

2024 SUSTAINABILITY SPOTLIGHT



CITY OF
TALLAHASSEE

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intro

At the City of Tallahassee, we strive every day to integrate sustainability into all that we do. Through consistent measures to increase the sustainability of City operations, we are better able to meet the needs of today without sacrificing our ability to meet the needs of tomorrow.

The Sustainability Spotlight highlights some of the many ways the City is committed to caring for the people, places, and economy that make Tallahassee such a great place to live, work, and play. In 2023, the City celebrated exciting milestones in its journey to an even more sustainable future, including the adoption of Tallahassee's Clean Energy Plan. This plan prioritizes equity throughout the more than 85 action items set to guide the City toward a 100% net-zero emission energy future.

Additionally, the City continues to lead the region in transitioning its buses and fleet to low and zero emission vehicles, investing in infrastructure and neighborhoods, and expanding recreational opportunities while providing best-in-class service. The City's commitment to creating an even more sustainable community is engrained in all that we do. With input and collaboration with the community, the City continues to seek new, cost-effective, and innovative ways to further enhance our sustainability efforts. Keep reading to learn more about how the City has demonstrated this commitment over the past year.



Leadership

GOAL: Foster a culture of sustainability and enhance the City's role as a regional, national, and international leader in the field.



FOCUS AREAS

Integrating Sustainability

Employee Participation

Evaluation and Benchmarking

Community Partnerships

Collaborative Sustainability

The City regularly collaborates with regional, national, and international organizations to exchange ideas and share best practices. Through one such ongoing collaboration, in 2023 the City hosted:

16

Professional Fellows through the U.S. Department of State's Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI)



2023 YSEALI Fellows

YSEALI affords accomplished young professionals a unique opportunity to witness and actively contribute to the City's initiatives. The YSEALI Fellows collaborate with City staff as they explore innovative approaches to address sustainable

development and confront environmental challenges. Since 2019, this collaboration has served as a platform for cross-cultural learning, emphasizing the City's dedication to embracing global perspectives.

Acknowledgements and Recognitions

The following highlights some of the ways the City was recognized as a leader in sustainability in 2023:

- Earned Government **Green Fleet Award** from the National Association of Fleet Administrators for the third consecutive year
- Designated a **Tree City USA** for the 31st consecutive year
- Received Arbor Day Foundation's national **Growth Award** for the eighth consecutive year
- Earned an Honorable Mention at the United States Conference of **Mayors' Climate Protection Awards** for City Farm TLH
- Designated a **Smart Energy Provider** by the American Public Power Association, a national recognition of the utility's efforts to incorporate efficiencies and sustainability while providing affordable electric service



education



GOAL: Educate the community on the issues and practices of environmental and economic stewardship and social equity.

FOCUS AREAS

Sustainability Training

Internal Sustainability Network

Community Awareness

Local School, College and University Collaboration

Community Outreach and Education

Various strategies are used by the City to keep residents informed about its many sustainability efforts and successes. In addition to City staff participating in many in-person events, other outreach included:

6,500

engagements on more than 200 sustainability-related social media posts, including videos that also aired on WCOT-13

16,000

combined views of the City's "In the Bin" series of YouTube shorts since the first episode launched in October 2022

65,000

copies of the **monthly Insight newsletter** produced, with extended reach via the online version, which helps inform City Utility customers about sustainability programs and tips

29

news articles published that highlight City sustainability programs and achievements

City Employee Training

To maintain safe, efficient, and sustainable operations, City staff undergo extensive training year-round. In 2023:

893

City employees received environmental training from the City's Environmental Services Division

To maintain its ISO 14001 Environmental Management System certification, Underground Utilities and Public Infrastructure (UUPI) must comply with all requirements of the environmental permits that UUPI holds. These permits require training with a focus on stormwater management, recycling, illicit discharges, and waste disposal.



EV Guest Drive

Electric Truck Guest Drive

The City's Electric & Gas Utility hosted an Electric Truck Guest Drive event for area commercial and institutional fleet managers. Through this one-day event:

68

area fleet representatives were able to test drive electric commercial and fleet vehicles, speak with owners and manufacturers, and learn about electric fleet vehicle charging options.



health



GOAL: Improve overall health and wellness in the community.

FOCUS AREAS

Recreation Opportunities

Wellness Infrastructure

Environmental Health Awareness

Urban Farms and Community Gardens

Parks and Recreation Programming

The City offers a wide variety of recreational and wellness opportunities. In FY23, nearly **506,000** participants enjoyed recreational programs at City facilities, which include:

96

Parks

8

Community Centers

2

Service Centers

1

Senior Center

≈4,000

acres of parks

80

miles of trails

92%

of residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park or open space

In 2023, the City expanded its park system with the addition of two facilities, including Four Oaks Park. Spanning more than 40 acres, this facility offers amenities such as a cricket pitch, playground, multi-purpose sports fields and basketball, beach volleyball, and pickleball courts, as well as open spaces for passive recreation.



City Farm TLH Training Program

Community Food Systems

The City's Five-Year Strategic Plan objective to improve food access for residents continues to be a focus through investment in our urban food infrastructure. In addition to ongoing collaboration with community gardening and agriculture partners, City-led efforts include:

1 City Farm TLH Pilot Farm

6 Community Gardens on City property

5 scholarships per semester offered to the Sustainable Agriculture training program at TCC

12 Southside Farmers Market days with **1,167** pounds of fresh food sold to the community

600 coupons for the Southside Farmers Market distributed to the community to ensure accessibility and equity

\$51,500

USDA Farmers Market Promotion Grant accepted to develop a marketing plan for the Southside Farmers Market

\$1+ million

committed toward development of a grocery store in the Griffin Heights neighborhood

Employee Wellness

The City's commitment to community wellbeing extends to each City employee, with access to programs that enhance their overall health and wellness. With the knowledge that a healthy workforce is better equipped to serve the community, in 2024, the City continued to offer education, tools, and resources to support the physical, emotional, environmental, and financial wellness of staff.





Tallahassee's first cricket pitch, Four Oaks Park



(Above) Southside Farmer's Market, Walker-Ford Community Center
(Right) Griffin Heights park and trail in the works



economics

GOAL: Support a robust green-sector economy.



FOCUS AREAS

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

Capital Projects and Sustainability Integration

Local and Sustainable Businesses

Education and Training for a Green Economy

Brownfields Program

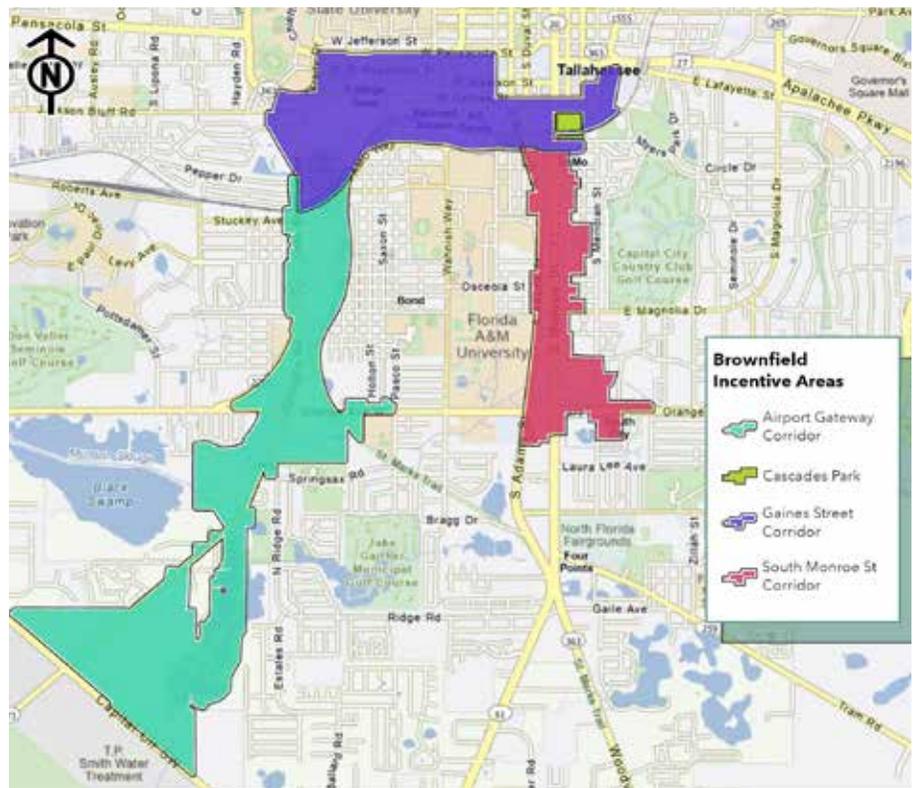
Through the Brownfields Program, the City leverages federal and state dollars to assess, clean up, and reinvest in properties where the presence or potential presence of environmental contaminants hinders redevelopment. In 2023, accomplishments of the program included:

38

properties in the Southside area assessed, made possible through a 4-year **\$500,000** grant from the U.S. EPA to conduct environmental assessments, cleanup planning, and community involvement activities within Tallahassee's Southside

720+

acres designated as the new Airport Gateway Corridor Brownfields Area along Lake Bradford and Springhill roads



Supporting a Green Economy

The City seeks to foster a green economy through a variety of proactive efforts, such as:

\$2.5 million

invested in the North Florida Innovation Labs, a 40,000 square foot incubator expected to create 650 jobs. Located in Innovation Park, the new facility will support businesses looking to commercialize new technologies through amenities such as biology and chemistry labs, flexible workspaces, and a machine shop to build prototypes that would, among other things, support sustainable technologies.



Integrating sustainability into City projects

The City routinely strengthens the sustainability of its own facilities and operations. From efforts such as energy efficient lighting and HVAC upgrades to the expansion of EV charging infrastructure at City facilities, the City is leading the way in sustainability.



An example of StarMetro's electric bus charging infrastructure



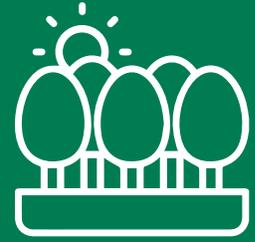
Jake Gaither Community Center receives energy efficient lighting upgrades



HVAC system upgraded at Lawrence Gregory Community Center



natural resources



GOAL: Preserve, conserve, protect, and manage the area's natural resources in a manner that supports the community's economic and social vitality.

FOCUS AREAS

Water Resources

Air Quality

Nontraditional
Pollution

Natural Areas and
Urban Tree Canopy



Urban Forestry

The City works to protect and enhance its tree canopy, which contributes to Tallahassee's unique character, increases air quality, and mitigates stormwater runoff and heat island effect. Some of the City's urban forestry efforts in 2023 included:

300+

trees planted through the Adopt a Tree program

600+

additional trees planted throughout City parks, rights-of-way, and beautification areas

Residents are integral to the City's tree planting efforts

Protecting Our Water Resources

The City continues to protect our ground and surface water resources through a variety of proactive efforts, including:



17 million

gallons per day of reclaimed water used for irrigation of crops, public areas, golf courses, and roadsides

\$11.75 million

in grant funding received to extend water and sewer service to the Southside Triangle bounded by Capital Circle SE, Woodville Hwy, and Crawfordville Hwy

In 2023, the City's sewer crews began using a new pipe assessment tool that applies acoustic technology to identify areas with potential blockages thereby preventing overflows with this efficient, safe, low-cost technology.



Lake Ella also serves to clean stormwater



Invasive Plant Control

The City coordinates activities to help address invasive plants in our parks and natural areas.

300+

acres of parks and natural areas treated for invasive species control

340+

volunteer hours removing invasive plants in City parks and natural areas

\$76,000+

awarded for invasive plant control in City parks



Neighborhood Clean Up

The City supports opportunities for residents to help keep their neighborhoods clean through organized litter cleanups. Through the Adopt-a-Street Program, in partnership with Keep Tallahassee Beautiful, in 2023:

450+

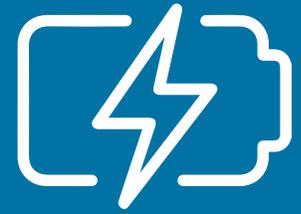
miles of roadways were cleaned up

900+

bags of trash were collected



energy



GOAL: Provide a safe, reliable, efficient, and cost-effective energy system that moves the City toward a net-zero carbon operation and 100 percent clean renewable energy.

FOCUS AREAS

Energy Efficiency

Clean Energy Generation

Clean Fuel Vehicles

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

Clean Energy Resolution

Adopted in 2019, the City's Clean Energy Resolution sets two key goals:

2035

Achieve 100% net clean, renewable energy in City operations. Transition bus fleet and light duty vehicles to electric

2050

Achieve 100% net clean, renewable energy community-wide



Clean Energy Plan

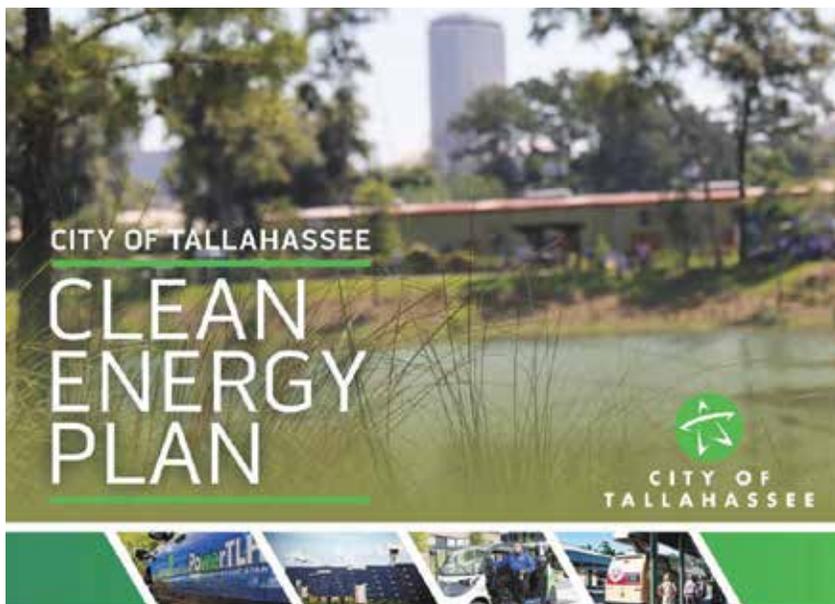
Adopted in August 2023, the City's Clean Energy Plan identifies **85+** action items organized under seven goals related to renewable energy, energy efficiency, and clean transportation. This roadmap will guide the City to 100% net clean, renewable energy.

Implementation of the Clean Energy Plan is well underway with efforts being made across all City departments. From updating energy efficiency incentives and rebates to seeking grant funding to increase impact, these efforts incorporate collaboration throughout the City government and into the community. Access the City's Clean Energy plan at: [Talgov.com/CleanEnergyPlan](https://talgov.com/CleanEnergyPlan).

SCAN TO LEARN MORE



[Talgov.com/CleanEnergyPlan](https://talgov.com/CleanEnergyPlan)



Energy Equity

Part of the Clean Energy Plan includes goals to ensure an equitable transition to clean energy. Such efforts include examining the viability of community solar and overcoming barriers to increasing energy efficiency in income-qualified households. Affordability is an important component of equity and remains a major focus of the City's utilities. Retail electric and gas residential costs remain below the Florida average, resulting in:



\$91 million

less paid by Tallahassee customers for electricity than customers of other utilities around the state in 2023





City of Tallahassee Solar Farm

Solar Power

Solar energy continued to be a cornerstone of the City's clean energy goals in FY23, resulting in:

107 million kWh

delivered from City solar farms



55,287 tons

of greenhouse gas emissions estimated to have been avoided through the Solar Net Metering Program, which transfers excess solar energy from homes back to the grid

Green Fleet Transition

The City is diligently working toward its 2035 goal of converting 100% of its light-duty fleet vehicles to electric. Today's fleet includes:

104

electric vehicles (EV) in use, with an additional **19** ordered

72

Compressed Natural Gas vehicles

79

hybrid vehicles, with an additional **57** ordered

21%

of the City's light duty fleet is electric/hybrid as of February 2024, with 30% anticipated by year-end

33%

of StarMetro's bus fleet has transitioned to Battery Electric Buses (BEBs)



TPD Community Service EVs

Additionally, StarMetro partnered with FDOT for the state's first in-service Battery Electric Paratransit vehicle. In exchange for performance data and service metrics, FDOT issued StarMetro this eco-friendly vehicle at no cost.

To accommodate the transition to cleaner vehicles, the City has installed **64** EV charging stations for its light-duty fleet vehicles, three overhead chargers for in-route bus

charging, and six Level 3 plug-in chargers at the StarMetro facility on Appleyard Drive.

As of February 2024, electric and hybrid fleet vehicles have been driven nearly **4.8 million** miles, representing an estimated savings of over **3.5 million** pounds of CO₂. This represents an emissions savings equivalent to planting over **26,000** trees.

Energy Efficiency Incentives

The City continues to offer customers many financial incentives to reduce energy consumption. Participation in FY23 included:

2,400+

ENERGY STAR rebates totaling over \$535,000

350+

energy efficiency grants totaling over \$125,000

120+

commercial energy audits

3,500+

residential energy audits

150+

residential loans totaling nearly \$1.2 million

3

commercial loans totaling \$30,000



waste management



GOAL: Decrease the amount of solid waste generated within the City's solid waste service area.

FOCUS AREAS

Education and Awareness

Waste Reduction and Composting

Reuse

Recycling

Recycling

The City offers single-stream recycling pick-up service to City residents and businesses. Single-stream recycling eliminates the need for residents to separate materials when placing them into their recycle container. This increases participation rates and reduces collection costs because haulers can use single compartment trucks. In FY23:



10,668+ tons

of material were diverted from the landfill through recycling

Additionally, the City offers **four** locations for residents to drop off household recyclable materials for free. These facilities are located at:

- Lake Ella Park, South Lake Ella Drive
- City Solid Waste Services, 2727 Municipal Way
- Renaissance Building, 435 N. Macomb Street
- St. John's Episcopal Bookstore, 131 N. Calhoun Street

Cash for Trash

For those materials not suitable for the recycle or garbage barrel, the City's biannual Cash for Trash events provide a \$5 credit on solid waste customers' utility bills for bringing bulky and household hazardous waste to these events. In 2023, the program serviced nearly **700** customers and collected:



6 tons

of tires



18 tons

of bulk waste



11 tons

of household hazardous waste



10 tons

of electronics



Tree Debris

To increase the resilience of the City's power grid against major storm events, trees around above-ground electrical infrastructure are regularly trimmed and maintained to reduce the potential of power loss, as well as reduce time to reinstate power. In 2023:

2,400+ cubic yards

of wood chips from the Electric Utility's tree trimming program were diverted from the landfill and delivered for free to City electric customers for use in home gardens and landscapes

Biosolids

To decrease waste from the wastewater reclamation process, the City's Water Utility processes biosolids into a highly treated product that is then sold in bulk quantities to golf courses, farmers, and fertilizer bagging companies to be used as a fertilizer supplement or soil amendment. In 2023, the City sold:



3,000+ tons

of Class AA biosolids developed through the wastewater reclamation process



land development and mobility



GOAL: Facilitate land development patterns, transportation options, and building practices that support the City's sustainability goals.

FOCUS AREAS

Development in the Mobility District and Other Urban Areas

Green Building

Green Industry and Infrastructure

Alternative Transportation

Sustainable Land Use

The Tallahassee Land Development Code (TLDC), administered by the Growth Management Department, supports sustainable land use patterns by identifying where and how urban development may occur, which has a significant impact on sustainability. By encouraging redevelopment of existing sites such as the 4Forty project on Monroe Street and new student housing on Tennessee Street, the TLDC seeks to:

- Prevent the premature and unnecessary conversion of rural, environmentally sensitive lands to urban development
- Minimize sprawl by encouraging a more compact and contiguous development pattern
- Reduce the cost of providing public infrastructure by encouraging infill and redevelopment in areas that already have services
- Limit vehicle miles traveled, thereby reducing fuel consumption and air pollution

Micromobility

The City's alternative transportation options in 2023, led to:



130,051

e-scooter rides, which covered 151,997 miles (a **12%** increase over 2022)

Additionally, the equivalent of **31,733 to 43,599 kg** of CO₂ emissions are estimated to have been avoided through the City's e-scooter program since its inception.

Public Transit

Celebrating its 50th anniversary, StarMetro is a vital transportation system with modern amenities and a commitment to accessibility, including Braille signage at 100% of bus stops and facilities. In FY23, StarMetro provided:



2.5 million

rides, an increase of **7%** compared to FY22

To facilitate the City's transition to clean fuel vehicles, StarMetro was awarded more than **\$36 million** in grant funds in 2023, including:

\$20+ million

from the Federal Transit Administration to purchase eight Battery Electric Buses (BEBs) and construct electric charging infrastructure at the StarMetro facility on Appleyard Drive

\$15+ million

from the U.S. Department of Transportation to construct the Sustainable Southside Transit Center (SSTC), which will include electric charging stations for fixed-route buses and paratransit vehicles

\$1 million

from the State of Florida for the SSTC

Additionally, StarMetro provided **125,414** free bus trips to K-12 students during the 2022/2023 school year as part of its Student Transportation for Academics and Responsibilities (STAR) Program.





Talgov.com/Sustainability