

Pathways to Urban Sustainability: Lessons from the Atlanta Metropolitan Region

**Organized by
The National Academies
Washington, DC**

September 30 - October 1, 2010

**Hosted by
Georgia Tech Global Learning Center
Atlanta, Georgia**



The National Academies

Advisers to the Nation on Science, Engineering and Medicine

- Established by President Lincoln in 1863
- Four organizations comprise the Academies: the [National Academy of Sciences](#), the [National Academy of Engineering](#), the [Institute of Medicine](#) and the [National Research Council](#)
- Produce groundbreaking reports that have helped shape sound policies, inform public opinion, and advance the pursuit of science, engineering, and medicine



Roundtable on Science and Technology for Sustainability

- Established in 2003
- Provides a forum for sharing views, information, and analysis related to harnessing science and technology for sustainability
- Members include senior decision-makers from government, industry, academia, and non-profit organizations who deal with issues of sustainable development, and who are in a position to mobilize new strategies for sustainability



Why Urban Sustainability?

As of mid-2005, 81% of the U.S. population resides in cities and suburbs (the worldwide urban rate was 49%)

Source:
United Nations, *World Urbanization Prospects*
February 2008

It is expected that 70 percent of the world population will be urban by 2050, and that most urban growth will occur in less developed countries.

Source:
United Nations, *World Urbanization Prospects*
2007 Revision



FORUM SCOPE

- Foster discussion of the metropolitan region's approach to urban sustainability
- Build an evidence base upon which policies and programs might be developed



OBJECTIVES

Explore how the interaction of various systems (natural and human systems; energy, water, transportation systems) affect the region's social, economic, and environmental conditions

Examine challenges the region faces, innovative approaches to addressing these complex challenges, performance measures to gauge success, and opportunities to link knowledge with on-the-ground action

Engage local, state, and federal agencies to explore how their resources could best support sustainable improvements in the Atlanta metropolitan region

Drivers of Sustainability



- **Economy**
World's economy is driven by availability of energy
- **Environment**
Belief of scientific community that emissions from combustion of fossil fuels contribute to global warming
- **Society**
Availability of reasonably-priced energy has increased productive capacity and educational opportunities; and improved quality life

If availability of energy is threatened, so are these social advances.

*Sustainability - Metro Atlanta Futures Forum
Atlanta Regional Commission Fifty Forward
2008*

Urban Sustainability

...May be defined as having “enough” to support the urban population’s quality of life

- **Enough** clean air, water and green space
- **Enough** food
- **Enough** affordable housing
- **Enough** health facilities
- **Enough** energy
- **Enough** quality education
- **Enough** sources of transportation
- **Enough** businesses and jobs



Ask Communities of People



Pathways to Urban Sustainability

The Way Forward...

- Partnerships
- Short Term and Longer Term Benefits

