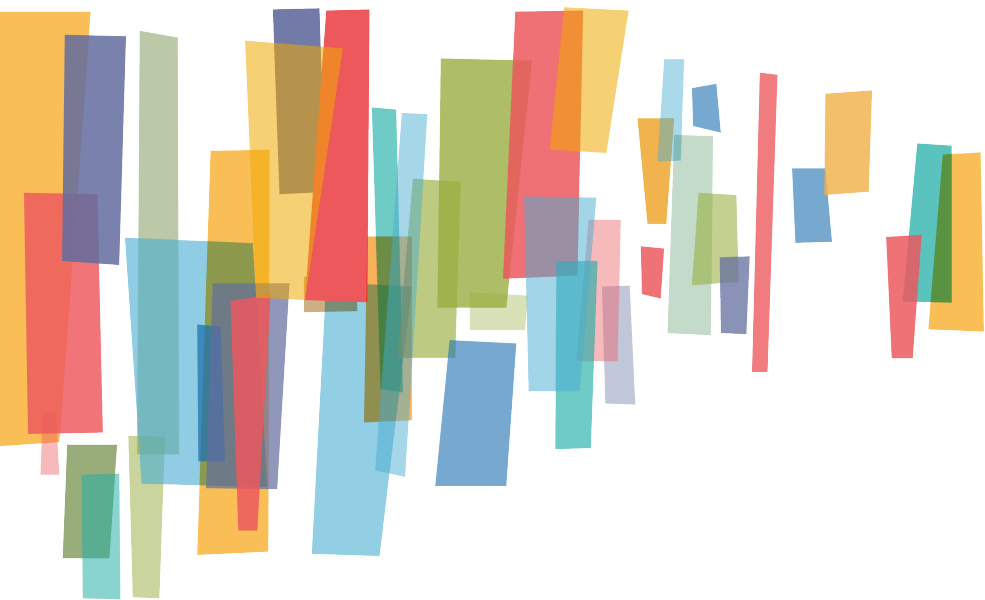
Menti

Green Communities Ses...



Choose a slide to present





Green Communities Overview

Local Governments Leading the Way to Sustainability

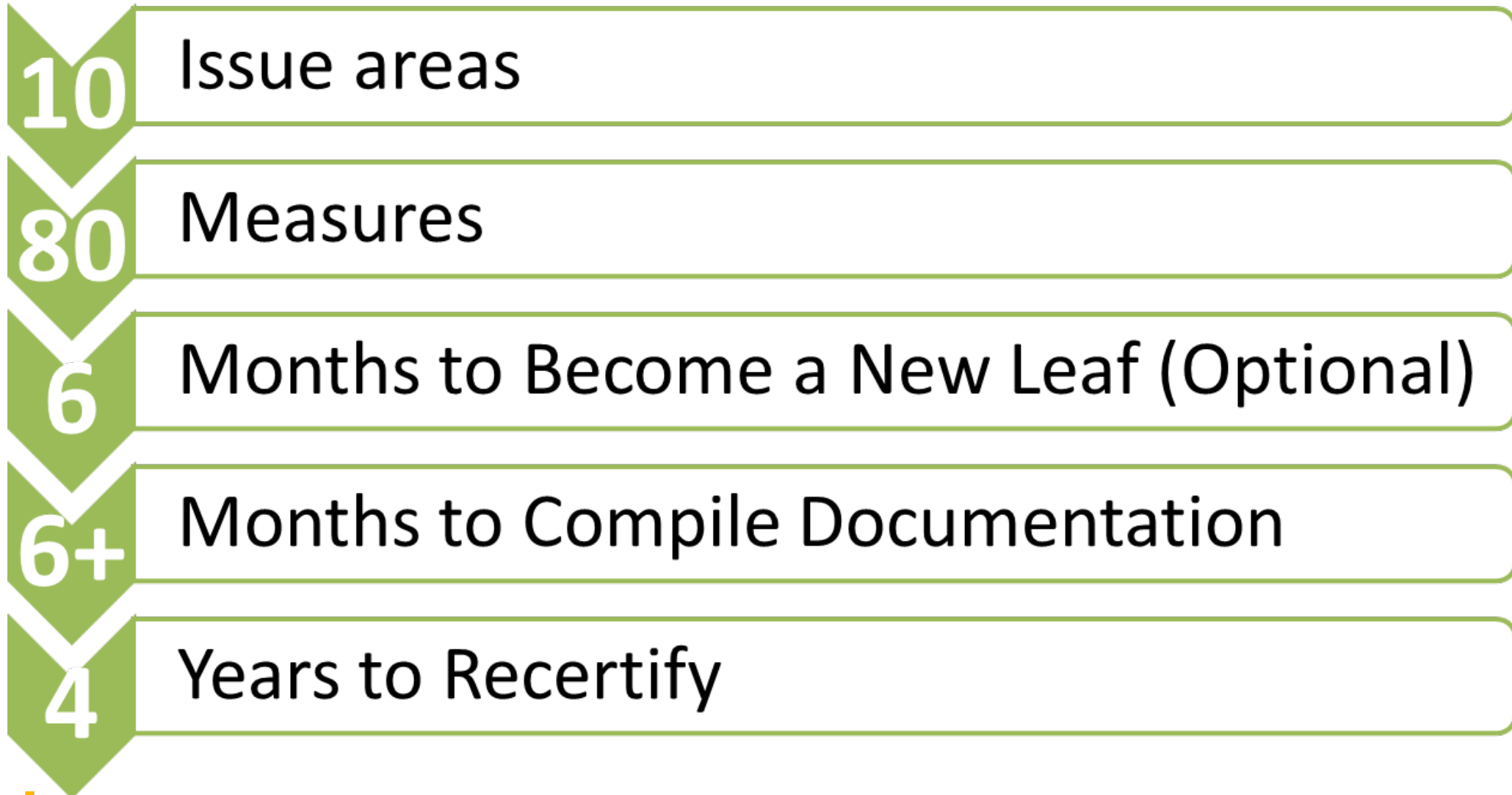


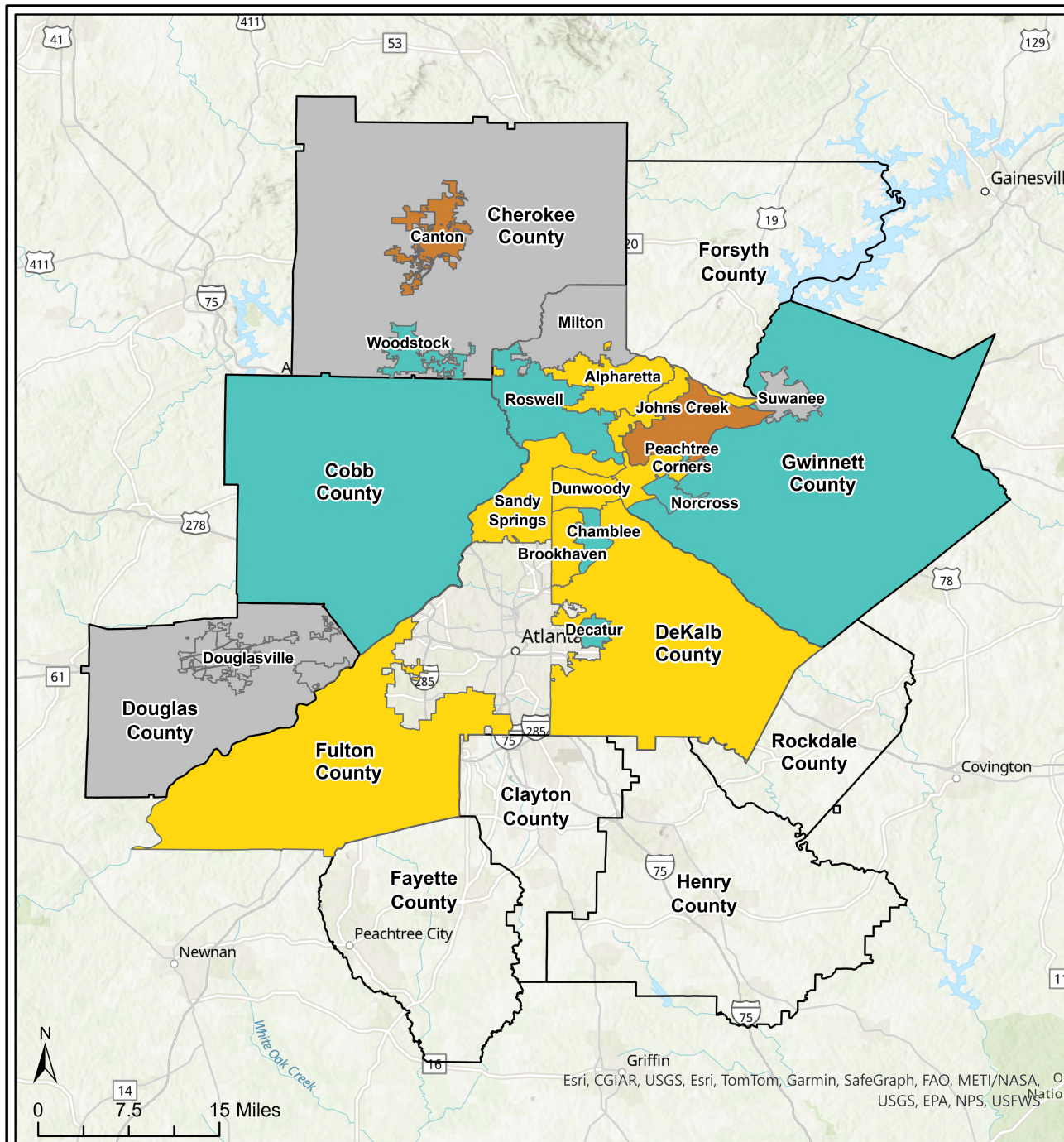
- Green Building
- Energy Efficiency
- Green Power
- Water Efficiency
- Trees & Greenspace
- Transportation
- Recycling & Waste Reduction
- Land Use
- Education
- Innovation





Certification Process by the Numbers





Atlanta Regional Commission Green Communities



Atlanta Regional Commission

Legend

Certification Status

- Platinum (330 - 435 points)
- Gold (280 - 329 points)
- Silver (230 - 279 points)
- Bronze (175 - 229 points)

PLATINUM

City of Chamblee
City of Decatur
City of Norcross
City of Roswell
City of Woodstock
Cobb County
Gwinnett County

SILVER

Cherokee County
City of Douglasville
City of Milton
City of Suwanee
Douglas County

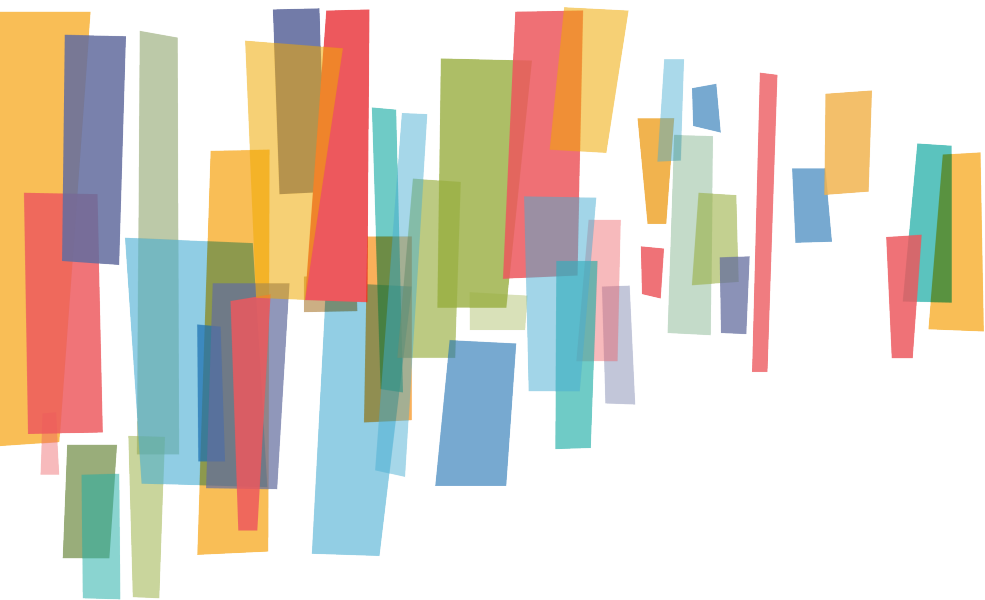
GOLD

City of Alpharetta
City of Brookhaven
City of Dunwoody
City of Peachtree Corners
City of Sandy Springs
DeKalb County
Fulton County

BRONZE

City of Johns Creek
City of Canton





Dive Into Planning-Related Green Communities Measures

Green Building



Green Building Incentives

- Ordinance or policy that offers incentives for builders to seek green building certifications such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), EarthCraft, and ENERGY STAR
- Examples: expedited review process, reduced or waived development fees, density bonuses, etc.

Green Affordable Housing Incentives

- Ordinance or policy that offers incentives specifically for affordable and workforce housing entities to seek green building certifications (listed above)
- Examples: expedited review process, reduced or waived development fees, density bonuses, etc.

Energy Efficiency



Active Energy Codes Inspection & Enforcement

- Active inspection for compliance with the Georgia State Energy Code for Buildings
- The physical inspection shall encompass all items required to show compliance with the Georgia Energy Code
- Only conducting an insulation inspection or simply accepting the REScheck/COMcheck checklists completed by builders does not suffice as an active inspection

Outdoor Lighting Efficiency

- Ordinance or policy in place to require the efficient operation of outdoor lighting throughout the community by limiting misdirected, excessive, or unnecessary outdoor lighting on both public and private property
- Example: adoption of a night sky ordinance that meets the guidelines of the International Dark Sky Association

Trees and Greenspace



Greenspace Plan

- Develop, adopt, and implement a greenspace plan that provides for connectivity of protected greenspace within and among communities

Parking Lot Canopy Requirements

- Develop and enforce parking lot canopy standards that result in 50% canopy coverage of impervious parking surfaces within 15 years of completion
- The policy is equivalent to or exceeds the shade requirement in two of the following ways:
 - At least one overstory tree for every eight parking spaces
 - At least 200 square feet of contiguous soil space per overstory tree
 - No parking space shall be more than 40 feet from a tree

Trees and Greenspace



Forest Master Plan

- Develop a comprehensive analysis of community forests and trees
- Plans should include:
 - Current tree canopy coverage and existing tree species (as well as populations of each)
 - Short-term and long-term goals for the status of local forests
 - Applicable action items and implementation tools
 - Outline species that are indigenous to the local community recommended for residents to plant, as well as invasive species that should be eradicated and/or avoided

Local Foods Systems Plan

- Develop, adopt and implement a local food systems plan to influence and shape how food is produced, processed, distributed, consumed and disposed of within the community

Transportation and Air Quality



Complete Streets

- Adopt a complete streets policy or ordinance
- Includes the following elements:
 - Definition of “all users” to include pedestrians, bicyclists, transit passengers of all ages and abilities, as well as trucks, buses and automobiles
 - Applicability to both new and retrofit projects and covers all roads with noted exceptions
 - Clear guidelines for exceptions and a procedure that requires high-level approval of exceptions
 - Makes the use of the latest and best design criteria, and directs implementation of complete streets in a context-sensitive manner
 - Includes specific next steps for implementation of the policy

Shared/Reduced Parking

- Amend development regulations to encourage shared parking, joint parking, and/or reduce parking requirements (such as adopting a max parking requirement)

Transportation and Air Quality



Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

- Adopt bike and pedestrian friendly policies through either a bicycle and pedestrian plan or a transportation plan that includes a bicycle and pedestrian section
- Includes policies, standards, evaluation of current infrastructure needs, a list of proposed and/or ongoing projects, and assessment of future system requirements for bicyclists and pedestrians

Plug-In Electric Vehicle Readiness

- The local government has taken steps to become Electric Vehicle ready by doing at least one of the following:
 - Updating codes and zoning, parking rules, or other local ordinances to allow for charging stations
 - Passing an ordinance that would restrict HOA's from allowing covenants that prevent the installation of charging stations in the community
 - Revising permitting and inspection processes to support the installation of charging equipment and the development of charging station networks
 - Installing a charging station for public use
 - Developing an Electric Vehicle Strategy with an implementation timeline

Land Use



Historic Preservation Ordinance

- Adopt a historic preservation ordinance
- Should provide for:
 - the establishment of a Historic Preservation Commission
 - the identification and designation of historic properties or districts
 - the issuance of certificates of appropriateness
 - the establishment of an appeals procedure

Smart Growth Incentives

- Offer incentives that support smart growth, such as
 - incentives for development and redevelopment in existing downtown areas
 - transit-oriented development
 - traditional neighborhood development
 - mixed use development and/or infill development

Land Use



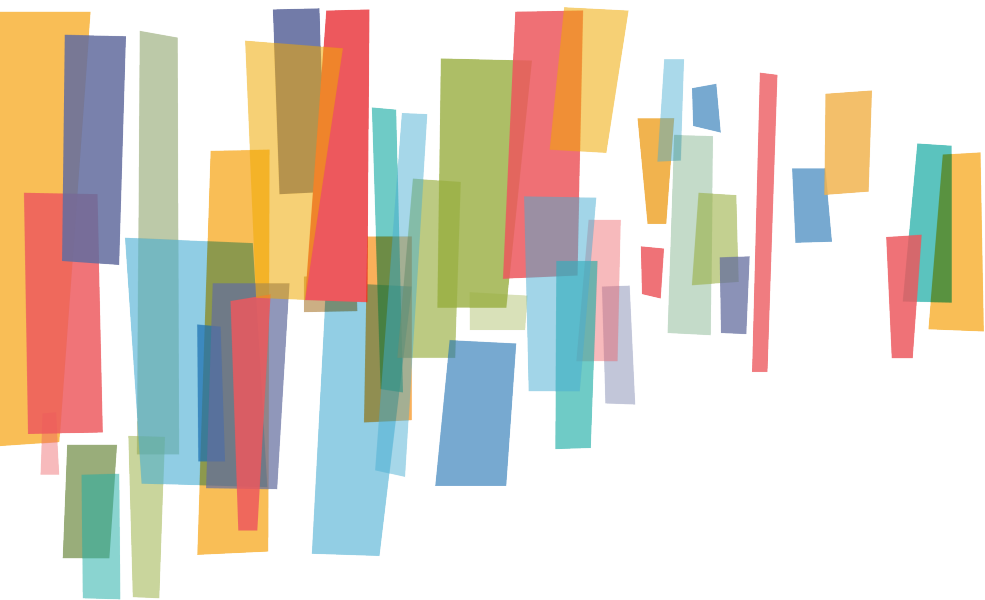
Revitalization Incentives/Strategies

- Analyze potential areas and develop incentives and/or other revitalization strategies for reuse of buildings, greyfield redevelopment and/or brownfield redevelopment
- Make this information available to developers and promote

Education

Community Sustainability Plan

- Develop, adopt and implement a sustainability plan
- Must include:
 - vision statement and a comprehensive set of goals for becoming a sustainable community
 - regional and global sustainability issues such as water consumption, air pollution, energy use, and waste reduction
 - performance metrics to track progress towards goals
 - action plans that have roles for government, citizens, businesses, schools, and civic organizations



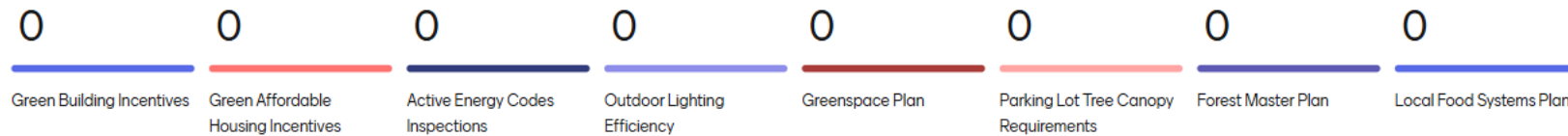
Showcasing Your Community's Actions



Join at menti.com | use code 7702 5142



What Green Communities measures are you implementing in your community?

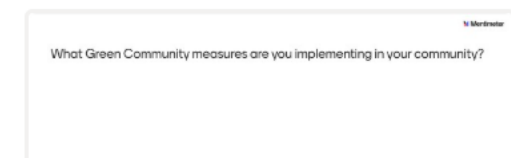


Menti

Green Communities Ses...



Choose a slide to present





Join at menti.com | use code 7702 5142



What Green Communities measures are you implementing in your community?

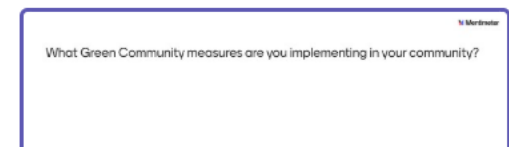


Menti

Green Communities Ses...



Choose a slide to present





Join at menti.com | use code 7702 5142

Mentimeter

What results have you seen or experienced as a result of putting these measures in place?

All responses to your question will be shown here

Each response can be up to 200 characters long

Turn on voting to let participants vote for their favorites

Menti

Green Communities Ses...

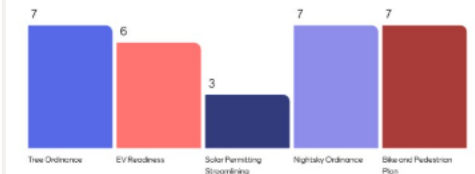


Choose a slide to present

What word or short phrase would you use to describe your Green Community?

chartreuse
blue
green
economically competitive
effective
cool
greenish
calm
innovative
smart and responsible
sustainable

What Green Community measures are you implementing in your community?



What Green Community measures are you implementing in your community?



Join at menti.com | use code 7702 5142



What types of barriers might local governments face to participate in a program like Green Communities?

All responses to your question will be shown here

Each response can be up to 200 characters long

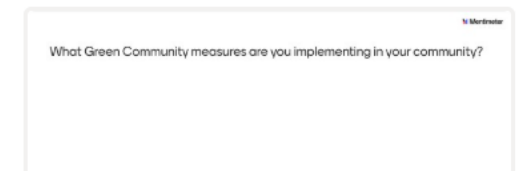
Turn on voting to let participants vote for their favorites

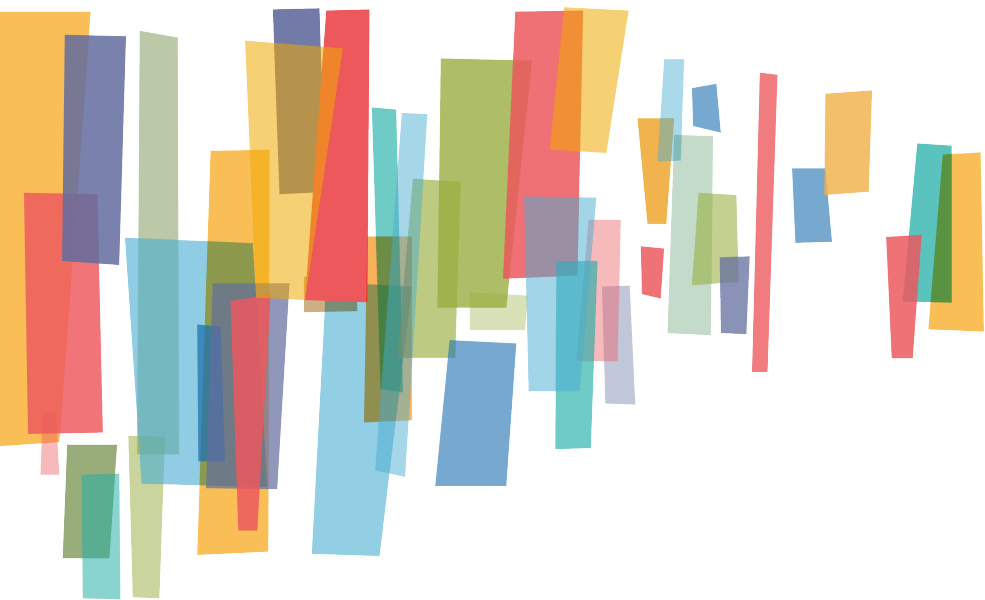
Menti

Green Communities Ses...



Choose a slide to present





Potential New Green Communities Measures

Let's take a walk...

Potential Measures Interactive Gallery Walk

5 Posters around the room

- Name of proposed measure
- What, How, Example

Provide Feedback

- Is this an action that your community might implement?
- What might make this difficult or impossible in your community? What barriers do you see to implementation?
- What would make this possible in your community? What tools, resources, or assistance would you need to make implementation happen?

Group Report Out

- One person per poster volunteer to share what's been written

Join at menti.com | use code **7702 5142**

 Mentimeter

Thinking back to what a Green Community is/could be: What are we missing?

All responses to your question will be shown here

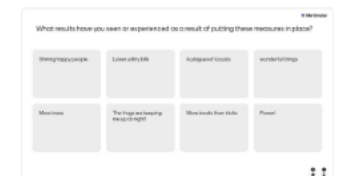
Each response can be up to 200 characters long

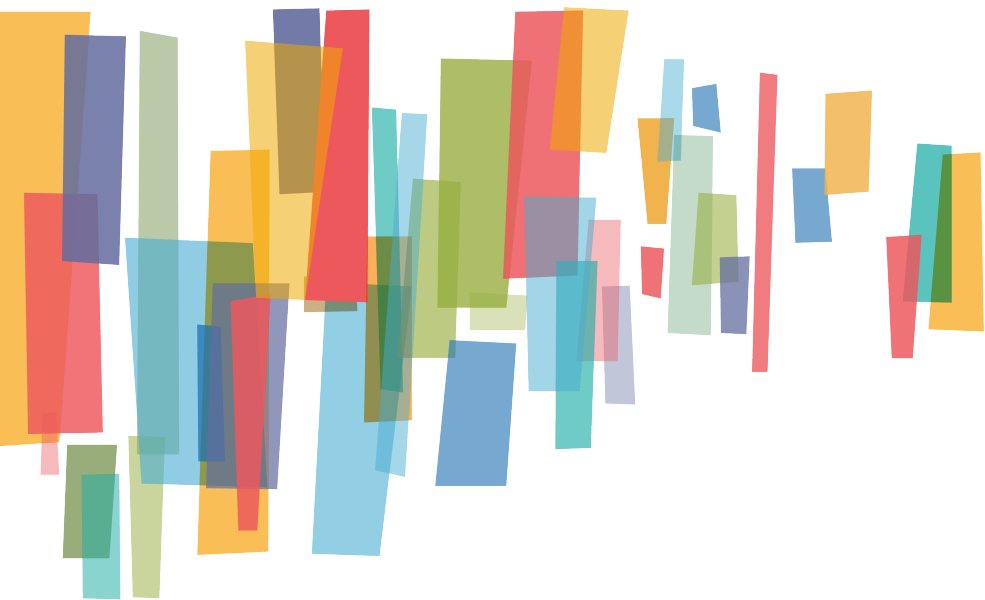
Turn on voting to let participants vote for their favorites

Menti

Green Communities Ses...  

Choose a slide to present





Questions & Answers

Stay Connected to Climate Change & Resilience at ARC



WHO WE ARE WHAT WE DO RESOURCES

atlantaregional.org/climatechange

Climate@atlantaregional.org

Home > What We Do > Climate Change and Resilience

Climate Change and Resilience

ARC's Climate Change & Resilience program aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in metro Atlanta, support the transition to a lower-carbon economy, and help the region become more resilient to climate change and current and future extreme weather conditions. This program coordinates the agency's climate-related initiatives to ensure that climate change and resilience is considered in all of our planning work. As part of this, ARC is seeking grants to fund important climate change related planning initiatives, a first for the agency.

EXPLORE CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESILIENCE

- Overview
- Air Quality
- Green Communities Program
- Solar Resources and SolSmart
- Climate Pollution Reduction Grant

RELATED EVENTS

Energy and Climate Council
August 28, 2024, 10:00-12:00 PM

Energy and Climate Council
November 4, 2024, 10:00-12:00 PM

CLIMATE POLLUTION REDUCTION GRANT

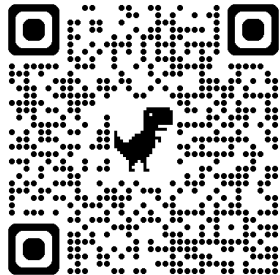
This federal EPA grant provides funding through the Inflation Reduction Act for climate action planning for

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION ELECTRIFICATION PLAN

This plan will provide a strategy to equitably accelerate the adoption of

GEORGIA ENERGYSHED PROJECT

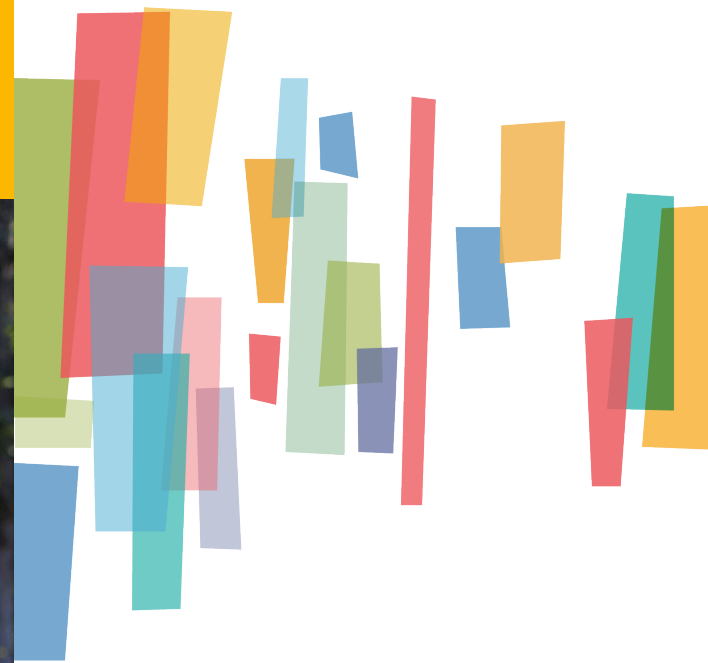
This project will analyze the benefits, costs, and effects of various electricity generation and distribution



**Green
Communities**

atlantaregional.org/greencommunities

The resiliency of our region—both today and tomorrow—**depends on all of us.**



ONE
great
REGION

Crystal Jackson

Planning Manager, Climate + Sustainability

cjackson@atlantaregional.org

Jon Philipsborn

Climate and Resilience Manager

jphilipsborn@atlantaregional.org

Lauren Wiggins

Energy and Resilience Principal Planner

lwiggins@atlantaregional.org