



Meeting Notes
Citizens Advisory Board (CAB)
December 16, 2020
2:00pm – 4:00pm
Virtual Meeting – WebEx

Meeting attendance available [here](#). | Recording of meeting available [here](#).

Introductions

- We'll be posting a recording of this meeting on the web. Meeting is being livestreamed thought YouTube.

Year in Review

- 2020
 - July – ACES; Energy Burden data; CAB review of mailers; CAB review of radio PSAs
 - August – Education need heard' major topics identified; ACCGov participation
 - September – Engagement during a pandemic - CAB feedback heard; Education sessions: Clean Energy 101, Efficiency in the Built Environment
 - October – Education session: Energy Systems & Grid Policy; Stakeholder identification
 - November – Education session: Energy Burden & Housing Inequality; Stakeholder identification finalized
 - December – Education session: Greenscaping; Scheduling stakeholder interviews and charrettes
- What we've learned (education session)
 - Clean Energy 101
 - Benefits of clean and renewable energy
 - Georgia's energy mix in Georgia
 - The importance of energy efficiency
 - Basic pathways to energy efficiency in buildings
 - Energy Efficiency in the Built Environment
 - Putting energy use in perspective
 - Technologies, and EE retrofits/upgrades
 - Water & waste impacts
 - Building energy codes
 - Workforce opportunities
 - Energy Systems and Grid Policy
 - Energy landscape, and Georgia's electricity system
 - Regulation of electric utilities
 - Public Service Commission: key decision-makers
 - Energy Burden and Housing Inequality
 - Housing stock and affordability in Athens
 - Opportunities for clean energy in housing
 - Energy burden



- Panel: ACCGov Housing and Community Development, Action Inc., Athens Land Trust
 - Greenscaping
- What we've heard (Key ideas presented by CAB):
 - Great need for education
 - For ALL - Leaders and community members alike
 - Energy efficiency
 - Low-income communities have urgent priorities
 - Housing - need for partnership to close gaps in service
 - Small businesses have different needs from broader business community
 - Minority communities must be engaged from the start, and engaged consistently
 - Immigrant communities must not be overlooked
 - Faith leaders are a conduit to the community
 - Virtual engagement will present challenges and highlights the need for even more strategic and comprehensive engagement
- Key numbers
 - 80+ stakeholders identified
 - 5 education modules produced
 - 9 convenings of the CAB
 - 4 major communications materials created
 - Webpage
 - Survey
 - Radio PSAs
 - Mailers
 - 1 extraordinary year

Look ahead to 2021

- January
 - Charrette 1: Community & Equity
 - Stakeholder interviews
 - Community survey launch
- February
 - Charrette 2: Clean Energy Economy
 - Charrette 3: Intersection of the Natural & Built Environments
 - Stakeholder, ACCGov interviews
 - Community conversations
- March and April
 - Community conversations continue
 - Survey results analysis
 - Plan outlining, development begins
- May - September
 - Plan development and revisions
 - CAB feedback
- October – December
 - Plan completion
 - Commission presentation and vote for adoption



Education Session 5: Greenscaping

- In this session, we will focus on
 - Plants, soil, water and other important natural allies
 - Green Infrastructure Best Management Practices (BMPs)
 - Trees and the Tree Canopy
 - Parks and Public Spaces
 - Land Use Issues (including “solar air rights”)
- Each of these topics can play a direct role in the Athens 100% Clean & Renewable Plan by:
 - Reducing a community’s carbon footprint
 - Promoting healthier neighborhoods
 - Providing workforce development opportunities
 - Providing excellent opportunities for public engagement and involvement
- Benefits of *awareness* of the natural environment
 - The more contact we have with the natural environment, the more aware we are of all that we stand to lose.
 - The more knowledge we have about our environmental surroundings and our place in the system, the more likely we are to take positive, constructive actions and to stay engaged.
- Greenscaping overview
 - Home, work, public lands
 - Your own gardens are included in this
 - The health of pollinators and wildlife including urban wildlife are connected to us
 - Plants, trees, soil, water management: the choices we make can have a lasting, net positive impact on **wildlife and habitats, air, and waterways connected to our built environment.**
 - Trees
 - Trees sequester carbon
 - When plants, trees decay, they release carbon into the atmosphere
 - Plants absorb atmospheric carbon through photosynthesis, which is then sequestered in plant mass. Additional sequestration occurs during decomposition of plant matter, even though some carbon is released back into atmosphere through plant and bacterial respiration.
 - Studies show that plants and soil sequester a lot more carbon than they release, i.e., plants are net positive!
 - Forests are carbon sinks – carbon goes in and most of it stays there
 - Solar air rights
 - Tree canopy can create thorny issues if you’re unprepared re: zoning, rights, entitlements...
 - Natural cycles of life in forestry
 - A fallen tree gradually releases carbon back into the atmosphere as decomposers do their work. Then again, a fallen tree becomes a source for new life, so it basically balances out.



- Prescribed fire
 - A necessary part of forest health
 - Georgia has the most prescribed burns in the country
 - Forest fires release all sequestered carbon into the atmosphere; however, forest regrowth is GREAT for carbon sequestration, so fires are not all bad.
 - Prescribed burns are beneficial and are recommended best practice for land management. Uncontrolled wildfires are usually a different story...
- Lumber – cut responsibly
 - Forest clearing releases carbon into the atmosphere, but lumber itself stores carbon, so it's not all bad! Moreover, smart forest management can be quite beneficial!
 - Mass timber has big potential to reduce construction's carbon footprint. <https://www.southface.org/georgias-mass-timber-and-the-triple-bottom-line/>
- Not all trees are equal
 - Some trees are better than others
 - Hardwoods like oaks are best but pines are great too – their root systems sequester lots of carbon even after they're cut
 - Invasive species
 - Native plants
 - Not all native plants are harmful, but native plants are the best for this local environment
 - Native plants have natural predators
 - Kudzu is an example of this phenomenon
 - Stiltgrass is a *new* invasive species
 - Can dominate a forest floor within a year
 - Native topsoil is better
- Green Infrastructure
 - Stormwater refers to a heavy quantity of water that falls to the surface of the Earth. When it reaches the surface, stormwater becomes polluted as it picks up, carries, and transports various pollutants (oil, grease, chemicals, sediment, nutrients, pathogens) along streets, drains, open channels, and storm sewer systems.
 - Most of the untreated runoff eventually is discharged into nearby waterbodies. However, in combined sewer systems, stormwater flows with wastewater and is treated at a water resource recovery facility.
 - In urban areas, stormwater management is especially important because of decreases in natural land cover and the expansion of impervious surfaces, such as rooftops, sidewalks and roadways.
 - These surfaces exacerbate runoff because they change the permeability of the landscape – preventing rainwater from soaking in or infiltrating the soil. Some impacts of stormwater include flooding, sewer overflows, and nonpoint source pollution.
 - Georgia Stormwater Management Manual (the “Blue Book”)



- 3 Volumes (BIG!)
 - Stormwater Policy Guidebook
 - Technical Handbook
 - Pollution Prevention Guidebook
 - 2016 latest edition (since 2001)
- Southface offers two comprehensive trainings:
 - Install (laborers/workforce dev)
 - O&M (contractors)
- Benefits of Green Infrastructure
 - Provides wildlife habitat
 - Cleaner waterways through natural filtration pathways
 - Treats stormwater as a resource instead of a waste product
 - Cost-effective and cost-saving
 - Creates opportunities for localized workforce development
 - Helps communities stretch their infrastructure investments further
 - Increases public health and safety
 - Adds to the aesthetic appeal of neighborhoods
 - Urban Heat Island mitigation
 - Alleviates the impact of storm events by mitigating flooding in flood prone areas
 - Cleans the first flush of pollutants from an average storm
 - Creates greenspaces, parks and amenities.
 - Sustainable, local supply of water by harvesting or infiltrating precipitation.
 - Reduces the volume of stormwater.
 - Provides recreational, wildlife habitat and aesthetic benefits; ecosystem services.
- Types of Green Infrastructure:
 - Vegetated Filter Strip
 - Grass Channel
 - Bioslope
 - Dry/Wet Enhanced Swales
 - Dry Detention Basin
 - Bioretention Areas
 - Stormwater Ponds
 - Stormwater Wetlands
 - Permeable Paver Systems
 - Pervious Concrete
 - Dry Wells
 - Infiltrators
- Carbon cost of land clearing
 - Soil disruption and lost plants = more atmospheric carbon
 - Land conservation
- Greenspaces of Athens
 - See map here:
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/3625364178894420837e0b26801f53df>



- Greenway: <https://www.accgov.com/7143/2016-Greenway-Network-Plan>
- Legacy forest project:
 - <https://www.accgov.com/8875/Legacy-Forest-Project>
 - <https://athensclarke.maps.arcgis.com/apps/StorytellingSwipe/index.html?appid=311f153714394750b3e601567efd3019>

Wrapping Up

- Today, we:
 - Reviewed progress made in 2020
 - Looked ahead to 2021
 - Learned about Greenscaping
- Upcoming:
 - Next CAB Meeting - January 20
- Thank you, and Happy Holidays!