



# Buckhead Strategic Sustainability Action Plan

**2018 - 2021**



# Sustainability Committee Members

Andrew Lantz, *Keter Environmental Services*  
 Andrew Navarro, *RS Andrews*  
 Ashley Gravlee, *Novelis*  
 Bonnie Cassamassima, *INTERWEAVE People Place*  
 Boyd Leake, *Community Environmental*  
 Daniel New, *GA Restaurant Association*  
 Denise Miller, *Ansley Atlanta Real Estate*  
 Don Francis, *Clean Cities GA*  
 Emma Brodzik, *Keter Environmental Services*  
 Eric Balogh, *Beck Architecture Georgia LLC*  
 Greg Chafee, *Thompson Hines LLP*  
 Joe Winslow, *Southface*  
 John R. Sydel, *City of Atlanta Office of Resilience*  
 Juliette Appicella, *Gables Residential*  
 Kanika Greenlee, *Keep Atlanta Beautiful Commission*  
 Kathy Robb, *Southern Company Gas*  
 Lauren Dufort, *CBRE*  
 Mark Gallman, *Highwoods Properties*  
 Mary Howard, *Southface*  
 Matt Cox, *The Greenlink Group*  
 Matt Finn, *Cognitive Design*  
 Michael Shelby, *Novelis*  
 Mindy Boggs, *The Live Well Companies*  
 Moses Tejuoso, *Keep Atlanta Beautiful Commission*  
 Peggy Whitlow Ratcliffe, *Live Thrive Atlanta*  
 Rex Hamre, *JLL*  
 Shelby Buso, *USGBC Georgia*  
 Shelby Morris, *Beck Architecture Georgia LLC*  
 Stacy Abbate, *Cousins Properties*  
 Steve Leeds  
 Trey Gibbs, *Hannah Solar*  
 Virginia Ferguson, *Transwestern*

***A special thank you to Eric Balogh, Tylen Perpall, and the entire Beck Group Inc. team for the graphic design services provided to put this plan into its final format.***

# Livable Buckhead Board of Directors

Bob Stoner, *Livable Buckhead INC., Chairman*

Sandy Godwin, *Pearl Meyer*

Dave Skelton, *Omega CM Services*

Robin Suggs, *Simon Property Group*

Joe Wilber, *Gables Residential*

Bill Hollett, *Cousins Properties*

Sally Silver, *Council District 7*

Kathy Robb, *Southern Company Gas*

Rebecca King, *Buckhead Condo Alliance*

Matt Samuelson, *Integral Group LLC*

Bob Hughes, *HGOR*

Greg Chafee, *Thompson Hine LLP*

Svein Romstad, *Loudermilk Properties*

Dan Knopp, *Hyatt Place Atlanta Buckhead*

Emily Sircy, *Transwestern*

Howard Grant, *Atlanta Housing Authority*

## Livable Buckhead Staff

Denise Starling, *Executive Director*

Cecilia Shuttters, *Sustainability Director*

Rebecca Stokes, *Financial/Office Manager*

Scott Cantrell, *Communications Director*

Anna Sharp, *Community Engagement Manager*

Katie Gable, *Mobility Services Manager*

Calvin Cromer, *Program Administrator*





## Contents

<b>Sustainability Committee Members</b>	2
<b>Livable Buckhead Board of Directors and Staff</b>	3
<b>Executive Summary</b>	7
<b>Section I: Introduction</b>	17
Background	
Sustainability Upshot	
The Community	
Demographics	
Current Conditions	
Plan Development	
<b>Section II: Plan Recommendations</b>	29
Culture of Sustainability	
Energy	
Water	
Waste	
Health and Wellness	
Mobility	
Greenspace	
Arts and Culture	
<b>Section III: Implementation</b>	53
<b>Technical Supplement</b>	67
<b>Appendix A: Housing Analysis</b>	70





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Buckhead is uniquely situated to drive and demonstrate first-in-class sustainable innovation given its identity as a dynamic and successful business hub, its residential demographics, and its expected growth in population and development. Livable Buckhead's strategic sustainability plan employs the three-pillar approach often associated with the triple bottom-line: environmental sustainability, economic sustainability, and social sustainability, showcasing why sustainable development is critical to the long-term success of Buckhead across eight elements of sustainability: culture of sustainability, energy, water, waste, health & wellness, mobility, greenspace, and arts & culture.

"The official boundaries of the Buckhead Community (adopted in 1982 by the Buckhead Coalition, in 1990 by the Georgia House of Representatives, and in 1991 by the Atlanta Regional Commission) include the portion of north Atlanta bounded by the city limits/DeKalb County line on the east; the city limits line on the north; the city limits/Cobb County line on the west, and Peachtree Creek from the Chattahoochee River to Interstate 85 to DeKalb County on the south. The total area contains approximately 28 square miles and is about 4 miles from Atlanta's central downtown."<sup>1</sup>

## ***State of Buckhead's Sustainability:***

At the onset of the development of this plan, Buckhead was already making great strides in sustainability programs and projects. Some highlights of the state of sustainability at this time are:

- More than 19 million square feet of Buckhead's commercial buildings have signed on to the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge
- 101 LEED projects are registered or certified in Buckhead
- More than 63% of Buckhead is within a mile from an electric vehicle (EV) charger
- In 2017, the Buckhead Recycles program diverted 1000.68 tons of recyclable material from landfill
- Livable Buckhead has added 34 acres of greenspace to Buckhead to date
- The BUCKHEAD REdeFINED master plan, adopted in December 2017, identified sustainability as one of the key strategies for encouraging Buckhead's growth during the next ten years as part of the community master plan. Specifically the plan calls to action:
  - Promote and expand Livable Buckhead's sustainability programs
  - Capitalize on enhanced walkability and transit access
  - Increase public space and tree canopy

## ***Process***

To build upon this progress and develop the vision called for by the Buckhead REdeFINED master plan, Livable Buckhead convened a committee of approximately 35 sustainability and community experts and charged them with the task of developing a comprehensive and actionable sustainability plan for the community.

The goals, topics, and the approach guiding the plan were developed by the committee over the course of nine months. Once a platform of goals and strategies was identified by the committee, it was then vetted internally to ensure it was consistent with, and fully integrated into overall organizational goals and capacity. Once that was completed, the plan was further vetted through a series of one-on-one meetings with key Buckhead commercial real estate professionals who would play instrumental roles in its implementation. The focus of this vetting process was to determine the feasibility of the defined goals and strategies.

<sup>1</sup><http://pubman.net/epubs/buckhead/2018/>



# THE PLAN

## *Vision*

A thriving, vibrant Buckhead community differentiated from other markets as a leader in innovative sustainability strategies.

## *Programmatic Recommendations*

Implement programs that deliver on economic, environmental, and social sustainability in **eight key areas**:



**CULTURE OF  
SUSTAINABILITY**



**WATER**



**HEALTH AND  
WELLNESS**



**GREENSPACE**



**ENERGY**



**WASTE**



**MOBILITY**



**ARTS AND  
CULTURE**

# IMPLEMENTATION

The theory behind our implementation strategy in each category of sustainability follows a general pattern to achieve stated goals over the course of four full years: 2018-2021.





## CULTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY

### ***Vision***

Livable Buckhead (LBI) will engage it's robust network of committees and communications platforms to extend its reach and serve the community through education and awareness. The impact of these efforts will be measured in frequency and consistency of meetings, content provided in meetings, and feedback gathered from participants.

#### ***Goals within this section include:***

- Grow Buckhead's knowledge base regarding sustainability practices to foster innovative programs and projects within the community
- Inventory and align practices both within Livable Buckhead and across the community with sustainability practices



## ENERGY

### ***Vision***

Buckhead is home to some of the most successful, competitive, and cutting-edge businesses in the southeast, the country, and in some cases, the world. Energy is a critical component to any business's ability to prosper. Sustainability in the energy category of this plan focuses on the built environment and engaging our innovative business community to maximize energy efficiency and efficacy – creating possibilities to do more with less.

In terms of sustainable development, this plan seeks to reduce the amount of energy required to maintain a growth strategy, resulting in reduced energy costs and positive downstream environmental outcomes such as improved air quality for Buckhead, the City of Atlanta, and the Southeast Region as a whole. Specifically, the vision for energy is a commercial building stock that achieves an average ENERGY STAR rating of 80 or higher, one megawatt of new installed solar, and a demonstrated pipeline of energy improvement projects initiated from LBI's education efforts.

#### ***Goals within this section include:***

- Participate in regional/national energy efficiency programs
- Encourage sector-specific energy efficiency upgrades
- Ensure future commercial development is designed in a manner that progressively addresses energy efficiency
- Catalyze the deployment of solar energy in Buckhead
- Make PATH400 Energy Net Positive through renewable energy infrastructure
- Catalyze the development and utilization of a variety of financing strategies to support the implementation of energy efficiency and renewable energy measures through education and information share



## WATER

### ***Vision***

In the Southeast, water is an issue that is felt from the regional "water wars" to the CFO of a corporation considering the cost of doing business in Buckhead.

As with energy, this plan aims to reduce the water required to maintain a growth strategy. The economic benefits of employing water efficiency strategies stand to be significant as Atlanta faces some of the highest, if not the highest, water and sewer prices in the country. Access to water is the most vital component to livability. Water efficiency gains contribute to the social sustainability of not only the Buckhead community, but the City of Atlanta and the southeast region more broadly.

Specifically, the vision for water in this plan intends to promote improved water efficiency through a completed design and feasibility study for a WaterHub based in the Buckhead commercial core, a campaign dedicated to identifying water efficiency improvement in commercial buildings, an assessment of water efficiency recommendations provided to improve zoning codes, the delivery of a water neutral PATH400, and a demonstrated pipeline of water improvement projects initiated from LBI's education efforts.

**Goals within this section include:**

- Participate in regional/national energy efficiency programs
- Ensure future commercial development is designed in a manner that progressively addresses water reclamation and conservation activities
- Foster the creation of a model for water efficiency in a dense urban landscape
- Positively contribute to the health of natural bodies of water in Buckhead



## WASTE

### **Vision**

Livable Buckhead began offering a coordinated option for commercial buildings to recycle through its Buckhead Recycles program in 2015. Recycling in Buckhead, like in all other communities, is beneficial environmentally, socially, and economically. The focus of this plan is to build the bridge for valuable commodities in the waste stream to feed economic development in the City of Atlanta, State of Georgia, and Southeast region.

Specifically, the vision for waste aims to increase the diversion rate and reduce the average contamination rate across our participating Buckhead Recycles portfolio by 2021. Additionally, it aims to create a point source in Buckhead for information and resources for hard to recycle materials by helping to establish and promote a CHaRM <sup>2</sup> North location, helping to develop and promote resources for construction and demolition (C&D) recycling, and delivering a solution for glass recycling in the short term.

**Goals within this section include:**

- Upgrade and expand performance of Buckhead Recycles community-wide recycling program to achieve better than national average commercial diversion and contamination rates
- Establish a connection between recycling in Buckhead and supporting industry throughout the State of Georgia
- Develop a strategy to provide resources for and access to recycling for hard-to-recycle material in Buckhead

<sup>2</sup><https://livethrive.org/charm/>



## HEALTH & WELLNESS

### ***Vision***

As Buckhead's growth trajectory continues, the emphasis on creating health-forward amenities and infrastructure is paramount to the livability of this community. Striving to improve the health of a population is essentially the definition of social sustainability and can have positive environmental and economic impacts. This plan aims to achieve increased awareness of health and wellness through the completed assessment of an active stairwell campaign, completed assessment of indoor air quality initiatives, education events focused on health and wellness, installation of pedestrian counters on PATH400, increased programming and utilization of PATH400, and by encouraging commercial buildings to consider appropriate options for healthy building certification.

#### ***Goals within this section include:***

- Encourage existing commercial buildings to engage in health and wellness activities
- Influence community design and future development initiatives to develop in a manner that will enhance health and wellness, especially via walkability in Buckhead
- Utilize PATH400 as a tool for healthy living by implementing wellness-oriented programming



## MOBILITY

### ***Vision***

Buckhead is recognized internationally for its residential neighborhoods, corporate offices, regional shopping, dining destinations and entertainment options. Today, Buckhead is building upon its reputation by transforming from a place designed around the automobile to a more vital urban center focused on the pedestrian experience and mobility options.<sup>3</sup> Yet, key challenges must be overcome in Buckhead's future public and private realms in order to achieve its full potential as a great, distinctive urban place. To improve mobility, this plan aims to achieve increased ridership on public transportation, increased access to bicycle facilities across the community, complete community-wide electric vehicle infrastructure, and completion of the PATH400 trail.

#### ***Goals within this section include:***

- Position Buckhead to accommodate market-projected deployment of electric vehicles (EV) by completing an infrastructure network that provides access to an EV charger no more than one mile from anywhere within Buckhead community
- Identify existing roadway and corridor enhancements, new street connections, intersection improvements and improved access to and from GA400 to enhance connectivity and reduce traffic congestion
- Build upon PATH400 to provide greater, safer bicycle and pedestrian opportunities and create a viable alternative commute option for local commuters
- Identify and catalyze the development of alternative modes of transportation to provide Buckhead commuters with a variety of ways to commute and balance the use of the transportation system overall
- Expand use of transit, walking, bicycling, telecommute, and rideshare for commute trips to Buckhead, as well as internal trips within Buckhead
- Address the lack of housing diversity by creating a direct connection between Buckhead employers and housing providers supported with incentives to allow for the creation of a wide range of housing option geared specifically toward supporting the local workforce

<sup>3</sup><http://livablebuckhead.com/commute/>





## GREENSPACE

### ***Vision***

Buckhead has long been considered the premier community in the City of Atlanta. While it proudly boasts many world-class assets, it is woefully lacking in greenspace.<sup>4</sup> In today's world, greenspace is no longer a luxury – it is an integral part of a community that is thriving socially, environmentally and economically. This plan includes strategies to create an interconnected network of parks, trails and greenspaces serving the needs of Buckhead's residents, workers and visitors.

#### ***Goals within this section include:***

- Develop a world-class parks system to ensure Buckhead will continue to be one of the most desirable places in the world to live, work, and play
- Provide residents, workers and hotel guests with access to meaningful greenspace within a convenient distance from their home, businesses, or hotels
- Maximize real estate values through proximity to greenspace
- Provide adequate athletic fields and recreation facilities to meet the needs of Buckhead
- Work cooperatively with the community to develop the vision for, identify the resources to fund and construct new parks
- Identify and pursue opportunities to develop parks that are designed to be accessible and inclusive
- Provide opportunities for alternative modes of transportation through a network of trails, bikeways and sidewalks
- Provide opportunities for the community to gather for festivals, performances, special events, and other cultural activities
- Provide opportunities for public art, historic preservation and interpretation, storm water management, and environmental protection throughout the parks system
- Seek opportunities to activate parks and public spaces by incorporating programming that narrows the outcome gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged populations

<sup>4</sup><http://www.atlantaga.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=3810>



## ARTS & CULTURE

### ***Vision***

Public art is an integral part of a vibrant community. It invites people in and encourages them to explore what the community has to offer. Art creates a sense of place and provides a reason for people to interact with the art, and each other. Art weaves inspiration and beauty into the daily lives of those who live, work, and play in our community. This plan calls for the development of a public arts program that celebrates Buckhead's history and culture while providing a compelling walking environment, a world-class aesthetic and an authentic sense of place.

### ***Goals within this section include:***

- Enhance Atlanta's ability to capture heritage and cultural tourists who spend more than \$192 billion in the US economy annually
- Enhance the user experience for PATH400 by integrating an engaging art program that includes permanent and temporary installations
- Create compelling opportunities that engage urban explorers in experiences that educate, entertain, and cultivate an understanding of Buckhead's rich history and culture
- Ensure future development creates opportunities for the inclusion of public art, and integrates art into the overall design strategy of the project and broader community
- Foster the development of the local arts community by engaging local artists and educational institutions in the development and implementation of Buckhead's arts programs
- Support City of Atlanta Office of Resilience to promote economic development in the arts and humanities through a creative rescue and reuse program
- Encourage innovation in the arts through the incorporation of recycled and upcycled materials
- Contribute to the health and vitality of the community by providing vibrant public spaces that encourage physical activity
- Cultivate a deep-rooted appreciation for and support of the arts in Buckhead through educational and hands-on experiential programming

