



Action Requested/Required:

- Vote/Action Requested
- Discussion or Presentation Only
- Public Hearing
- Report Date: _____
- Hearing Date: _____
- Voting Date: _____

Department: Public Works **Presenter(s) & Title:** Kelly Pendley - Public Works Operations Manager

Agenda Item Title:

Canton Sustainability Plan

Summary:

Requesting Action on adopting the City of Canton Sustainability Plan.

Budget Implications:

Budgeted? Yes No N/A

Total Cost of Project: Check if Estimated

Fund Source: General Fund Water & Sewer Sales Tax Other:

Staff Recommendations:

Staff Recommendation adoption of the Canton Sustainability Plan.

Reviews:

Has this been reviewed by Management and Legal Counsel, if required? Yes No

Attachments:

City of Canton Sustainability Plan

City of Canton Sustainability Plan

— Est 1834 —



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Introduction

Purpose and Importance

The City of Canton is proud to present its Sustainability Plan, a comprehensive roadmap designed to guide our community towards a more sustainable and resilient future. This plan underscores our commitment to balancing economic growth, social equity, and environmental stewardship, ensuring that our city remains a vibrant and desirable place to live, work, and play for generations to come. Sustainability plans are of paramount importance as they provide a strategic framework for cities to mitigate their environmental impact, adapt to changing conditions, and foster a high quality of life for all residents. By setting clear goals, strategies, and performance metrics, this plan will help us make informed decisions, allocate resources effectively, and measure our progress in achieving sustainability. Through this plan, we aim to create a city that is not only thriving today, but also prepared for the future.



Vision

In the City of Canton's 'Roadmap for Success', eight fundamental guiding principles have been delineated as the pillars for our future prosperity. Sustainability serves as a crucial cornerstone in the foundation of these principles. It is essential that we weave sustainability into our strategies to ensure a successful and resilient progression in our journey.



The Tenets for Canton's Future



Creating Great Neighborhoods

Safe, attractive, connected, and inviting neighborhoods are the foundation of Canton's hometown appeal. All residents deserve quality housing that reflects our community character through thoughtful design and responsible development practices.



Celebrating the Diversity in Our Community

The diverse cultures and communities within Canton are vibrant and engaging. Economic, cultural, and social diversity.



Advancing Regional Economic Success

Utilizing existing business strengths in industry, healthcare, and an entrepreneurial spirit, Canton seeks to expand its economic footprint. Diverse and innovative business growth will support jobs, attract investment, and create tourism opportunities.



Enhancing Historic Downtown Canton

Preservation, entrepreneurship, arts and culture, and community-centric activities are cornerstones of economic development within Downtown Canton. Benefiting the entire City, downtown redevelopment creates jobs, attracts investment, increases property values, and generates tourism.



Sustaining Our Natural Environment

Canton residents appreciate our natural beauty, proximity to the mountains, ample green spaces, and the Etowah River. Projects in the City will promote interaction with nature through sustainability, stewardship of resources, and innovative design.



Connecting Citizens to Parks and Recreation

A healthy community provides access to nature. Residents should be connected with local parks through trails, sidewalks, and additional transportation options. Recreational opportunities should be available and inclusive for all.



Improving Infrastructure for Future Demands

Citizens, businesses, and visitors need access to the Canton infrastructural network to succeed in their goals. Transportation, power supply, gas availability, water and sewer, and digital connectivity are part of building a great network for success.



Leading with Excellence

City Council, Staff, and Citizen Boards will foster civic participation and serve ethically, transparently, responsibly, and efficiently.

02 Canton Today

Sustainability Assessment & Performance Metrics

The City of Canton has long been a champion of sustainability, with numerous initiatives already in place. This Sustainability Plan represents the first consolidated documentation of these efforts. This section provides a comprehensive evaluation of our existing sustainability initiatives, laying the groundwork for future strategies. Each area of focus includes a set of performance metrics that the City will consider utilizing for assessing the impact of our sustainability efforts.



Energy & Buildings

Accomplishments & Current Programs:

- Commissioned the **Thomas Miller House Study**, which was completed in December 2020 and updated in 2022.
 - The report identified the trends, gaps, and opportunities for development codes and zoning.
 - The information was summarized in three categories: demographic and socioeconomic, housing availability, and housing affordability.
- Adopted the **Canton Green Plan** in May 2023, which includes the following initiatives:
 - The Green Building Policy utilizes several certification programs and benchmarks to ensure that all new buildings and major renovations constructed by the City will be sustainability designed, measured, and constructed. Reasonable exceptions are included to protect historically designated buildings and undue burden of adoption.
 - Community Green Building Incentives are included to encourage residential and commercial buildings to be built to a green standard. Reduction of permit review times and permit fees are offered to development projects as specified in the Plan.
 - Energy Start Purchasing Policy reduces the City's energy use and cost by purchasing ENERGY STAR rated products, equipment, and components.
 - Lights Out / Power Down Policy drives behavioral changes that reduce the energy use and cost for the City buildings and other activities. Behavioral recommendations include ensuring lights are turned off in spaces not being used, shutting down all office equipment at the end of the workday, avoiding plugging in seldom used office equipment until time of use, discontinuing interior decorative lighting unless they are LED lights, and recommending perimeter spaces that receive natural light use it instead of electric lights.
 - LED Light Bulb Policy will ensure that all end-of-life light fixtures and bulbs will be replaced with lower energy consuming LED options.



Accomplishments & Current Programs:

- Entered an **Energy Performance Contract** with Schneider Electric in 2023. **Scope of work includes:**
 - Performing energy audits at City-Owned facilities to understand current performance and savings opportunities.
 - Replacement of old Heating, Ventilation, Air-Conditioning (HVAC) equipment with new high efficiency units. The new equipment will improve energy efficiency, comfort and indoor air quality, reliability, and reduce maintenance burden.
 - Upgrading the outdated HVAC controls with new a EcoStruxure Building Automation System to allow efficient control management and proactive troubleshooting.
 - Repair of the City Hall roof using a new elastomeric cool roof coating that reduces cooling requirements and eliminates water infiltration issues.
 - Installation of a 70 kW DC roof mounted solar array and provide a real-time solar production monitoring platform



Performance Metrics to be considered for future tracking:

- **Energy Utilities that serve the area**
 - Cost Structures
 - Power plant source allocations
- **Energy Consumption**
 - Electricity, Natural Gas, etc.
 - City-Owned facilities
 - Residential
 - Commercial
- **Renewable energy sources**
 - Utility
 - City-Owned facilities
 - Other highlighted facilities
- **Renewable energy project permits**
- **Green House Gas Emissions**
 - City-Owned facilities
 - Residential
 - Commercial
 - Transportation
 - Solid Waste
- **Green Building Certifications**
 - City-Owned facilities
 - Other highlighted facilities

Land Use & Greenspace

Accomplishments & Current Programs:

- The City of Canton maintains a commitment to outdoor accessibility through its provision of public spaces and amenities. The city's offerings include six parks totalling 182 acres, two community gardens, a seasonal farmers market, and an outdoor gym facility.
- [Lake Canton / Hickory Log Creek Reservoir](#) provides residents with a reliable source of drinking water, recreational opportunities, and enhanced environmental conservation.
- Achieved [Tree City USA](#) status by meeting four core standards of sound urban forestry management: Maintaining a tree board or department, having a community tree ordinance, spending at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry, and celebrating Arbor Day
- Dedication of greenspace is required for development.
- [Harmon Park](#) projects are on track to be completed by Spring of 2023. These upgrades encompass a range of improvements including expanded trail systems, new field lights, infield sod, fencing, stormwater management, a gazebo, and recreational area upgrades.
- [South Canton Park](#) project currently in development that includes an amphitheatre, open lawn space, playgrounds, dog parks, and spaces for public art installations.
- [Etowah River Park](#) include a significant trail extension from the park to Old Doss Road, adding more than 1.5 miles of multiuse trail. Additionally, a demonstration solar system has been installed near the parking lot to increase visibility and showcase renewable energy in action.
- An experienced [Economic Development Team](#) collaborates with various development partners to offer substantial incentives to businesses seeking to relocate or expand. This specialized team is committed to facilitating growth opportunities and providing tailored support to enhance sustainable business development.
- Adopted Chapter 47, Article II [Historic Preservation Commission](#) to stimulate revitalization of the business districts and historic neighborhoods and to protect and enhance local historic and aesthetic attractions to residents, visitors and tourists and thereby promote and stimulate business.



Performance Metrics to be considered for future tracking:

- Quantity, acreage, availability of park and greenspace areas
- Public outdoor recreational areas
- Quantity of community gardens
- Tree canopy coverage
- Farmers market times and attendance
- Historic Building Preservation

Water & Waste Management

Accomplishments & Current Programs:

- [Wastewater treatment plant expansion](#) that began in 2021 marks the City's most significant capital improvement to date. This project will enhance the plant's capacity by 50% and incorporate advanced treatment technologies. Completion is expected in 2025, aligning with Canton's strategic goal of improving infrastructure to support sustainable growth.
- Reclaimed water is used to irrigate up to 500,000 gallons per day at Fairways of Canton.
- Partnership with [Upper Etowah River Alliance](#) for stream cleanup events
- In process of evaluating [Advanced Metering Infrastructure \(AMI\)](#). AMI enables real-time data collection and management of utility usage, promoting energy and water conservation. AMI systems help detect leaks, reduce waste, and allow for dynamic pricing, encouraging consumers to use utilities during off-peak hours, leading to more efficient resource use and reduced environmental impact.
- A residential curbside [recycling program](#) is provided and additional collection site available free to residents within city limits. In addition, Cherokee County Recycling center is available for harder to recycle items.
- Adopted the [Canton Green Plan](#) May 2023, which includes the following initiatives:
 - Recycling and Waste Reduction Policy outlines the City of Canton's guidelines for recycling and waste reduction aimed at both residents and government buildings. It includes increased recycling participation opportunities, a permanent glass drop-off location, curbside recycling services, and a program for non-traditional recyclables in government facilities. Additionally, the city hosts two annual community recycling events and provides at least two household hazardous waste disposal opportunities each year, along with weekly curbside yard debris collection for residents.
 - Sustainable Purchasing Policy is currently in process to be adopted in the Financial Plan. It is designed to integrate environmental considerations into the City's procurement of goods and services. It mandates that all departments purchase paper with a minimum of 30% recycled content and encourages the selection of products and packaging that are reusable or recyclable. Additionally, departments are urged to choose products that minimize waste and toxic by-products throughout their lifecycle. Exceptions to the policy are permitted when recycled products do not meet quality standards or when life cycle costs are considered.



Performance Metrics to be considered for future tracking:

- Water consumption
- Water usage by sector
- Treated wastewater used for secondary purposes
- Impaired streams
- Curbside recycling, yard waste, solid waste
- City waste programs
- Landfill diversion rates
- Electronics & battery collections

Transportation

Accomplishments & Current Programs:

- Adopted a [Transportation Master Plan](#) in January 2023 to inform future decisions, incorporating demographic trends, travel patterns, and alternative projects to address anticipated demand. The plan outlines 67 prioritized projects that cover policies, programs, strategies, projects, associated costs, and potential funding sources to ensure the transportation system meets short, intermediate, and long-term needs.
- Encourage carpooling and alternate transportation by offering a Park and Ride lot with 173 spaces, Express Bus Services, bicycle facilities requirements at all community facilities, sidewalk requirements on both sides of street within City limits, and providing various paths to connect different communities.
- Encouraging the use of [Electric Vehicles](#) (EV) by purchasing 3 EV fleet vehicles, providing EV charging at the City Hall, promoting EV boating requirements on the reservoir, and requiring Commercial development over 5 acres to provide EV charging infrastructure.
- Adopted [the Canton Green Plan](#) in May 2023 which includes the following initiatives:
 - No Idling Policy is designed to cut fuel costs and reduce emissions from city-owned vehicles. It stipulates that engines should not idle for more than 30 seconds and encourages immediate driving once visibility is clear, with a focus on minimizing warm-up times for diesel vehicles as per manufacturer recommendations. It provides exemptions for emergency, safety, and equipment considerations.



Performance Metrics to be considered for future tracking:

- Water consumption
- Water usage by sector
- Treated wastewater used for secondary purposes
- Impaired streams
- Curbside recycling, yard waste, solid waste
- City waste programs
- Landfill diversion rates
- Electronics & battery collections

Education & Community

Accomplishments & Current Programs:

- Updated the [City website](#) to enhance accessibility to information, foster transparency, and facilitate two-way communication between the city and its residents. It serves as a central hub for resources, updates, and interactive tools, empowering citizens to participate in local governance and community activities, ultimately strengthening civic involvement and trust.
- Provided [public Wi-Fi](#) in parks, which offers residents and visitors enhanced connectivity, encouraging the use of outdoor spaces for leisure and work. It increases access to digital resources, supports educational activities, and can improve the overall park experience, potentially boosting community engagement and inclusivity.
- Entered an [Energy Performance Contract](#) with Schneider Electric in 2023. Scope of work includes:
 - Installing an interactive kiosk in city hall dedicated to sustainability education serves as a valuable tool for community engagement, providing residents with hands-on learning opportunities about local environmental initiatives and how to participate in them. It also acts as a platform for sharing information on sustainable practices, fostering a culture of environmental awareness and collective action within the community.
 - Demonstrational solar in two parks serve as a visible commitment to renewable energy, educating the community on the functionality and benefits of solar power. It also provides a practical example of sustainable practices in action, potentially inspiring residents to adopt similar technologies and contributing to the city's overall green energy goals.



Performance Metrics to be considered for future tracking:


- Atlanta Regional Commission Green Community
- LEED for Cities and Communities
- Tree City Certification
- Description of public sustainability focus events
- Population metrics (age, income, education, race & ethnicity, etc.)

03 Strategic Solutions






Within this section we summarize the City of Canton's comprehensive action plan. Each topic provides clear goals and tasks designed to enhance efficiency, promote responsible resource management, and foster an informed, engaged community. This action plan serves as a blueprint for sustainable development, ensuring that every initiative contributes to a cohesive vision for a greener, more resilient Canton.



Energy & Buildings

Goals	Tasks & Next Steps	Responsibility	Timeline
 Reduce energy use at City owned facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install automatic lights in individual offices. • Continue to communicate Lights Off / Power Down policy • Monitor and verify energy savings of energy performance contract. Identify areas of potential improvement or replication 	Sustainability & Schneider Electric	Q4 2024
 Increase the use of renewable and clean energy sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor generation of Solar Panels on City Hall Roof • Continue Partnership with EPA for remaining solar install • Verify Net Zero Operations 	Sustainability	Q2-Q4 2024
 Encourage historic building preservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt residential design guidelines (commercial design guidelines have already been adopted) • Review, extend, & adopt new historic district boundaries • Update ordinances & other guidelines as needed 	Planning & Zoning	Q2 2024





Land Use & Greenspace

Goals	Tasks & Next Steps	Responsibility	Timeline
 <p>Preserve and reclaim historical and natural sites</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand trail network along the Etowah River Create trail marker for Indian Fish Traps/Weirs on the Etowah River Install new put in/take out at the Mill on the Etowah 	Parks & Recreation	Q3 2024
 <p>Increase acreage of preserved space / greenspace throughout City and along Etowah</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update zoning ordinances to allow for additional preserved space/greenspace via development Creation of South Canton Park Continuing the enhancement of existing parks, recreation areas, and greenspace 	Planning & Zoning and Parks & Recreation	2024
 <p>Increase pollinators on city property and along Etowah River</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership with Etowah Beekeepers club to install Beehives at City Facility or community Garden Partnership with master garden club for pollinator garden Complete Bee City certification 	Sustainability	Q3 2024
 <p>Utilize green development practices in all park projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include Green Infrastructure Initiatives in South Canton Park Design Model Green Infrastructure Project in one of the existing parks 	Sustainability	Q4 2024
 <p>Promote native plants and landscapes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heritage Park Landscape Project Add more Native plants in City Landscape 	Sustainability	Q2 2024




Water & Waste Management

Goals	Tasks & Next Steps	Responsibility	Timeline
 <p>Increase water conservation and efficiency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt water conservation/plumbing ordinances. • Incentivize installing water efficient appliances for existing homes. • Consider native plants and landscape (from land use) • Evaluate rainwater or greywater for reuse at city facilities 	Engineering & Public Works	2026
 <p>Protect water quality and public water supplies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Green Infrastructure in Residential projects • Retrofit Proprietary Devices in existing stormwater system 	Engineering	2027
 <p>Reduce sludge hauling at WWTP & Decrease inflow and infiltration of stormwater system to WWTP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) 2017 study of downtown • Create a phased I&I study for older areas of Canton • Install Drying Beds with WWTP Upgrade 	Engineering	2027
 <p>Increase recycling tonnage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate and follow up the Recycling and Waste Reduction Policy outlined in the Green Plan • Provide education at City Events for Residents and Public • Provide residents min of 2 household hazardous waste disposal opportunities through a partnership 	Sustainability	2025

Transportation

Goals	Tasks & Next Steps	Responsibility	Timeline
 <p>Connect all neighborhoods to a Citywide sidewalk system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Sidewalk Inventory to find missing connections • Purchase land for trail extensions between neighborhoods • Build connectivity between the historic downtown loop and The Mill 	Engineering	2028
 <p>Increase access to electric vehicle charging stations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install EV charging stations at South Canton Park 	Engineering	2027
 <p>Increase low emission vehicles in city fleet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunities for city fleet alternative fuel/hybrid options • Purchase electric vehicles 	Sustainability	Yearly
 <p>Identify alternative transportation options in neighborhoods, increase bike options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with CATS (county bus) to improve alternative transportation • Identify alternative modes for transport between Downtown and the Mill 	Engineering	2027

Education & Community

Goals	Tasks & Next Steps	Responsibility	Timeline
 <p>Pursue recognition for leadership in sustainability programs and initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain ARC Green Community Certification 	Sustainability	Q2 2024
 <p>Educate city staff, schools, public about sustainability initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize the Kiosk, Sustainability Plan, and Solar Demos to educate and encourage city residents and businesses to adopt more sustainable behaviors and practices. 	Communications & Sustainability	2024
 <p>Improve outreach to Hispanic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a Multi-cultural event Ensure educational material is in English and Spanish 	Communications & Public Safety	Ongoing

04

Final Efforts

Following the adoption of this Plan, City staff will reconvene in five years to review and, if necessary, revise the Plan's objectives, actions, and overarching vision. The revised Plan, which will incorporate a summary of achievements and fresh recommendations, will be submitted for approval. This process ensures the Plan remains relevant, sufficient, and effective in guiding the city's sustainability efforts.

