

Application for

# Greater Atlanta Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (ATL RCE)

**September 14, 2017**

## **Contacts**

**Primary contact:**

Jennifer Hirsch, PhD  
Director, Center for Serve-Learn-Sustain  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
Clough Commons, Ste 205E  
266 Fourth St NW  
Atlanta, GA 30332-0940  
224-392-5608 (cell)

**Alternate contact:**

Ciannat M. Howett  
Director of Sustainability Initiatives  
Emory University  
1599 Clifton Road, 5.414  
Atlanta, Georgia 30322  
404-727-5020 (Office)

# Introduction

Since its founding, Atlanta has aspired to greater heights. Rising from the ashes after the American Civil War, Atlanta became a beacon of the “New South,” a region that would grow into a cosmopolitan city of the American South driven by a modern economy, a vibrant and diverse citizenry, and a spirit of what Congressman John Lewis refers to as “good trouble” to create positive change. In the decades since the Civil Rights Movement was born here, the region’s rapid growth has created great wealth and prosperity for many. Yet for those living south and west of the growth line bisecting the region, this 50 years of growth has come at great cost: jobs, opportunity and high quality of life are largely inaccessible to them.

As the region prepares for an additional 2.5 million residents in the next 25 years, it sits at a pivotal moment: will deepening disparities limit opportunity for even the most prosperous in the region? Will our ecosystems, neighborhoods and institutions survive the shocks and stressors anticipated as global warming accelerates, climate refugees arrive, and the fossil fuel-driven economy wanes?

The stakeholders engaged in formation of the Greater Atlanta Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (ATL RCE) see a different future for the region, where the dozens of organizations and institutions working tirelessly to address these crucial sustainability issues are able to connect, align, and leverage their efforts for collective impact. The ATL RCE will provide a much-needed structure to facilitate cross-sector collaboration towards commonly identified Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While metro-Atlanta boasts one of the highest concentrations of higher educational institutions in the United States, those anchor institutions have not always been a part of past networks to achieve sustainability goals, like an effective movement to resist the privatization of water in Georgia. The genesis of the RCE is a realization by these anchor institutions that, after implementing award-winning sustainability programs on their own campuses, the time is right to bring their knowledge and expertise outside their campus gates and partner at a broader regional scale for a multi-sector approach to education for sustainable development. It will also engender a culture of learning and continuous improvement, providing opportunities for students of all ages to contribute to these efforts and shape new ones.

## RCE Development

The Greater Atlanta Metropolitan Region has long been a hub of activity around the principles of sustainable development, both in spirit and in the activities of its citizens and institutions. As the home to 57 colleges and universities, from technical colleges to internationally-renowned research institutions to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), the region is a hive of scholarship, with more than 250,000 students enrolled annually, representing the 7th largest enrollment among America’s largest urban areas, and almost 1,800 distinct programs of study at the associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s, doctorate and professional levels across all disciplines of study<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Atlanta Regional Council for Higher Education](#)

This application will highlight these and many other regional assets, while detailing its significant sustainable development challenges and paradoxes. At its core, the deeply compelling opportunity presented by the RCE structure is to leverage the region's powerhouse higher education sector to embed education for sustainable development across all sectors in the region.

In the spring of 2017, leaders from two of these institutions - The Georgia Institute of Technology ("Georgia Tech") and Emory University ("Emory") - began a formal process of engaging stakeholders and future members in conversation around the opportunities presented by a Greater Atlanta RCE, to determine whether to apply to establish an RCE and, if so, what to focus on. Stakeholders were convened by sector in the following sessions:

- Higher Education
- Business
- NGO, K-12 and Government (Local, State, Regional and Federal)
- Youth
- Philanthropy

Through these sessions, campus meetings with faculty, staff, and students, and three online surveys (for higher education, youth, and other stakeholders), we engaged more than 200 stakeholders in identifying existing efforts and collaborations, and developing an initial set of RCE strategies and proposed activities for the first two years, as laid out in this application.

Following the submittal of this application, we used the application momentum to start working together right away as we awaited the response to our application, expanding a few existing activities to include additional RCE stakeholders. Specifically, these activities include:

- Integrated Network for Social Sustainability conference sponsored by Georgia Tech in June 2017 included a dedicated session to develop a plan for making the RCE a data hub for the region; small groups have continued to meet since then and we are convening the Work Group at a workshop on SenseMaker, a data collection tool, to be sponsored by Georgia Tech at the end of September;
- Sustainability Case Competition hosted by Emory University in fall 2017 will engage students from multiple campuses in competition to present the most compelling solutions to a common sustainability issue, this year focused on SDGs and utilizing the already operating RCE Youth Network;
- On November 4, 2017, preceding the 2017 American Public Health Association Annual Meeting (APHA), Spelman College will host a Climate Justice Summit, a national partnership between University of Michigan (Dearborn, Ann Arbor), Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, WE ACT for Environmental Justice, the Union of Concerned Scientists, the National Association for Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the American Public Health Association. Greater Atlanta UN RCE member institutions Clark Atlanta University, Emory University, Georgia Tech, and Spelman College are members of the local planning team.
- A year-long series of events, activities, and workshops focused on the SDGs, for Academic Year 2017-18, has been planned by Georgia Tech and launches Sept. 13 (see schedule

[here\)](#)

- EPA Region IV is leading a work group to transition their Environmental Justice Leadership Academy to the RCE, to be hosted by RCE higher education institutions, led by Atlanta Metropolitan Technical College

We are also collaborating on three conference sessions, as follows:

- In September 2017, the RCE Youth Network will present a session on Student Sustainability Networks as part of the Georgia Campus Sustainability Network annual conference, to be held at Georgia Southern University;
- The EcoDistricts National Conference will be held at Atlanta University Center in October 2017 and will feature a special studio session on the Emory WaterHub as an example of the types of collaborations between universities and communities that an RCE might engender, to include five diverse panelists from different RCE stakeholder organizations;
- In October 2017, the Greater Atlanta RCE organizers will present along with the RCEs for Greater Portland and Georgetown, South Carolina at the annual conference of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), held this year in San Antonio, Texas.

In addition, we have been actively introducing the RCE concept to corporate representatives from companies in the Greater Atlanta region that have programs aligned with the SDGs, including certified B corporations, and encompassing nonprofits who regularly engage with the corporate sector. The initial responses from these representatives have been positive, and we anticipate having one or more of these organizations in rotational roles on the Steering Committee.

Our K-12 Outreach Work Group has developed a plan to align the language of the SDG Goal (4: Quality Education) with the curriculum of schools, rather than trying to implement a new system. They have also begun exploring creation of a sustainability mentoring program for students and expanding the number of contacts in the RCE networks that are already familiar with working within school systems. In addition, the K-12 outreach office at Georgia Tech worked with a middle school teacher over the summer to survey teachers at different Atlanta area public schools about their work and interests related to sustainability and how the RCE might be helpful to them. The teacher developed recommendations that the K-12 Outreach Work Group will follow up on this semester.

Finally, during this interim period before formal RCE launch, organizers have continued outreach to critical stakeholders not yet engaged.

## **Geographical Scope**

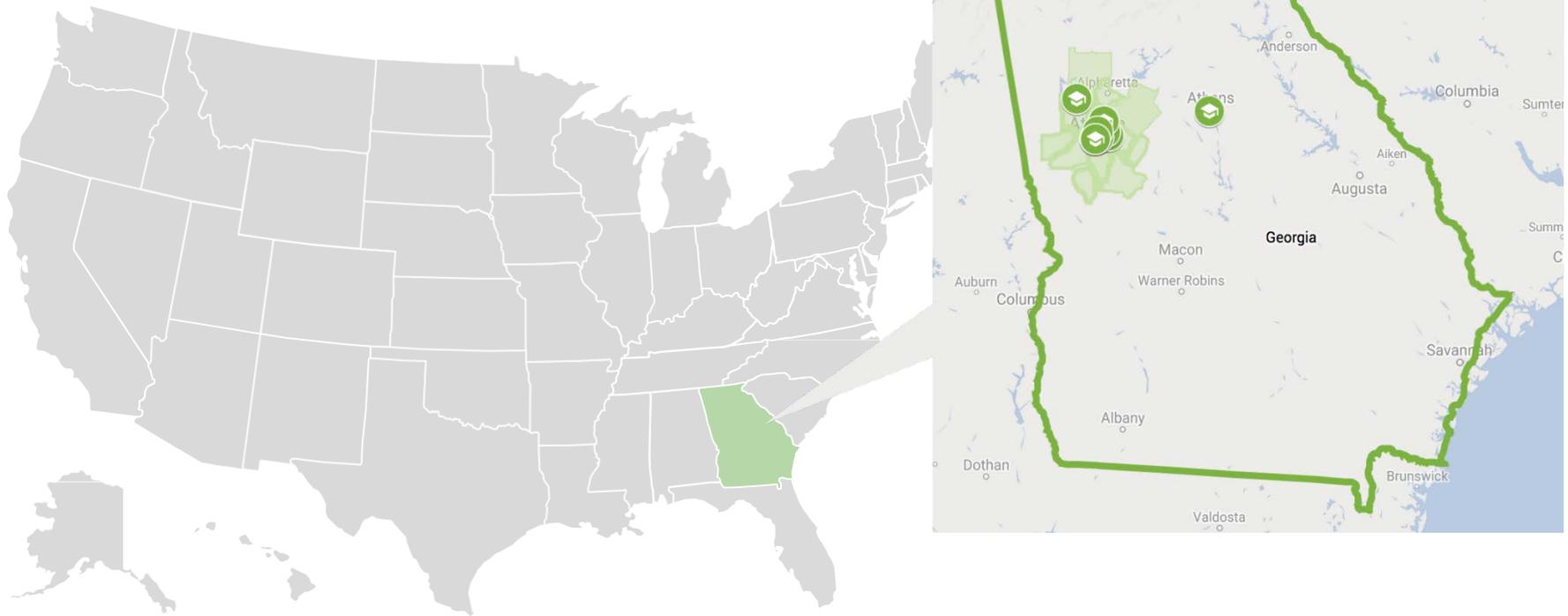
---

There are several definitions of what area comprises the Atlanta Metro region, but the proposed geographic scope of this RCE is the ten-county area that makes up the inner Metro region as defined by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), our Metropolitan Planning Organization. These ten counties - Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, and Rockdale counties - as well as the City of Atlanta, comprise the most densely populated area of the state of Georgia, with a population of 4.4 million people. This regional delineation will serve to describe the

primary locations of the network stakeholders and the local context in which we work, but participation will be broader. For example, the University of Georgia is located in Athens, Georgia that is outside of the 10-county area, but it serves all of Georgia and runs the agricultural extension services and provides other statewide resources that make it appropriate for inclusion in the Greater Atlanta RCE.

## Map of Region

[Click here for interactive map](#)



The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) has produced this [visual aid to provide context](#) regarding different definitions of the region by different federal and state agencies

# Characteristics of the Region

---



## Socio-Cultural and Historical Context of the Region

The Atlanta Metropolitan Region, located in the American South, is a relatively young city with a rich history of challenging the status quo to advance social progress. Literally left in ashes following the American Civil War, the City of Atlanta was rebuilt to become the beacon of a “New South” - a post-slavery southern region that would shift away from agrarian traditions and towards a modern economy. Though

hardly exempt from the racial tensions that plagued the postbellum south, Atlanta became a cornerstone of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, meanwhile broadly proclaiming it was a city “too busy to hate,” emphasizing the willingness of white leaders to appease some progress by black leaders in order to pursue economic growth as compared to most southern cities at the time.

Today’s Atlanta Metro region is a vibrant and diverse southern metropolitan region that pays homage to its history of advancing civil rights and economic growth, while still struggling to reconcile the systemic racism woven into the fabric of the community. As of 2010, the ten-county region is considered a majority-minority region, with almost 56% of the population classified as Non-White<sup>2</sup> and the second fastest growing foreign-born population in the US.<sup>3</sup> The City is home to fifteen Fortune 500 companies, 57 institutions of higher education (including the largest concentration of HBCUs in America), and a huge network of small, medium, and large enterprises and nongovernmental organizations leading the City in innovation and growth. The metro area is particularly well-known as a logistics hub and technology center, often compared Silicon Valley in terms of higher education and private technology resources. At the same time, the area struggles with some of the greatest inequality in the country in terms of income disparity, access to transportation and education, and other indicators of poverty (elaborated upon in the Demographics section).

In many ways, the Atlanta region represents a microcosm of the United States (and many parts of the world) in the opportunities and challenges it presents to develop sustainably - including equitably. As such, the research and knowledge coming out of the Atlanta region can (and does already) inform strategies for pursuing global sustainable development goals. Leveraging and coordinating these

---

<sup>2</sup> Pew Charitable Trust. 2015. [Reflecting a racial shift, 78 counties turned majority-minority since 2000.](#)

<sup>3</sup> Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs. <http://www.welcomingatlanta.com/>

efforts and outcomes through establishment of a formal RCE will increase the value of the work taking place in the region by linking it with a global network.

## Demographics of the Region

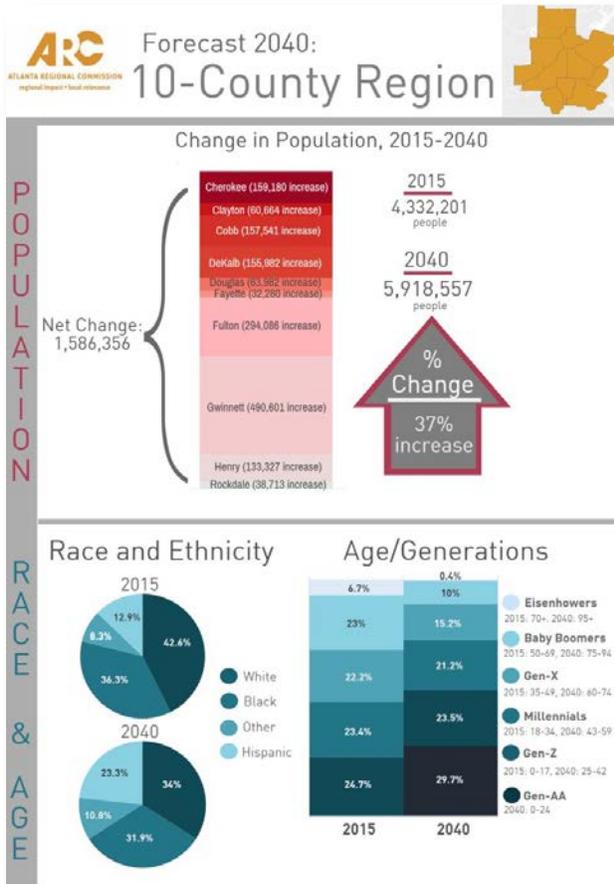


Fig. 1 - Regional 2040 forecast for the ten counties. Atlanta Regional Commission.  
<https://magic.piktochart.com/output/10702045-10co-forecast>

The 'minority-majority' designation underlines two significant characteristics of the region: 1) the established African American population that has helped to build and define the City, and 2) the growing immigrant population that is further diversifying the demographics and culture of the region (see Figure 2). Both of these factors contribute to the rich cultural landscape of the City, as well as the inequities we see deeper in the data.

The Atlanta Metro region is among the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the United States. With a population of about 4.4 million people, the area is forecasted to grow by about 37% by 2040 (see Figure 1).

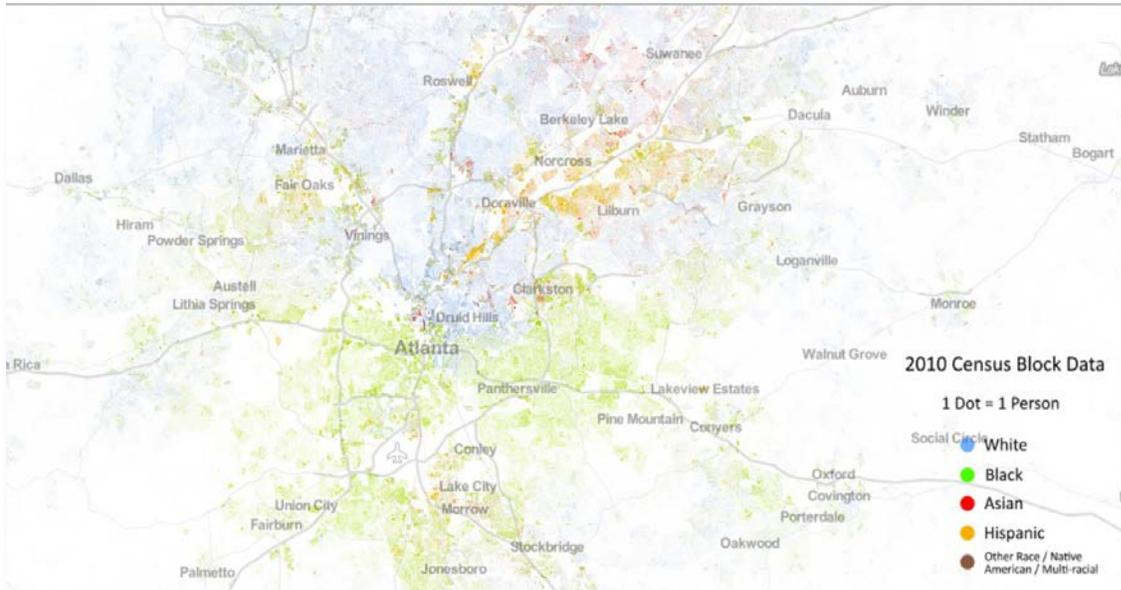
The Atlanta region is a minority-majority region, with 56% of the population classifying themselves as something other than White in 2010 Census reports. Further, this racial diversity is expected to grow significantly over the next 25 years.<sup>4</sup>



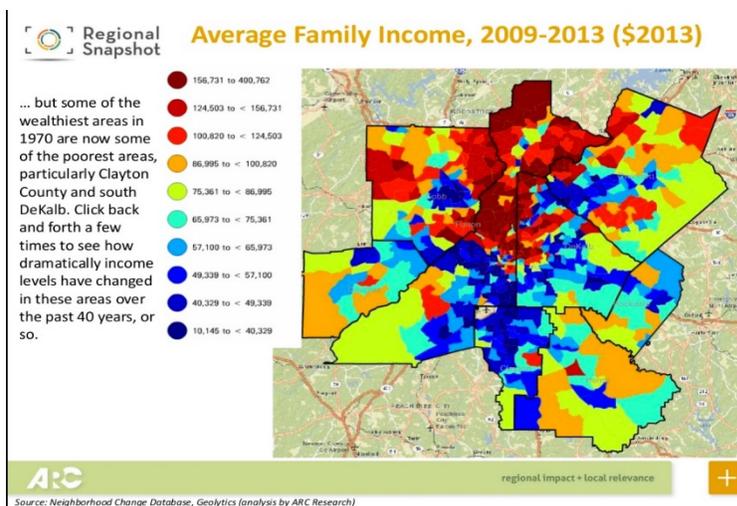
Fig. 2 - Atlanta by the numbers. Atlanta Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. <http://www.welcomingatlanta.com/>

<sup>4</sup> Atlanta Regional Commission. [10 County Forecast](#).

There remain clear racial divides in the metro region, as illustrated in Figure 3, [a map produced by the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service](#), in which each dot represents one person reported in the 2010 Census. Note the striking divide between the black dominated southern part of the City (green on the map), and the white dominated northern region (blue dots on the map). Also note the band of dominantly Hispanic populations stretching northeast (orange on the map).



**Fig 3.** Racial Dot Map by 2010 Census Tract. University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service. <http://demographics.coopercenter.org/racial-dot-map/>



**Fig 4.** Family Income by neighborhood. Atlanta Regional Commission. <http://atlantaregional.org/>

These clear delineations of racial distribution unfortunately also align with average family income within the Metro region, illustrated in Figure 4.<sup>5</sup> Compare Figure 3 with Figure 4 and it becomes clear that areas denoted in green and orange in Figure 3 are also some of the poorest as depicted in Figure 4. Though certainly not a challenge unique to Atlanta, the racial inequalities are profound.

<sup>5</sup> Atlanta Regional Commission. 2014. *Income Changes in Metro Atlanta: Meandering Through The Research*. [http://documents.atlantaregional.com/snapshots/income\\_fullpres\\_final.pdf](http://documents.atlantaregional.com/snapshots/income_fullpres_final.pdf)

A [recent study completed by the Annie E. Casey Foundation](#)<sup>6</sup> on the inequities of the Atlanta region included some startling stats:

- Eighty percent of Atlanta's African-American children live in communities with high concentrations of poverty, compared with 6 percent of their white peers and 29 percent of Asians.
- The unemployment rate for African Americans in Atlanta (22 percent) is nearly twice the City's overall 13 percent, more than three times higher than the rate for their white counterparts (6 percent) and more than twice the rate for Latinos (9 percent).
- Graduation rates for black and Latino students in Atlanta Public Schools are 57 percent and 53 percent, compared with 84 percent and 94 percent, respectively, for white and Asian students. Black and Latino students are more than three times more likely to drop out of school.

The Greater Atlanta RCE will seek to amplify and accelerate the many efforts around the region to address these and many other inequities (detailed in the "Sustainability Challenges" section of this application).

## **Economic and Civic Context of the Region**

Metro Atlanta is one of the fastest growing regions in the U.S. and has the 10th largest economy in the U.S. as measured by Gross Metro Product (GMP). It is the largest economy in the Southeastern U.S., which itself is the largest of all U.S. regions. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the Southeast measured \$3.8 trillion in 2015. Only two foreign countries have a greater GDP than the U.S. Southeast – China and Japan. The metro area has a labor force of more than 2.8 million and a median household income of ~\$60,000 (29 county Metropolitan Statistical Area, 2015). In the 2015 World Ranking of Global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Metro Atlanta's GDP of \$339 billion ranked at in the top 35 economies globally, between Venezuela and Malaysia.

## **Business Resources**

The region is home to 25 of America's largest corporations (FORTUNE 1000) and 220 of the nation's fastest-growing private companies (Inc. 5000). It is a thriving hotbed of entrepreneurialism and start-up culture, with a growing ecosystem of incubators and accelerators such as the Greenhouse Accelerator, working to cultivate this sector. Metro Atlanta has strengths in technology, bioscience and health information technology, supply chain and advanced manufacturing, and is also a leading headquarters location for food franchises and business services.<sup>7</sup>

Atlanta's vibrant business community includes many large, medium, and small companies that have taken significant stands for more sustainable production and consumption practices, fair work conditions for employees and suppliers, and the well-being of their consumers. Integration of

<sup>6</sup> Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2015. [Changing the Odds: The Race for Results in Atlanta](http://www.aecf.org/blog/as-atlantas-economy-thrives-many-residents-of-color-are-left-behind/) - <http://www.aecf.org/blog/as-atlantas-economy-thrives-many-residents-of-color-are-left-behind/>

<sup>7</sup> [Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce](#)

business stakeholders is a critical element of this proposed RCE, as they both provide a market perspective of what solutions are possible, and create pragmatic opportunities for students of sustainable development. When galvanized to action, Atlanta's business leaders have advanced the City both economically and socially, playing a critical role in desegregation of schools in the 1960s and in securing and executing the 1996 Olympic Games.

Preliminary conversations with global leaders from the region's business community in logistics, aviation, commercial real estate development, and food production have found interest in furthering corporate education around the SDGs (particularly mapped to GRI indicators being reported), and creating a Greater Atlanta RCE to continue and expand their growing commitment to sustainable development. As key partners in the formation of the Greater Atlanta RCE, Georgia Tech's Ray C. Anderson Center for Sustainable Business, together with local nonprofits - Corporate Volunteer Council of Atlanta and the Green Chamber of the South - will support outreach and engagement of the region's business community in the RCE. RCE organizers have also begun conversations with the Georgetown RCE around their strategy for successful business engagement in RCE efforts.

### **Nongovernmental & Philanthropic Resources**

The Atlanta Metro region is also home to a dynamic network of nongovernmental organizations of all sizes - from international organizations such as CARE and International Rescue Committee, to national organizations such as Carter Center and National Center for Civic & Human Rights, to regional organizations such as Southern Poverty Law Center and Partnership for Southern Equity, to a large network of grassroots organizations working on the full range of urgent sustainable development challenges at all scales. The region also maintains a strong and strategic philanthropic community working across sectors to leverage good work to greater heights. These organizations and foundations have a long history of working collaboratively with the business and university communities in pursuit of outcomes consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals, even if it hasn't been framed as such in the past.

Representatives of these sectors engaged in the application process emphasized the need to develop a structure for ongoing collaboration. Philanthropy partners also lifted up the potential for the SDG framing to help pierce silos in local philanthropy for deeper funding collaboration and impact. Establishment of an RCE in the Atlanta Metro region would provide a structure in which areas for collaboration and leveraging efforts would be more easily identified, and knowledge transfer would be more readily achieved. See "Key Institutions" section for more information about organizations operating across the region.

### **Governmental Resources**

The City of Atlanta and Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC, the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization) have been engaged in the RCE formation process since the beginning, and bring tremendous resources and synergy of efforts, include the City's participation in the Rockefeller Foundation's [100 Resilient Cities](#) work and the [ARC's Green Communities program](#), a national

model for local government sustainability leadership development. ARC will help serve as a conduit to engaging the more than 75 local government agencies it coordinates in RCE efforts (including entities such as the Cobb County Water System, a local leader in water conservation, an early RCE session participant).

Atlanta is the capital of the state of Georgia, and as such, state agencies are all based in the region. State agencies play a significant role in delivering important programming and services to communities and citizens across the state. Agencies such as the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Education, and others will be invited to participate as part of the RCE network. Likewise, many of the regional offices of the federal government are located in Atlanta including the Environmental Protection Agency, which has already begun participation in the RCE conversation.

Among the exceptions to federal agencies based in the nation's capital, and one especially important to pursuit of global sustainable development goals, is the U.S. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC), which is based in Atlanta. The US face of global public health research and assistance, the CDC works across the US and around the world to research and support disease control methods. Researchers and program officers from CDC will also be engaged as part of the RCE as it grows.

## **Education in the Region**

### **Higher Education**

As noted in the "RCE Development" section of this application, metro Atlanta hosts an abundance of higher education resources, which will serve as anchors in governance of the Greater Atlanta RCE. Many of the region's colleges and universities are active participants in the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) - which is actually the source from which we first heard about the RCE Network - and prioritize sustainable operations and educating their students to advance more sustainable forms of development as an increasingly important part of their mission. With such a wealth of knowledge and expertise on a broad array of topics, and with so much ongoing research and development on innovative sustainability solutions, the formation of an RCE in the region would provide an incredible opportunity to strategically coordinate, collaborate, and leverage efforts towards pursuit of the SDGs for the region and the world.

Below is a list of the key university stakeholders currently involved in this RCE proposal, and their notable efforts in the ESD realm:

- [Georgia Institute of Technology \(Georgia Tech\)](#) - The Georgia Institute of Technology is a leading research university committed to improving the human condition through advanced science and technology. The Institute is composed of six colleges with over 30 academic units located on 400 acres in urban Atlanta, Georgia. Georgia Tech is well-recognized for programs in business, computing, design, engineering, liberal arts, and the natural sciences. The research enterprise recorded \$786 million in total expenditures in FY2016 and spans

academic colleges and schools, the Economic Innovation Institute, Interdisciplinary Research Institutes, Interdisciplinary Research Centers, and the Georgia Tech Research Institute (GTRI). The Institute has long recognized the importance of sustainable and regenerative stewardship of all resources - fiscal, human, and natural. This commitment was illustrated in 1952, when the Institute moved off of coal in the central plant, significantly reducing emissions. Since then, we have built 27 LEED certified buildings; signed the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment in 2007, pledging to become carbon neutral by 2050; founded the Strategic Energy Institute (2004), Brook Byers Institute for Sustainable Systems (2009), and Ray C. Anderson Center for Sustainable Business (2013); and begun designing a fully certified Living Building in 2015, with a \$30M gift from The Kendeda Fund, with opening scheduled for 2019. Of particular note, in January 2016, the Institute launched "Serve-Learn-Sustain," a campus-wide education for sustainable development initiative to prepare students to use their disciplinary expertise to "create sustainable communities" in Georgia, the United States, and around the globe. The Center for Serve-Learn-Sustain, which serves as the RCE lead for Georgia Tech, is implementing Tech's new Quality Enhancement Plan, a component of its reaffirmation of accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. The Ray C. Anderson Center for Sustainable Business, Office of Campus Sustainability, and Strategic Energy Institute have also been involved in the RCE application process and are committed to participating in the RCE. Additionally, there is significant interest in the RCE among faculty, staff, and students across Georgia Tech. Approximately 30 people have taken part in stakeholder meetings; a staff person from the Office of International Education has taken on a leadership role in coordinating the Youth Network, with a special focus on increasing intercultural communication around sustainability; and our students have taken lead roles in coordinating the RCE Youth Network, in writing the RCE letter of support and organizing our SDG series for next year. In all, nine faculty and staff representing seven different units have committed to taking active roles in the RCE as members and leaders.

- [Emory University](#) - Emory University is a top-ranked private institution recognized internationally for its outstanding liberal arts colleges, graduate and professional schools, and one of the world's leading health care systems. They define sustainability as relating to quality of life: a community is sustainable if economic, social, and environmental systems provide a healthy, productive, and meaningful life for all community residents, present and future. Sustainability supports and incorporates many aspects of Emory's mission— educational, healthcare, and operational. Sustainability provides a multi-disciplinary framework for broadening student and employee perspectives on the economic, social, and environmental factors shaping our lives and our world, our interdependence as a local and global community, and the impact of our actions on future generations. Emory is home to the Carter Center, Global Health Institute, Center for Global Safe WASH, Emory-Tibet Science Initiative, and the nationally-recognized Piedmont Project, the longest-running faculty development program to integrate sustainability into teaching and research in the U.S. Over 500 faculty from all over the US have come to Emory to learn about how to start similar programs on their campuses. Emory is also currently ranked fourth among tier I research universities in the U.S. for its comprehensive sustainability program and is rated "Gold" level status by the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education.

- [Agnes Scott College](#) - Agnes Scott College is a liberal arts college for women, founded in 1889. The current student body of approximately 900 students reflects the two largest entering classes in the history of the college, the class of 2019 and 2020. In 2017 the college garnered national recognition as a higher education leader, including #4 Most Innovative School (U.S. News & World Report) and the 2017 ACE Award for Institutional Transformation. The college was also recently named the #2 Most Diversified College in America by Time Magazine. Agnes Scott's mission is to educate women to think deeply, live honorably and engage the intellectual and social challenges of their times. Because Agnes Scott's faculty, staff and student leaders view sustainability as one of the most important global challenges of today, therefore, the college maintains a deep commitment to integrating sustainability into sustainable development into both its operations and curriculum. Agnes Scott has become a recognized leader in environmental sustainability, specifically by committing to a goal of climate neutrality by 2037, and making progress toward meeting that goal with the following initiatives: five solar arrays, geothermal heating and air conditioning for almost one-tenth of the college's square footage, along with a \$1 million Green Revolving Fund to support energy and water efficiency. The college also offers an Environmental and Sustainability Studies program, providing students with an interdisciplinary curriculum that equips them to understand sustainability from a variety of liberal arts perspectives, including natural and social sciences, humanities, and fine arts. The program encourages students to gain experiential learning through internships and engagement in sustainability efforts on campus.
- [Spelman College](#) - Spelman is a member of the Atlanta University Center, a consortial arrangement with Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, and the Morehouse School of Medicine, and the world's oldest and largest association of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Spelman has been ranked the best historically black college or university in the U.S. for more than a decade, and ranks number one in sending African American women to doctoral degree programs in the sciences, mathematics, and engineering. Forbes and the Princeton Review annually list Spelman as one of the best colleges or universities in the nation. For over half a century, Spelman has been dedicated to sending African-American women abroad through its Merrill Foreign Travel-Study Program. Moreover, the Gordon Zeto Center for Global Education is committed to providing Spelman students with opportunities to engage the world through curricular programs and co-curricular activities. The Center infuses international and cross-cultural opportunities throughout the institution, and one of its five parts includes G-STEM, which is the initiative to enhance global research and education in the STEM fields. Consistent with its historical mission of promoting ethical leadership and positive social change, Spelman has a sustainability commitment to achieve climate neutrality by reducing its ecological footprint and practicing sustainability as a way of life. The school offers an Environmental Health and Sciences degree program that creates a learning environment in which students can better understand changes in the world and be gain a greater voice in planning for conservation through an interdisciplinary environmental science curriculum that is designed to enhance scientific inquiry and to strengthen scientific competence.
- [Clark Atlanta University](#) - Clark Atlanta University is a comprehensive, private, urban, coeducational institution of higher education with a predominantly African American heritage. It offers undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees as well as certificate programs to

students of diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The University was established in 1988 through the consolidation of its two parent institutions, Atlanta University (1865), the nation's first institution to award graduate degrees to African American, and Clark College (1869) the nation's first four-year liberal arts college to serve a primarily African American student population. Sustainability is deeply embedded in the Clark Atlanta University DNA. A charter signatory of the American College & University Presidents' Climate Commitment, CAU is working to integrate sustainability campus-wide including student engagement, curriculum development and buildings, infrastructure and operations.

- [Morehouse College](#) - Morehouse, a historically black college of Atlanta, maintains a mission of leading a sustainable transformation, promoting and supporting sustainable initiatives while serving as a resource to the campus community. The school's Institute for Sustainable Energy seeks to provide students with an experiential understanding of the interconnectedness of sustainable energy issues in science, society and business utilizing a comprehensive, interdisciplinary curriculum linked to multidisciplinary research and community outreach.
  
- [Kennesaw State University](#) - The university maintains a Sustainability Team within the Office of Campus Planning and Sustainability that works to improve sustainability outcomes on KSU campuses through education and training, student and faculty engagement, and operational improvements. Faculty within the Office of Campus Planning and Sustainability work under Academic Affairs, while staff works within the Division of Facilities Services. To encourage ESD, KSU's Sustainability Across the Curriculum is a two-day workshop that teaches faculty about sustainability initiatives on- and off-campus and helps them integrate sustainability topics into their curriculum through modules and stand-alone courses.
  
- [University of Georgia \(UGA\)](#) - The University of Georgia, a land-grant and sea-grant university with statewide commitments and responsibilities, is the state's oldest, most comprehensive, and most diversified institution of higher education. UGA is committed to solving grand challenges for Georgia, the nation and the world, while training students who are capable of solving real-world, multifaceted problems with no simple solutions. Sustainability research at UGA includes efforts to mitigate environmental impacts of human activity, discover new sources of energy, enhance agricultural practices, and increase community resilience.
  - Center for Integrative Conservation Research promotes an integrative approach that utilizes insights and methodologies from across the social and ecological sciences. Through research and teaching, program emphasizes the social and ecological trade-offs that are associated with managing complex systems and responding to contemporary environmental challenges, and to engage with policy and practitioner communities to support effective and equitable solutions to these trade-offs.
  
  - Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health serves a lead role in development, consolidation and dissemination of information and programs focused on invasive species, forest health, natural resource and agricultural management through technology development, program implementation, training, applied research and public awareness at the state, regional, national and international levels.

- Ideas for Creative Exploration at UGA is a collaborative network of faculty, students, and community members from all disciplines of the visual and performing arts in addition to other disciplines in the humanities and sciences, serving as a catalyst for innovative, interdisciplinary creative projects, advanced research and critical discourse in the arts, and for creative applications of technologies, concepts, and practices in sustainability and across disciplines.
- Institute for Resilient Infrastructure Systems helps communities, businesses, and governments mitigate risks - and seize opportunities - associated with environmental change, extreme weather, and climate-related events by rethinking, transforming and adapting infrastructure systems to strengthen social, economic and ecological resilience.
- New Materials Institute takes a systems approach to the challenges of design and disposal of new products and materials to minimize pollution, promote sustainability and protect human health—without sacrificing economic viability and efficiency.
- One Health is a multi-university and multi-disciplinary collaborative effort to attain optimal health for people, animals and our environment at all scales. The Division of One Health at the UGA Biomedical and Health Sciences Institute seeks to promote and expand the ongoing One Health efforts of UGA faculty, students and staff who share One Health’s unified vision towards combating today’s global health threats.
- River Basin Center works to connect freshwater science to management and policy. Although affiliated with the Odum School of Ecology, its members are drawn from units across the University of Georgia and it is known for an interdisciplinary approach.
- Sustainable Food Systems Initiative is addressing the security and resiliency of food systems for a growing world population without depleting natural resources or degrading the ecosystems on which long-term sustainability depends.
- Watershed UGA is a community stream restoration and protection initiative aimed at engaging the campus community in sustainability through watersheds.

## **K-12 Education**

Within the greater Atlanta RCE community defined by 10 counties, plus Athens-Clarke County as an extension of this region, K-12 public education is governed largely by 11 county-level Boards of Education. Exceptions to this county-structure are few, where City-level systems have jurisdiction within a County:

- Atlanta Public Schools (Fulton County)
- Marietta City Schools (Cobb County)
- Decatur City Schools (DeKalb County)
- Buford City Schools (Gwinnett County).

In the region, Cobb County, Gwinnett County and Decatur City School Systems are known for their embrace of environmental education. Partnerships between many of these public systems and locally-based international organizations such as the Captain Planet Foundation are also resulting in wide-spread adoption of Learning Gardens as living labs for healthy food, Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) experimentation and project-based ecosystem learning. The region is also home to dozens of private K-12 institutions, many of whom are making notable commitments to sustainability, in operations, curriculum integration and student leadership development.

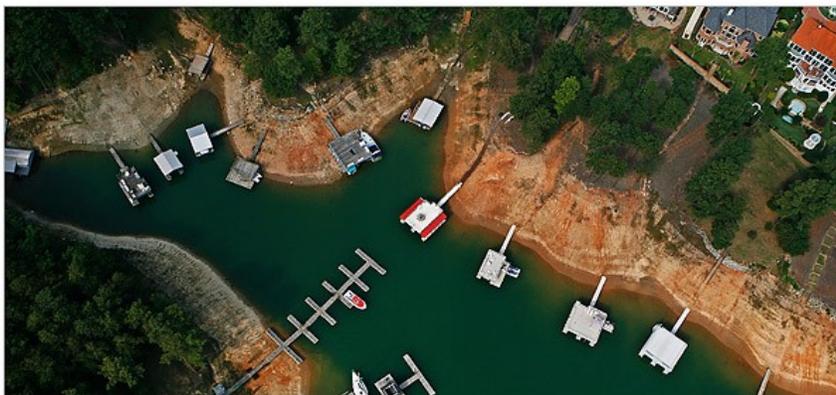
Informal and nonformal educational partners engaged in RCE conversations have relationships and ongoing collaborations in the region's K-12 school systems, and RCE organizers will put significant effort into engaging this core sector for ESD in the governance and activities of the network.

## Environmental Resources of Metro Atlanta

Atlanta, unlike many other cities founded in 19th century America, was not built based on available stocks of natural resources or location along waterways or fall lines. It grew from its role as a crossroads - a transportation hub for the southeastern US, first via rail and later via interstate highways and air travel (home to Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, the busiest airport in the world). Rivers provided fresh water and their floodplains absorbed water; forests filtered air, provided shade, and sequestered carbon; the soils absorbed rainfall and provided nutrients to grow food; natural areas offered habitat for a wide range of species, and recreational spaces for humans. The ecosystem services provided by the environmental assets of the region have been imperative to its growth, and yet are challenged by the area's rapid expansion and urbanization. These challenges are being compounded by larger issues such as climate change, human migration patterns, and agricultural intensification. Many actors in the region are coming together to address these challenges, both by reducing impacts and building resilience to the impacts already set in place.

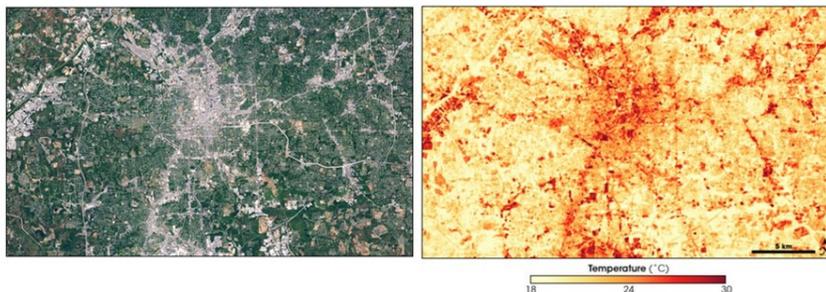
### Water

Both the availability and management of water present significant challenges to the Atlanta Metro region. With a granite bedrock and clay soil, the region depends primarily on surface water as the source of drinking water, but being close to the headwaters region, the volume of streams and rivers is relatively low. A lack of precipitation and



**Fig 5.** 2015 photo of Lake Lanier, primary drinking water source for Atlanta region, illustrates dramatic water level drop in last few years. Science Mag - <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2016/12/florida-georgia-water-war-kills-weather-forecasting-bill>

increasing population in the area has led to a two-year drought. The two lakes that serve as reservoirs for the region (one of which, Lake Lanier, provides 98% of Atlanta's drinking water) are at alarmingly low-levels. Georgia's downstream neighbors - sections of Florida and Alabama in the Chattahoochee River basin- rely heavily on water remaining after Atlanta's upstream withdrawals, causing what has been referred to as the [Tri-State Water Wars](#) for decades, and which is currently being argued before the US Supreme Court. The water shortage and water quality issues are being addressed in several ways across the region - improving water efficiency, encouraging water conservation, increasing capacity, and improving stormwater management solutions.



**Fig. 6.** Landsat satellite images provides two views of urban Atlanta, Georgia, on September 28, 2000. NASA Earth Observatory.

<https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/IOTD//view.php?id=7205>

## Air

The Atlanta region has not had a history of meeting federal standards for ozone and fine particulate matter levels, though air quality measures have improved significantly over the last decade.<sup>8</sup> Natural hot and humid weather conditions, motorized vehicles, power plants, and industry

contribute to air quality problems for the region. These problems are compounded by an increasing heat island effect produced by more impervious surfaces and higher temperatures.

Efforts to address these challenges to air quality in the region include extensive transportation improvement efforts, large investments in energy efficiency upgrades, switching to renewable energy sources, urban greening projects, carbon reduction plans, among others.

## Urban Food & Forest

Metro Atlanta is a vibrant scene for urban farming and forestry. In 2015, the City of Atlanta hired its first Urban Agriculture Director, a rare position for a city government. With several 'food deserts' identified across the Metro region, this position was created to support the City's goal of bringing local, healthy food within a half-mile of 75 percent of all Atlanta residents by year 2020. Urban agriculture is a big part of the strategy for addressing this goal - the City is making public land available for cultivation; there is a robust school and community garden network in place; public service agencies work closely with farmers markets and corner stores to provide access to low-cost produce; and local philanthropic dollars are investing in converting food 'deserts' into 'oases'.

<sup>8</sup> American Lung Association. *State of the Air 2016*. <http://www.lung.org/our-initiatives/healthy-air/sota/>

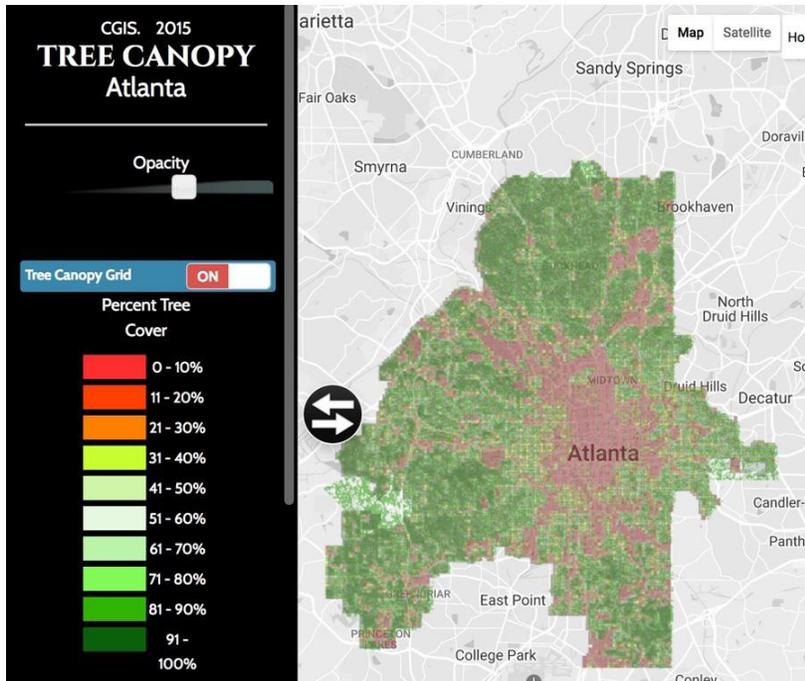


Fig. 7. Atlanta Urban Canopy Map 2008. Trees Atlanta.  
<https://treesatlanta.org/resources/urban-tree-canopy-study/>

The region’s urban forest is also an asset to the region, calculated to have an urban tree canopy of 47.9% of the City’s area (among the highest density in the US; studied in 2008)<sup>9</sup>. Looking at the canopy map (Fig. 7), you’ll notice that the majority of tree cover is located outside of the inner city, which aligns closely with the Urban Heat Island map illustrated above in Figure 6.

## Sustainability Challenges

As this application details, the Atlanta region represents many paradoxes of strength and weakness, resources and challenges, interwoven in a complex web of interdependency. Stakeholder-identified preliminary SDG priorities for Greater Atlanta RCE collaboration will seek to address these paradoxes.

<sup>9</sup>Trees Atlanta. *Assessing Urban Tree Canopy in the City of Atlanta*.  
<https://treesatlanta.org/resources/urban-tree-canopy-study/>

**Table 1. Sustainability Paradox of Greater Atlanta Region**

Primary SDGs	Strengths of the Region	Weaknesses
<b>Good Health &amp; Well-being</b>	Home to internationally known health centers, including the Centers for Disease Control, The Carter Center and world-class research hospitals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Top-ranked in US for new HIV/AIDs cases, diabetes, stroke, asthma</li> <li>● Extreme health inequities such as infant mortality and premature deaths</li> <li>● Graded “F” by American Lung Association in 2017 for ozone</li> </ul>
<b>Zero Hunger</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Year-round growing season - GA is #1 producer in US of eight food commodities</li> <li>● Growing local food system, with one of first US cities with Director of Urban Agriculture</li> <li>● In 2015, Georgia ranked third in the nation in net electricity generation from biomass</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● &gt;80,000 Atlantans need assistance to buy food each week</li> <li>● Dozens of food deserts and food swamps exist in metro Atlanta</li> <li>● No systems exist to scale diversion of food waste</li> <li>● Local production of perishable crops is limited by lack of access to land</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainable Cities &amp; Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● World-class parks and greenspaces</li> <li>● Sprawl growth model has shifted to core densification</li> <li>● Atlanta is one of 100 Rockefeller Foundation resilient cities</li> <li>● Trees cover 36 percent of the city, far above the national average of 27 percent</li> <li>● Strong sustainability plan under Power to Change and use of Neighborhood Planning Units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Top-ranked energy burden on low income households in US</li> <li>● Top polluting coal-fired power plants in US</li> <li>● Disparate impact of urban heat island effect on low wealth communities</li> <li>● Poor access to greenspace</li> <li>● Rapid loss of tree canopy</li> <li>● Legacy of sprawl development</li> <li>● Rapid gentrification and loss of affordable housing.</li> <li>● Lack of political commitment or investment in meaningful sustainable practices across the region, such as transit, walkability, and zoning</li> </ul>
<b>Climate Action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● US leader in electric vehicle ownership and growing charging infrastructure</li> <li>● Ranked by Carbon Disclosure Project as a top-10 worldwide city for quality reporting of Greenhouse Gas Emissions</li> <li>● City of Atlanta resolution mandates that the City transition to 100% renewable energy sources by 2035</li> <li>● US leader in LEED-certified buildings and voluntary commercial energy/water conservation</li> <li>● Strong leadership from Georgia Climate Action Coalition (grassroots) and the Georgia Climate Project (UGA, Georgia Tech, Emory)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Top polluting coal-fired power plants in US</li> <li>● Rapid loss of tree canopy</li> <li>● High transport carbon emissions (tonnes of CO2 per person)</li> </ul>
<b>Quality Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Highest concentration of Historically Black Colleges &amp; Universities in US</li> <li>● Home to more than 50 other higher education institutions with nearly 1,800 programs of study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● National notoriety for Atlanta Public Schools cheating scandal</li> <li>● Dramatically segregated and disparate K-12 school performance correlated with race and income</li> <li>● Lack of institutional commitment to sustainability and ethics in higher education</li> </ul>
<b>Industry, Innovation &amp; Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Global logistics hub - busiest airport in the world, HQ for UPS, extensive rail infrastructure</li> <li>● Burgeoning technology start-up ecosystem and testbed for smart cities technologies</li> <li>● New catalytic infrastructure investments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Notorious traffic and crumbling road infrastructure</li> <li>● Skeletal transit infrastructure inaccessible to more than 60% of population in region</li> <li>● Sharp digital divide</li> </ul>
<b>No Poverty</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Home to 25 Fortune 1000 corporate HQs</li> <li>● Film and video industry hub of the south</li> <li>● Abundance of natural resources</li> <li>● Diverse and growing economy</li> <li>● Birthplace to the modern civil rights movement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consistently ranked as top US city for income inequality and lack of social mobility</li> <li>● Slavery legacy is reflected today in structural and systemic racism and a city/region divided</li> </ul>

Many of these paradoxes are not unique to the Atlanta region - it could in fact be said that this is the story of many 21st century cities around the globe, certainly of those in the exponentially-growing US Southern Sunbelt. Atlanta has contributed health advances, civil rights inspiration, cultural icons, and logistics and technology innovations to the world. Now is the time for Greater Atlanta to contribute in a new way - to forge new global and local collaborations through the RCE network to advance sustainable development and address these paradoxes.

Two big systems-level challenges that the region must address if it's going to continue being a thriving and vibrant metro area are Equity and Resilience.

## Equity

Metro Atlanta is faced with a significant equity challenge. A legacy of systemic racism has created huge disparities among residents of the City, largely defined by race. The largest and most populated county in this 10-county region, Fulton County, has a Gini Index Score of 0.535<sup>10</sup> - a score that ranks it within the top ten most unequal countries in the world. This one county which stretches north to south through the City, represents an income gap that far exceeds the national average and which leads to other inequities that perpetuate the cycle including lack of access to transportation, housing, quality education, nutrition and health care.

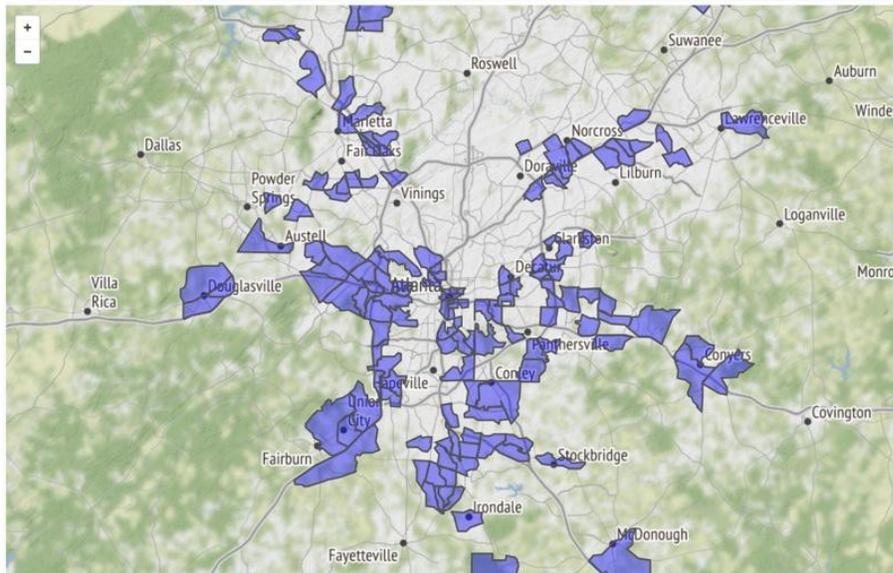


Fig. 8. Urban food deserts in the Atlanta region. Atlanta Journal Constitution.

<http://www.myajc.com/news/food-deserts-map/>

fresh produce and other healthy whole foods. Often, residents living in food deserts that lack access to reliable transportation are forced to shop at liquor and convenience stores, which are more

Access to fresh foods is but one manifestation of the region's socio-economic divides and inequities. The map illustrated in Figure 8 ([My AJC](#)) depicts 'food deserts' around the City, [defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture](#) as low-income communities located more than one mile from a reliable source of

<sup>10</sup> Atlanta Regional Commission. 2014. *Income Changes in Metro Atlanta:*

*Meandering Through The Research.* [http://documents.atlantaregional.com/snapshots/income\\_fullpres\\_final.pdf](http://documents.atlantaregional.com/snapshots/income_fullpres_final.pdf)

frequently stocked with processed foods high in sodium and fats, contributing to several public health problems including obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.

Consistent with many urban regions in the US, these socioeconomic and demographic divides often correlate with areas of high environmental contamination and/ or pollution sources, broadly considered environmental injustice. A 2012 study conducted by GreenLaw on environmental justice in the Atlanta Metro Region revealed 52 “environmental justice hotspots” where the correlation between race, poverty, and pollution were strongest.<sup>11</sup> For example, low pollution blocks have an average minority population of 25.4 percent while the average minority population of high-pollution blocks is nearly double at 44.2 percent. These disparities are well documented to contribute to a cycle of health risks and challenges (see Fig 9, [http://www.pediatrics.emory.edu/documents/pehsu/Monograph\\_2013.pdf](http://www.pediatrics.emory.edu/documents/pehsu/Monograph_2013.pdf)). One county in the region - Fulton County - has adopted environmental justice policies, but more can be done across the region.

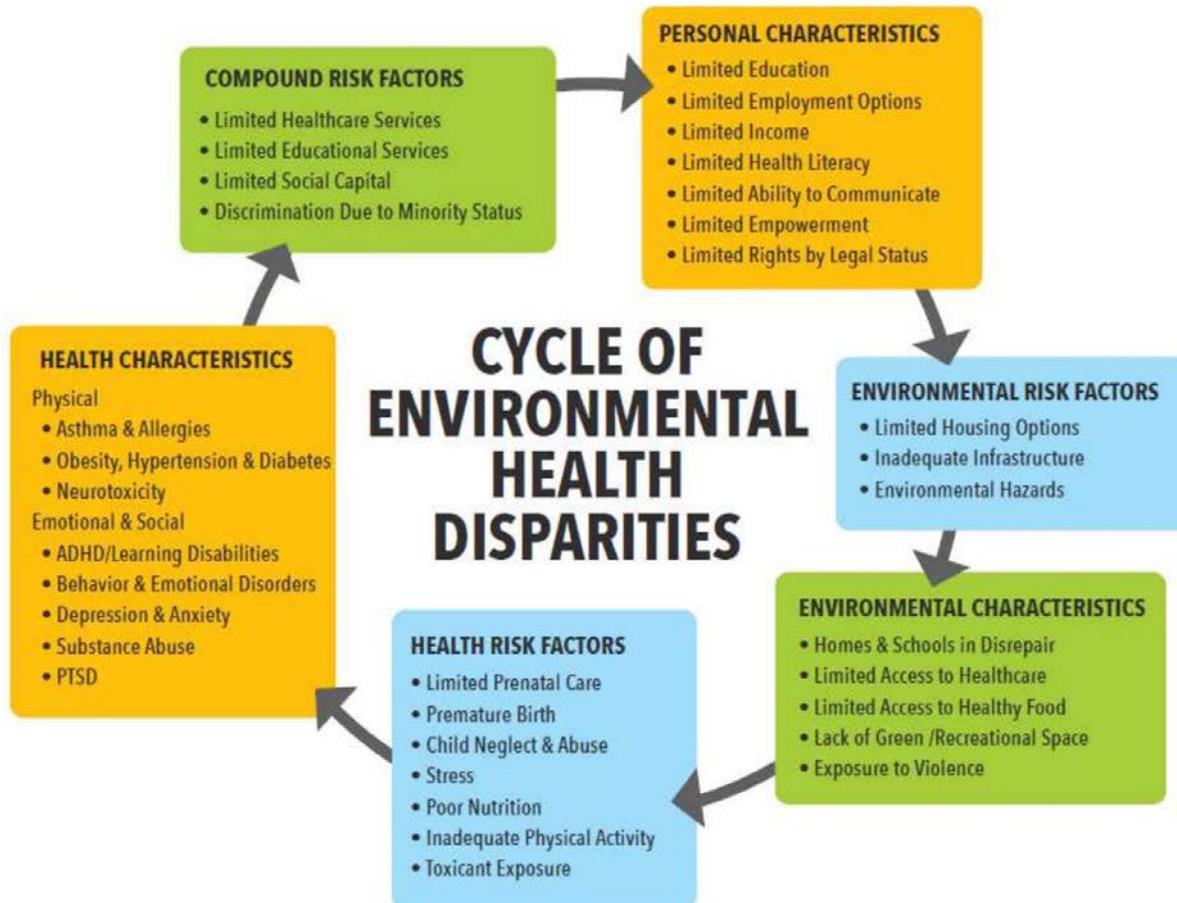


Fig. 9. Cycle of Environmental Health Disparity. ISDD. <https://www.isdd-home.org/break-the-cycle>

<sup>11</sup> GreenLaw. (2012). Patterns of Pollution: Report on Demographics & Pollution in Metro Atlanta. <http://greenlaw.org/the-issues/environmental-justice/patterns-of-pollution.html>

There are many organizations and university associates, including those included in this RCE proposal, who have been working tirelessly to address and ideally alleviate some of these inequities we see in the Atlanta region and across the broader region. We hope and anticipate that as an RCE, we will be able to learn from other places addressing similar challenges around equity, justice, and opportunity, as well as share what is working with others wrestling with the same challenges.

Several holistic initiatives are well underway to tackle these challenges, namely:

- The [Atlanta City Design Project](#) is an effort, under the direction of the City's Department of Planning and Community Development, to envision what Atlanta should look like decades from now, as well as guide future decisions on the growth and development of the City. Poised to more than double population by 2050, this project is an effort to be proactive about how that growth occurs to make the City a better place to live. It's a community planning process driven by two overarching assumptions:
  1. Atlanta is going to change – not changing is not an option – our change will involve significant growth – if properly designed, that growth can be a powerful tool for shaping the Atlanta we want to become.
  2. More people are better than fewer – a diverse population is better than a homogeneous one – the most strategic scenario for growth includes everyone.
- The [Strong, Prosperous, And Resilient Communities Challenge \(SPARCC\)](#) is a \$90 million initiative which invests in and amplifies local efforts underway in six communities to ensure that new investments lead to equitable and healthy opportunities for everyone. Atlanta is one of these six communities, with the focus on equitable transit development. The TransFormation Alliance (TFA) is a partnership of 17 government agencies, businesses, and nonprofits that share a vision of changing how transit and community development investments shape the future, offering all residents opportunities for a high quality of life. With the support of SPARCC, the TFA will be able to put more resources toward strategies to increase equitable city planning.
- With Atlanta mayoral elections taking place in 2017, [Our Future Atlanta](#) is a coalition of organizations across the City taking a stand on the importance of local elections, proposing an equity-based policy platform for candidate education and position. The Coalition is co-lead by the Center for Civic Innovation, the Partnership for Southern Equity and ProGeorgia.

## Resilience

With 4.4 million living in the region and 8+ million anticipated by 2050, the region's infrastructure systems are under increasing stress. The limits of hard infrastructure systems such as water and sewer, roads, and rail are being tested daily with congestion and wear. Already considered to have some of the worst traffic congestion in the world<sup>12</sup>, a recent fire that collapsed a bridge that serves

---

<sup>12</sup> INRIX. 2016. Global Traffic Report Card <http://inrix.com/scorecard/>

as a major thoroughfare for the City has brought the reliance on automobiles, the lack of other transportation options, and the vulnerability of the City to such disruptions into even greater relief.

As more people move to the region, more housing will need to be built, more people will need to get around, more toilets will flush, more trash will be discarded, more lights will be lit. The region's infrastructure systems are under increasing pressure, compounded by more erratic weather events, increasing heat, longer droughts, etc. These pressures impact not only natural systems such as water and air, but social and economic indicators such as health, well-being, happiness, and productivity.

Increasing the capacity and resilience of the region's systems to manage more volume and absorb shocks without crumbling is another key sustainability challenge the region must address. Some of the initiatives taking place to address this challenge include:

- [Atlanta Resilience Challenge](#), part of the Rockefeller 100 Resilient Cities Challenge, strives to develop a plan to reduce the region's reliance on highway infrastructure through development of an Emergency Preparedness and Management group.
- [Power to Change \(P2C\)](#) is the integrated sustainability plan for the City of Atlanta, guided by ten impact areas and monitored using GRI developed metrics. The ten sustainability goals for the City were developed through a process of benchmarking, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews with a wide range of City stakeholders, and include:
  1. **Improve** our regional **air quality** and foster the improvement of indoor air quality throughout the City.
  2. **Develop land use** policies and programs designed to protect greenspace, sustain our tree canopy, bring brownfields back into productive use, and enhance community livability.
  3. **Institute sustainable** development through **participatory planning**. To balance growth with environmental stewardship by collaborating with diversified stakeholders and learned experiences
  4. **Provide** access to safe, efficient and sustainable **transportation** choices for Atlantans to reach employment, goods and services, and recreational activities
  5. **Provide educational opportunities** for all Atlantans to see how far the community has come as well as demonstrate what work remains in creating a more sustainable Atlanta.
  6. **Improve business knowledge of resource use** while also accelerating job and economic growth to enhance the City of Atlanta's competitive position within the globalized economy
  7. **Reduce energy** use through conservation, efficiency best practices, and through the deployment of renewable systems
  8. **Maximize the health and well-being** of the community, providing access to affordable sustainable housing choices, nutritious food and efficient transportation.
  9. Create environmental and economic value to residents and businesses by **using less resources and diverting valuable materials from our landfills**.
  10. **Increase watershed protection** and preservation practices so that all Atlantans have access to a sufficient supply of clean, healthy water.

These potentially transformational equity and resilience initiatives have been elevated by RCE stakeholders through the engagement process, suggesting the RCE can play a valuable role in bringing additional collaborators to the growing momentum around these initiatives.

## **RCE Vision, Mission, Goals, & Objectives**

---

### **Vision of ATL RCE**

We envision a robust and engaged network of all sectors of Greater Atlanta society, collaboratively working towards a region where the principles of sustainability - equity and justice, resilient ecosystems, health and well-being, and economic opportunity - are ingrained in its continued development; where opportunities for greater progress are realized through connected local partners and knowledge centers; and where the students in the region have expanded opportunities to learn about sustainability locally and globally, and participate first-hand in shaping a sustainable future.

### **Mission**

The Greater Atlanta RCE accelerates student and community sustainable development leadership and progress towards a more sustainable future by leveraging a network structure to connect, support and catalyze diverse collaborations.

### **Goal and Objectives**

The stated goal of the UNU-IAS Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Programme is to bridge the gap between learning and development through the following objectives:

- Objective 1:** Accelerating local and regional solutions to sustainability issues
- Objective 2:** Re-orienting higher education for societal transformation into SD
- Objective 3:** Developing SD and ESD competencies and capabilities as well as a science-policy interface.

The Greater Atlanta RCE sees tremendous value in these stated objectives and plans to adopt them. Rather than expand upon them to articulate different goals and objectives relevant to Greater Atlanta, leadership has instead taken the approach of crafting preliminary strategies that will allow the Greater Atlanta RCE to focus on our priority SDGs, while addressing all three of the UNU ESD objectives.

### **Preliminary Strategies (see Collaboration Section for more detail)**

- A. Approach governance with explicit inclusion, focus on equity in power dynamics and balance of sector participation
- B. Use digital tools to elevate existing ESD collaborations for greater visibility and broader relevance
- C. Leverage momentum around existing collaborations to catalyze broader participation, greater impact and connection to ESD

- D. Identify and share wisdom of the network to heighten ESD in the region
- E. Infuse K-12, higher education and informal and non-formal education curricula with the SDGs in local context
- F. Empower local youth to create and execute ESD strategy through an RCE Youth Network.

### **Preliminary Priority SDGs**

- Good Health & Well-being
- Zero Hunger
- Sustainable Cities & Communities
- Climate Action
- Quality Education
- Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure
- No Poverty

## **Governance & Management Structure**

---

### **Stakeholder Engagement in RCE Formation**

The Metro Atlanta region has long been a hub of activity from across sectors in advancing progressive and sustainable principles of development, civil and human rights, and public health and well-being. The region's vibrant higher-education scene has also created many opportunities for those advocating and advancing ESD to interact with each other and with practitioners from other sectors. Based on those interactions, there have been numerous discussions about forming a more formal network to facilitate collaboration. The concept of the Regional Center of Expertise around Education for Sustainable Development and pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals provided an established framework around which to catalyze those discussions into action.

A series of stakeholder meetings were convened in winter/spring 2017 to begin exploration of the value, role, focus and activities of a Greater Atlanta RCE, with more than 200 stakeholders from higher education, civil society, business, and local, regional, state and federal government participating.

### **Key Institutions**

Greater Atlanta RCE organizers have identified key institutions across all sectors for engagement in the RCE. These institutions focus on the full range of SDGs, and were included in preliminary outreach efforts around application development.

Table 2 below lists key institutions who have participated in the process and/or committed to ongoing participation, as well as those who will be included in ongoing outreach, particularly to round out expertise on priority SDGs.

**Table 2. Key Institutions**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Process Participant</b>	<b>Committed to RCE Participation</b>	<b>Will be included in ongoing RCE outreach</b>
Acuity Brands	x		x
Agnes Scott College	x	x	x
Annie E Casey Foundation			x
Arthur Blank Family Foundation			x
Atlanta Food and Farm	x	x	x
Atlanta Regional Commission			x
Blue Heron Nature Preserve	x		x
Captain Planet Foundation	x	x	x
Central Atlanta Progress	x		x
Chick-fil-A			x
City of Atlanta			x
City of Atlanta Office of Resilience	x	x	x
Clark Atlanta University	x	x	x
Cobb County Water Authority			x
Coca-Cola North America			x
Community Foundation	x		x
Corporate Volunteer Council	x	x	x
Cox Foundation			x
Davis, Pickering, Seydel + Sneed	x	x	x
Dobbs Foundation			x
Emerald Corridor Foundation			x
Emory Rollins School of Public Health	x	x	x
Emory Sustainability Initiatives	x	x	x
Emory University	x	x	x
Emory Urban Health Initiative	x	x	x
EPA Brownfields Program	x		x
Georgia Farmers Market Association	x		x
Georgia Power Foundation			x
Georgia Tech	x	x	x
Georgia Tech Ray C. Anderson Center for Sustainable Business	x	x	x
Green Chamber of the South/Greenhouse Accelerator	x	x	x
Georgia Tech Serve-Learn-Sustain Center	x	x	x
Hartsfield Jackson International Airport	x		x

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Process Participant</b>	<b>Committed to RCE Participation</b>	<b>Will be included in ongoing RCE outreach</b>
Home Depot Foundation			x
Kendeda Fund	x		x
Kennesaw State University	x		x
Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change	x	x	x
Morehouse College	x		x
Plexus Scientific	x		x
Pure Cities	x		x
Ray C. Anderson Foundation	x	x	x
Saving Our Sons & Sisters Int'l	x	x	x
Southface	x	x	x
Spelman College	x		x
Sterling Planet			x
Suntrust Foundation			x
Sustainable Communities	x		x
Sustainable Options	x		x
The Coca-Cola Foundation			x
The Southern Company Foundation			x
Turner Foundation	x		x
UGA	x	x	x
University Community Development Corp.	x		x
UPS	x		x
US Forest Service	x		x
US Green Building Council	x		x
Wells Fargo Foundation			x
Woodruff Foundation			x
Zeist Foundation			x

## **Finances**

Planning and execution of all activities of the Greater Atlanta RCE will be reliant on network members' in-kind contributions of time and talents, with anchor educational institutions at the hub of the network. Initially proposed activities will largely be driven by voluntary efforts to achieve early wins with little to no hard expense. Relationships with the local philanthropic community have also been deepened through the application engagement process, and the RCE anticipates seeking funding to support network formation, coordination, facilitation; collaborative tool development; participation in the RCE global network; and scholarships to ensure diverse participation by our most resource-constrained members.

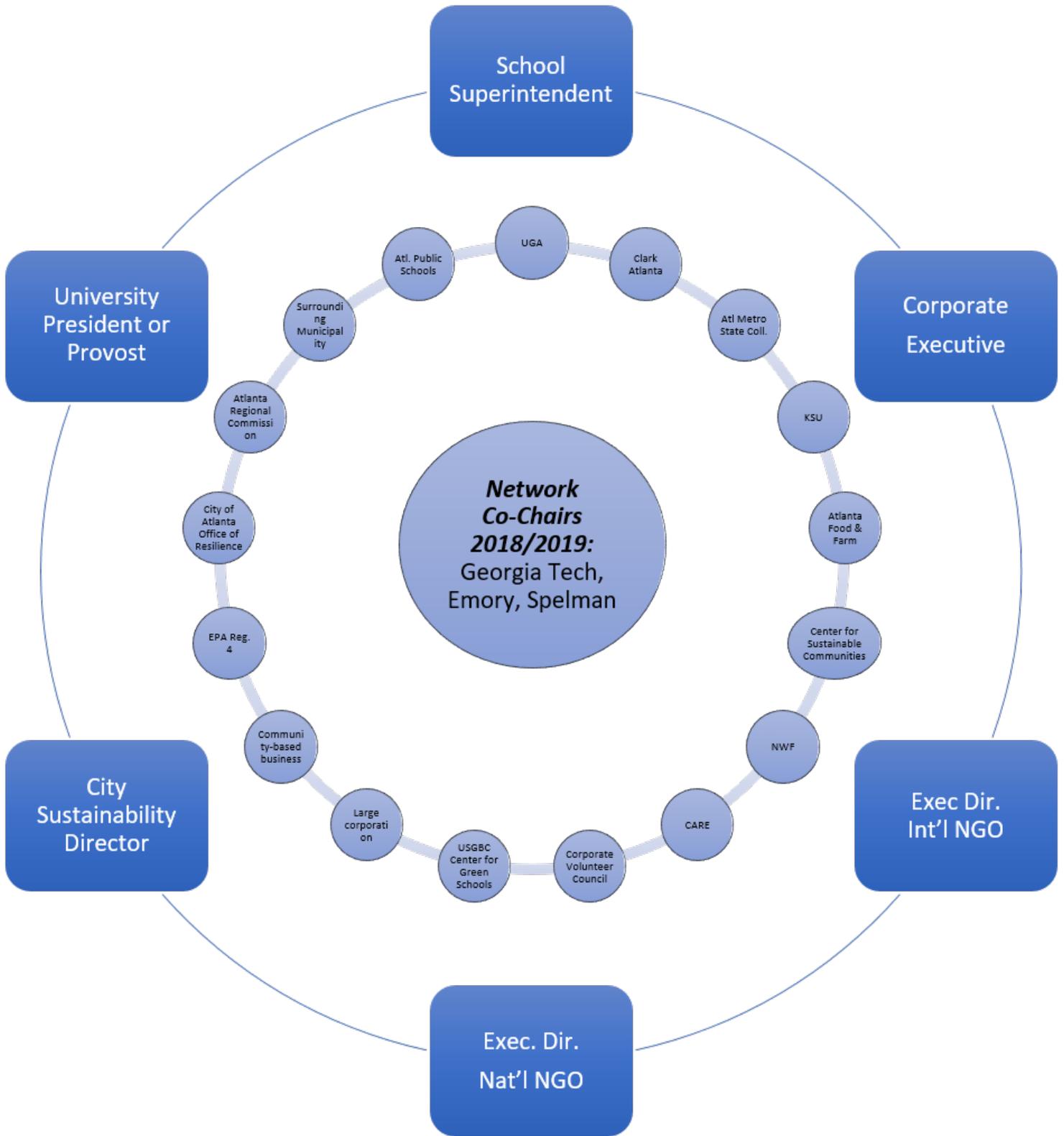
## **Governance and Management Structure**

The Greater Atlanta RCE will need to be organized in an efficient, collaborative, and flexible structure. At the time this proposal is submitted, the Steering Committee is led by [Serve-Learn-Sustain](#) (SLS) at Georgia Tech, and by the Emory University Office of Sustainability Initiatives. Consultant support was secured to convene stakeholder groups and identify priorities, opportunities, barriers to success and engagement with the RCE. An outcome of these conversations is a richer understanding of how the organizational and governance structure will need to take shape, as well as how participants will need to be engaged.

In order to keep the demands of network coordination from detracting from the ESD work of the network, we are exploring a governance structure for the Greater Atlanta RCE anchored during the first year by Georgia Tech, Emory and Spelman as co-leaders with broader multi-sectoral leadership provided by a Steering Committee, including representatives from each of the higher education partners, including HBCUs and technical colleges, as well as from other sectors, including business, governmental, NGO, K-12, youth and community organizations. We anticipate rotating the leadership roles every two years. The Steering Committee members will represent a stakeholder sector as well as leading a strategy, discrete project or an SDG initiative.

The early work will include structuring the rotation of leadership, integrating new stakeholder, data analysis, as well as commitment to planning for launch of Work Groups and training in diversity, equity and network leadership/facilitation.

Establishment of an RCE Youth Network will be an essential governance activity early in RCE formation. With a solid cohort of roughly 20 student leaders representing at least six institutions already engaged in an Atlanta Student Sustainability Council (ATL-SSC) (see attached support letter), the Youth Network will establish its own roles and responsibilities in executing RCE strategies; to participate in the Steering Committee and to serve as an important conduit to youth leadership around the region.



**Greater Atlanta RCE Governance Structure**

## EXPLANATION OF DIAGRAM:

### ***Inner Circle: 3 Network Co-Chairs***

- 2-year terms
- For this first cycle, all 3 co-chairs represent higher education
- After first cycle, our goal is for each co-chair to represent a different sector
- Subsequent co-chairs are expected to be chosen from the Steering Committee
- Co-chairs will provide overall network direction and supervise coordination, to be done by a Network Coordinator (need to fundraise to hire) and student workers (already hired)

### ***Middle Circle: Steering Committee\****

- 2-year terms
- Representing all RCE sectors
- Members commit to providing input into governance and network strategy through quarterly meetings and in between; being actively engaged by leading an RCE work group focusing on a strategy area, project, or SDG; serving as RCE public ambassadors (representing the RCE, seeking engagement and funding opportunities, etc.)
- Note that we have a commitment to serve from some, but not all, listed organizations; all of these partners have been actively engaged to date

### ***Outer Circle: Advisory Board***

- 2-year terms
- CEOs, Presidents/Provosts, Executive Directors
- Meet 1x/year to provide high-level guidance ensuring that the RCE is in touch with Greater Atlanta regional and stakeholder priorities and that these leaders are aware of RCE activities

**\*Steering Committee members (middle circle):** UGA, Clark Atlanta, Atlanta Metropolitan State College, Kennesaw State University, Atlanta Food & Farm, Center for Sustainable Communities, National Wildlife Federation, CARE Int'l, Corporate Volunteer Council, USGBC Center for Green Schools, Large Corporation (TBD), Community-based Business (TBD), EPA Region 4, City of Atlanta Office of Sustainability, Atlanta Regional Commission, Surrounding Municipality (TBD), Atlanta Public Schools

---

In addition, we have been actively introducing the RCE concept to corporate representatives from companies in the Greater Atlanta region that have programs aligned with the SDGs, including certified B corporations, and encompassing nonprofits who regularly engage with the corporate sector. The initial responses from these representatives have been positive, and we anticipate having one or more of these organizations in rotational roles on the Steering Committee. We also expect to have additional senior level corporate engagement through an Advisory Board that would provide strategic advice to the Steering Committee tentatively on an annual basis. Finally, the Managing Director of the Ray C. Anderson Center for Sustainable Business and the President of the Southface Institute are co-chairing a Work Group to lead engagement with the business sector.

Key to facilitating this process is establishing a designated part-time coordinator role that supports network facilitation and coordination, and guides graduate assistants and other student interns as additional support. This role can either exist as a dedicated team within an existing institution, or as an external dedicated entity.

The role of Secretariat will be filled by the Steering Committee.

The bulk of the activity of the network will take place within work groups organized around themes

and clusters identified in the initial inventories and surveys described in the 2018 activities. These thematic work groups are comprised of practitioners engaged in the work to support the SDGs and ESD, who will communicate about their work and collaborate as appropriate. A member of each work group will serve on the Steering Committee to ensure their activities are communicated.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

It is important to make the distinction between monitoring and evaluating progress towards SDG goals and ESD goals. In the case of the Metro Atlanta region, the City's ten-point Power to Change Initiative has invested heavily in identifying and articulating very clear goals and metrics of success for sustainable development in the City. With support from the [Global Reporting Initiative](#), the City has developed rigorous data-driven evaluation methods and reporting metrics published annually. This is just one example of how progress towards sustainable development is being measured in the region. The success of the RCE will not be based on SDG measures alone. Rather, the goals and objectives for the RCE, and thus measures of progress, will focus on the work of the network to facilitate collaboration and opportunities for ESD. Furthermore, AASHE has developed international standards, known as STARS, which include education for sustainable development. AASHE describes STARS as a transparent, self-reporting framework for colleges and universities to gauge relative progress toward sustainability. These standards will serve as a reference point for development of the RCE metrics for success.

As part of the first year of the RCE formalization, we will form Work Groups that will identify their own goals and metrics of success. Based on these goals, the Steering Committee will define overarching goals for the network, and identify metrics of progress for these goals. These goals, along with those articulated within the Work Groups, will be aggregated into a holistic strategy map for review and discussion. It is worth noting that the anchor institutions already have a long history of reporting on education for sustainable development and their sustainability practices. Once approved, the Measurement and Evaluation committee, leveraging the tremendous capacity and expertise of higher education network members, will be tasked with designing a process and dashboard for capturing, measuring, and communicating progress across the network. One option we have explored is to use strategy management software programs such as [InsightVision](#), which is designed specifically to facilitate collective impact across a wide diversity of organizations. Depending on the metrics selected, each organization or work group representative will be expected to input their activities and outcomes into the system to provide real-time measures of progress.

# Collaboration Among Stakeholders

## COMMITTED

Multi-Stakeholder Collaborations	Description (50 words)	Organizations (bold lead)	Timeline	Primary SDG	Secondary SDG
Farm to Schools		Atlanta Public Schools Captain Planet Foundation Georgia Organics Decatur Public Schools Wylde Center	Ongoing	3 - Good Health & Well-Being	2 - Zero Hunger
South Fulton Food Policy Council	The South Fulton Food Policy Council brings together diverse stakeholders to build a local food system and offer recommendations for policy improvements.	Atlanta Food & Farm PBC, South Fulton City Councilperson Khalid Kamau, The Market Garden, Same Difference Inc, Fulton County Cooperative Extension, Morehouse School of Medicine's Prevention Research Center	Ongoing	11 - Sustainable Cities & Communities	8 - Decent Work & Economic Growth
Sustainable Agriculture/Sustainable Food Systems: beginning farmer/rancher training program	(Statewide) capacity building for new farmer and journeymen; food hubs; food safety training; food product development	University of Georgia: Agricultural Extension	Ongoing	2 - Zero Hunger	15 - Life on Land
Food Waste database system	(Regional) supports small and midsize farms in sales of excess produce	University of Georgia: Agricultural and Environmental Sciences	Planned	12 - Responsible Consumption & Production	15 - Life on Land
AAMI (African American Male Initiative)- K12, College, Opportunity Youth (16-26) & ReEntry	The African American Male Initiative (AAMI) is a program that has been serving Booker T. Washington High School male students since its inception in Summer 2012 in the areas of mentorship, career development, and college readiness. It seeks to find community based solutions to increase academic, social, and career outcomes for K-12 students.	GEORGIA BOARD OF REGENTS, GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY, ALONZO A. CRIM CENTER GSU, SOSSI- SAVING OUR SONS & SISTERS INTERNATIONAL, GaDOE, Georgia Department of Labor, CTAE, State Farm, Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), AUCenter Colleges & Universities, AUCenter Alumni, Atlanta Tech College, Georgia Piedmont Technical College, Graduation Alliance, Georgia Global Technology Center, Year Up, Georgia Education Coalition, Westside Education Collaborative, Atlanta Public Schools, Fulton County, Gwinnett County, Cobb County & Butts County	Ongoing	16 - Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions	11 - Sustainable Cities & Communities

Multi-Stakeholder Collaborations	Description (50 words)	Organizations (bold lead)	Timeline	Primary SDG	Secondary SDG
Weatherwise Otherwise: Artists Respond to Climate Change	Agnes Scott College Department of Art, Environmental & Sustainability Studies & Center for Sustainability are organizing a four-month art exhibit on climate change. A series of speakers and film screenings will accompany the exhibit in the fall of 2017.	Agnes Scott College	Planned	13 - Climate Action	10 - Reduced Inequalities
The S.E.E.D. Academy: STEAM Career Exploration and Project-Based Learning (OST) out-of-time programming for K8 students; MyGPS career readiness training and internships for high school and college students; STEAM StartUp: youth and young adult startup incubator	The S.E.E.D. Academy provides quality enrichment, exposing campers to various areas of interests, and reinforcing skills learned throughout the school year. Our COMPASS collaborators expose students to work readiness and experience in career pathways, translating to increases entrepreneurship and work readiness using 21st century skills.	SOSSI- Saving Our Sons & Sisters International & The S.E.E.D. Academy	Ongoing	4 - Quality Education	9 - Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure
Energy 101 Massive Online Open Course	Develop some baselines for sustainability awareness and literacy. Potentially model after surveys and courses aimed at reaching a general audience with fundamental information, targeted to the greater Atlanta region	Ga Tech - Strategic Energy Institute	Ongoing	7 - Affordable & Clean Energy	11 - Sustainable Cities & Communities
Empowering Student Change Makers	Bringing the practical/entrepreneurial aspects of sustainability to students, with innovative startup entrepreneurs discussing their emerging business models with them. Encouraging students to develop business models built on sustainable business practices. Supporting graduating student-entrepreneurs in their efforts to build such companies.	(eg Greenhouse Accelerator)	Ongoing	11 - Sustainable Cities & Communities	12 - Responsible Consumption & Production
Empowering Development Authorities	Providing local development authorities with tools that enable them to measure success along more than the traditional two dimensions of 'new jobs' and 'increased tax base'. Develop and promote metrics that cover a triple bottom line (people, profits, planet) in practical and digestible/ actionable ways.		Planned	11 - Sustainable Cities & Communities	9 - Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure

<b>Multi-Stakeholder Collaborations</b>	<b>Description (50 words)</b>	<b>Organizations (bold lead)</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Primary SDG</b>	<b>Secondary SDG</b>
Net Blue- Cobb County KSU		Cobb County KSU			
Our Future Atlanta	Coalition of NGOs working to build a holistic, equitable quality of life agenda for Atlanta's new mayor, and engage new voices and voters	Partnership for Southern Equity Center for Civic Innovation ProGeorgia Park Pride Center for Working Families Atlanta Bicycle Coalition Southern Environmental Law Center Southface Chattahoochee Riverkeeper GA WAND GA ACT Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership	Ongoing	11 - Sustainable Cities & Communities	16 - Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions
Water Hub		Emory Office of Sustainability Initiatives Toto, USA	Ongoing	6 - Clean Water & Sanitation	12 - Responsible Consumption & Production
Southwest Atlanta Fertile Crescent	Occupying 6,000 acres in Southwest Atlanta, the Southwest Atlanta Fertile Crescent initially began as a neighborhood scaled adaptation of the Food Commons model for a regional food system. It has now evolved to a more grassroots expression of "Civic Agriculture" with the goal of developing a food based local economy for 20 neighborhoods along the Southwest Atlanta Beltline corridor subarea planning section 1, 2, 9, & 10.	Atlanta Food & Farm PBC, City of Refuge, Marddy's, Village Micro Fund, Come Up Project/Gangstas to Growers, Ayaresa Food Collective, GA Tech Serve-Learn-Sustain, Morehouse School of Medicine's Prevention Research Center	Ongoing	11 - Sustainable Cities & Communities	9 - Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure
Food Well Alliance Composting Initiative		Food Well Alliance	Ongoing	15 - Life on Land	2 - Zero Hunger

## OTHER ONGOING COLLABORATIONS THAT WILL BE INVITED

- The [Atlanta City Design Project](#) is an effort, under the direction of the City's Department of Planning and Community Development, to envision what Atlanta should look like decades from now, as well as guide future decisions on the growth and development of the City. Poised to more than double population by 2050, this project is an effort to be proactive about how that growth occurs to make the City a better place to live. It's a community planning process driven by two overarching assumptions:
  1. Atlanta is going to change – not changing is not an option – our change will involve significant growth – if properly designed, that growth can be a powerful tool for shaping the Atlanta we want to become.
  2. More people are better than fewer – a diverse population is better than a homogeneous one – the most strategic scenario for growth includes everyone.
- ☐ The [Strong, Prosperous, And Resilient Communities Challenge \(SPARCC\)](#) is a \$90 million initiative which invests in and amplifies local efforts underway in six communities to ensure that new investments lead to equitable and healthy opportunities for everyone. Atlanta is one of these six communities, with the focus on equitable transit development. The TransFormation Alliance (TFA) is a partnership of 17 government agencies, businesses, and nonprofits that share a vision of changing how transit and community development investments shape the future, offering all residents opportunities for a high quality of life. With the support of SPARCC, the TFA will be able to put more resources toward strategies to increase equitable city planning.

## NOTABLE ONGOING PROGRAMS WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

### Georgia Tech

- ☐ ***Serve-Learn-Sustain***, leading the RCE establishment effort,
- ☐ ***Brook Byers Institute for Sustainable Systems*** conducts and facilitates research that integrates science, technology, social science, policy, planning, design, and business to improve environmental, social, and economic outcomes.
- ☐ ***The Ray C. Anderson Center for Sustainable Business*** acts as a catalyst and connector, bringing together students, research faculty, companies, and entrepreneurs to create an environment where business-driven solutions to sustainability challenges can take shape and thrive.
- ☐ ***The Georgia Tech Manufacturing Institute*** helps manufacturers address systemic challenges resulting from acceptance that sustainability is a business priority, including lifecycle analyses, upcycling, and closed-loop supply chains.
- ☐ The ***MBA Strategic Sustainability*** concentration offers students a deeper understanding of business-relevant trends and innovation opportunities related to resource scarcity, environmental concerns, societal needs, emerging technologies, and policy developments.
- ***GT's Sustainable Design and Manufacturing Program*** combines high level independent scientific research with collaborative projects involving leading companies and their

suppliers in order to support companies in implementing and “operationalizing” sustainability in terms of materials, products, processes and services.

- **GT’s Sustainable Thermal Systems Laboratory** is developing practical solutions to the global climate change issue in the form of novel systems and components for improved thermal energy utilization.

## University of Georgia

- ② **Center for Integrative Conservation Research** promotes an integrative approach that utilizes insights and methodologies from across the social and ecological sciences. Through research and teaching, program emphasizes the social and ecological trade-offs that are associated with managing complex systems and responding to contemporary environmental challenges, and to engage with policy and practitioner communities to support effective and equitable solutions to these trade-offs.
- ② **Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health** serves a lead role in development, consolidation and dissemination of information and programs focused on invasive species, forest health, natural resource and agricultural management through technology development, program implementation, training, applied research and public awareness at the state, regional, national and international levels.
- ② **Georgia Institute for Climate and Society** is a network of UGA scientists and experts who have joined together to understand the changing climate on a global and local scale and to develop strategies, solutions, information, and tools that address the climate.
- ② **Ideas for Creative Exploration** at UGA is a collaborative network of faculty, students, and community members from all disciplines of the visual and performing arts in addition to other disciplines in the humanities and sciences, serving as a catalyst for innovative, interdisciplinary creative projects, advanced research and critical discourse in the arts, and for creative applications of technologies, concepts, and practices found across disciplines.
- ② **Institute for Resilient Infrastructure Systems** helps communities, businesses, and governments mitigate risks - and seize opportunities - associated with environmental change, extreme weather, and climate-related events by rethinking, transforming and adapting infrastructure systems to strengthen social, economic and ecological resilience.
- ② **Obesity Initiative** was launched to help the state address its growing epidemic of childhood and adult obesity, as well as the increasing incidence of overweight infants. UGA is harnessing diverse and extensive obesity-related instruction, research activities, and public service and outreach components to address this multi-faceted problem.
- **One Health** is a multi-university and multi-disciplinary collaborative effort to attain optimal health for people, animals and our environment at all scales. The Division of One Health at the [UGA Biomedical and Health Sciences Institute](#) seeks to promote and expand the ongoing One Health efforts of UGA faculty, students and staff who share One Health’s unified vision towards combating today’s global health threats.
- ② **River Basin Center** works to connect freshwater science to management and policy. Although affiliated with the Odum School of Ecology, its members are drawn from units across the University of Georgia and it is known for an interdisciplinary approach.
- ② **Watershed UGA** is a community stream restoration and protection initiative aimed at engaging the campus community in sustainability through watersheds.

# Ongoing and Planned Activities

## PLANNED & ONGOING ACTIVITIES

### Collaborative and coordinated joint activities of the RCE

The following reflects preliminary thinking on strategies and activities that will allow the Greater Atlanta RCE to focus on our priority SDGs while addressing all three of the UNU ESD objectives. This limited logic model approach articulates: How we will work (Strategies), What we will work on (Activities), and What result we seek (Outcomes). Activity detail in particular surfaced through stakeholder input during the application development process. Activities prefaced with “Potential” reflect ideas inspired by and extrapolated from these conversations.

Strategy	2018 Activities	2019 Activities	Long-term Outcomes
<p><b>A.</b> Approach governance with explicit inclusion of diversity of stakeholders, focus on equity in power dynamics and balance of sector participation</p>	<p>Establish RCE Steering Committee (SC), including community organization representation as well as other sectors, ensuring diversity of stakeholders in network governance.</p> <p>Establish network coordination structure, including engagement of part-time Network Coordinator, graduate research assistants and student interns.</p> <p>Develop collaborative leadership structure including regular rotation of RCE Chair(s)/Institutional home(s).</p> <p>Establish Work Groups (WGs) ensuring diverse representation across sectors, and network facilitation training is provided for SC and WG chairs.</p> <p>Establish RCE Youth Network, represented on the SC and active in WGs.</p>	<p>Explore potential membership structure with fees/in-kind contributions to deepen commitments, ensure equitable participation and generate revenue.</p> <p>Potentially create member mentoring program.</p> <p>Potentially create small grants program to help seed new collaborations and build capacity of civil society to participate.</p>	<p>RCE reflects the true diversity of experience and perspectives of Greater Atlantans, giving it reach and relevance across cultures locally and globally.</p> <p>RCE governance embodies SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities.</p> <p>RCE reflects focus on civil and human rights that is an integral part of Greater Atlanta’s history and future, incorporating the many international thought leaders and institutions on these issues located in the Atlanta area.</p> <p>RCE expands existing momentum of sustainability-focused student advocates/ groups and increases collaboration among them.</p>

Strategy	2018 Activities	2019 Activities	Long-term Outcomes
<p><b>B.</b> Use digital tools to elevate existing ESD collaborations for greater visibility and broader relevance</p>	<p>Conduct inventory of ESD collaborations, partners and results, identifying clusters, alignments and gaps.</p> <p>Engage communications assets of RCE members to develop branding for Greater Atlanta RCE that is approachable and inclusive, including templates for collaboration stories that connect SDGs to life in region.</p> <p>Develop Virtual Resource Center for RCE communications, directory of RCE members, projects, resources and opportunities (particularly around internships/fellowships and other employment), and educational resources/tools.</p> <p>Create SDG Data Hub to ensure quantitative and qualitative data is accessible and useful for regional sustainable development. Potential RCE roles include data collection, curation and translation.</p>	<p>Potentially develop shared online dashboard of SDG metrics with means for RCE participant contribution.</p>	<p>Ease of access and use catalyzes connections and accelerates local progress towards the SDGs while providing value to network participants.</p>

Strategy	2018 Activities	2019 Activities	Long-term Outcomes
<p><b>C.</b> Leverage momentum around existing collaborations to catalyze broader participation, greater impact and connection to ESD</p>	<p>Highlight and facilitate engagement with key regional projects (such as 100 Resilient Cities, SPARCC).</p> <p>Expand existing cross-institutional collaborations (e.g. Environmental Justice series, Georgia Climate Project, Piedmont Project, International Network for Social Sustainability, Leadership and Multi-faith Program, Student Sustainability Ambassadors Program).</p>	<p>Potentially develop annual RCE Conference to continue expanding the network and engaging new collaborators.</p>	<p>Greater Atlanta RCE amplifies and accelerates existing collaborations, contributing to their success.</p> <p>RCE engagement provides a conduit for broader participation in collaborations and catalyzes deeper integration of ESD.</p>
<p><b>D.</b> Identify and share wisdom of the network to heighten ESD in the region</p>	<p>Create crowd-sourced online directory of expertise, assets, needs and case studies, including network member training capabilities.</p> <p>Elevate Project Drawdown as a tangible example of education on the intersection of SDGs, and facilitate exploration of Greater Atlanta implications through convenings and fellowships.</p>	<p>Join other RCEs in SDG Challenges to accelerate inter- and intra-sector innovation, ESD and adoption of sustainable practices.</p> <p>Potentially create multi-media awareness campaign to share successes of collaborations.</p> <p>Potentially create RCE Member Speaker’s Bureau to take collaboration lessons learned to diverse array of conferences and RCE gatherings around the world.</p>	<p>Greater cross-disciplinary, cross-sector knowledge of ESD</p> <p>Growth of the network</p> <p>Acceleration of most locally-impactful global warming solutions</p>

Strategy	2018 Activities	2019 Activities	Long-term Outcomes
<p><b>E.</b> Infuse K-12, higher education and informal and non-formal education curricula with the SDGs in local context</p>	<p>Convene an RCE-focused meeting of all higher ed campuses in the region at the Georgia Campus Sustainability Network annual meeting (particularly focusing on engaging technical and vocational colleges).</p> <p>Deepen outreach to K-12 educators from the 5 core Greater Atlanta school systems to assess SDG knowledge and identify ESD leadership.</p> <p>Inventory curricula resources among the network and identify gaps in content for diversity of ages/settings.</p> <p>Establish a baseline of sustainability awareness in relevant categories of civil society.</p>	<p>Potentially develop new curricula to fill identified gaps and ground SDGs in local context.</p> <p>Potentially translate curricula to reach the region’s rapidly-growing immigrant and refugee community.</p> <p>Potentially partner to host Spanish-, Hindi- and Korean-speaking (largest non-English languages spoken in region) ESD events.</p>	<p>Introduction of ESD to greatly expanded audience across the region</p>
<p><b>F.</b> Empower local youth to create and execute ESD strategy through an RCE Youth Network</p>	<p>Support youth leaders in creating structure for recruitment, governance and accountability for RCE Youth Network.</p> <p>Support youth leaders in connecting with peer RCE Youth Network around the world.</p> <p>Engage Youth Network representatives to serve on SC and in each WG.</p> <p>Facilitate Youth Network connections with business leaders and entrepreneurs for both curricular (e.g. class projects) and extracurricular (e.g. internships) learning and mutual benefit of students and businesses.</p>	<p>Potentially facilitate mentorship between RCE Youth Network and secondary school students around ESD.</p>	<p>Youth leadership infuses RCE with energy and innovation, creates a cohort of young leaders who are highly competitive in the field, and accelerates momentum of the RCE</p>

# Appendix

## Letters of Support

(Alphabetical Order)

- Agnes Scott College – Elizabeth Kiss, President
- Atlanta Metropolitan State College, Division of Social Sciences – Vance Gray, Dean
- Atlanta Regional Commission – Douglas Hooker, Executive Director
- Atlanta Student Sustainability Council (RCE Youth Network) – Nicole Kennard & other students
- Captain Planet Foundation – Courtney Kimmel, Director of Strategic Partnerships
- Center for Sustainable Communities – Garry Harris, Executive Director
- City of Atlanta – Kasim Reed, Mayor
- Clark Atlanta University – Felicia Davis, Sustainability Coordinator
- Corporate Volunteer Council – Cheryl Kortmeier, Executive Director
- Emory University – Claire E. Sterk, President
- Georgia Institute of Technology – Rafael Bras, Provost
- Georgia Institute of Technology, Ray C. Anderson Center for Sustainable Business, Scheller College of Business– Michael Oxman, Managing Director
- Georgia State University, Institute for Urban Studies, Andrew Young School of Public Policy – Johannes Nijman, Director
- Georgia State University, College of Arts and Sciences – Sara Rosen, Dean
- Greenhouse Accelerator, Inc. – Bernie Burgener, Executive Director
- Kennesaw State University, President’s Commission on Sustainability – Vanessa Slinger-Friedman, Chair and Professor of Geography
- Morehouse College – William Taggart, Interim President
- Ray C. Anderson Foundation – John Lanier, Executive Director and Vice President
- Saving Our Sons & Sisters International – Chuck Barlow, Jr., Co-Founder/Executive Director
- Southface – Andrea Pinabell, President
- Spelman College – Mary Schmidt Campbell, President
- United Nations Foundation - J. Rutherford Seydel, II
- University of Georgia, Office of Sustainability –Kevin Kirsche, Director



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

May 24, 2017

RE: United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS)  
Global Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Service Center  
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear UNU-IAS RCE Selection Committee:

Agnes Scott College strongly endorses the application for a Global Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Service Center to be located in Atlanta, Georgia. Agnes Scott strives to serve as a regional and national model of climate leadership and environmental sustainability by integrating sustainability into the college's mission to educate women to think deeply, live honorably, and engage the social and intellectual challenges of their time. As such, we are a partner in the cross-sector collaborative in the Atlanta region that is seeking recognition from the UNU-IAS as a Regional Center of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development.

Agnes Scott College has become an increasingly active and recognized sustainability leader over the past decade. As a charter signatory in Second Nature's Climate Leadership Commitment, we are part of a network of over 600 college and university presidents and chancellors who have committed their institutions to take bold and catalytic climate actions. These Climate Leadership Commitments are a key driving force for transformative change on our campus, and provide experience that we can share through the RCE if it is located in metro Atlanta.

As part of our Climate Leadership Commitment we have:

- Set a goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2037, with emissions reduced by 20 percent to date;
- Committed to creating benchmarks for increasing climate resilience on campus and in the surrounding community;
- Pioneered the use of renewable energy among non-profit institutions in our region by installing a quarter megawatt of solar power and two geothermal HVAC systems on campus;

- Promoted energy efficiency through the college's innovative Green Revolving Fund, which has raised \$1 million to date from donors and invested these funds in energy efficiency projects, with savings revolved back into the fund to provide an ongoing investment fund for efficiency;
- Ensured that the equity, economics and the environment are considered simultaneously in our sustainability programming;
- Integrated sustainability, carbon neutrality and climate resilience into the curriculum and other educational experiences for all students and incorporated the themes of climate change, climate leadership and sustainable development within SUMMIT, the college's new program which provides every student with a core curriculum focused on global learning and leadership development;
- Created opportunities for sustainability research, teaching, and practice in order to educate and inspire the next generation of climate leaders;
- Coordinated with government agencies, non-profits, corporations and foundations to promote sustainability, climate leadership, energy efficiency and education through partnerships with: Emory University, Georgia Tech Research Institute, the City of Decatur, Oak Ridge National Labs, Southface Energy Institute, and the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta Grants to Green initiative.

Agnes Scott is committed to providing staff and faculty expertise and support for the RCE, if Atlanta is chosen as the site. We know that the RCE will in turn provide the college with strategic opportunities to cultivate thoughtful global citizenship and inspire our students to be leaders in sustainable development. We look forward to participating in this collaboration, and we greatly appreciate your consideration of the Atlanta region's application.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Kiss

President



## ATLANTA METROPOLITAN STATE COLLEGE

1630 Metropolitan Parkway, SW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30310

Division of Social Sciences

September 6, 2017

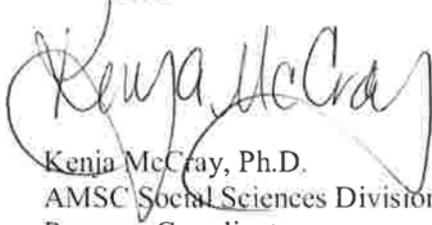
Dear Committee Members,

The Atlanta Metropolitan State College (AMSC) Division of Social Sciences endorses the creation of a Greater Atlanta Regional Center of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (UN-RCE). It is our hope that an Atlanta RCE will nurture and support the important work of sustainability and environmental justice. AMSC is willing to help advance the mission of the UN-RCE through our commitment to partnering with the United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 04 (EPA) to continue and to expand the Environmental Justice Academy (EJ Academy).

AMSC is an institution within the University System of Georgia. We are also leaders in terms of impacting and providing opportunities for southwest and greater metropolitan Atlanta community residents, particularly those who are first-generation college students and who are among the most under-resourced community members. AMSC students, faculty, and staff have participated in past EJ efforts and one student has secured an EPA internship as a result of the program. AMSC campaigns such as "Connecting the College to the Community" and our collaborative relationships with local school systems and other metropolitan Atlanta partners are designed to enhance educational attainment for community residents of all walks of life. AMSC's collaboration with the UN-RCE will, thus, provide a necessary mechanism for connecting global sustainability education to the College's mission of holistic student support and workforce development for diverse, urban populations.

The Environmental Justice Academy (EJ Academy) is a leadership development program meant to bolster graduates' ability to make a discernable difference in the communities they serve. EPA began this environmental justice training program to cultivate participants' skills in identifying and addressing environmental challenges in their communities. EJ Academy has the goal of better equipping community leaders for meeting public health and environmental challenges. The program grew out of a commitment to help improve the health and viability of all communities, especially the most vulnerable. The EJ Academy launched in September 2015. EJ Academy graduated students from throughout the Southeast in 2015 and 2016. AMSC plans to lead the next EJ Academy during spring 2018 with a focus on metro-Atlanta participants. We hope to do so with the support of key community partners, such as the EPA, Atlanta Food and Farm (AF2), and Clark Atlanta University. Through EJ Academy, AMSC will provide input into RCE governance, assist with overall strategizing, and will actively engage with the RCE in other ways.

Pending RCE approval, AMSC looks forward to developing a synergistic relationship through the EJ Academy as well as our academic and student affairs programming. We hope to do so as we help carry out the UN RCE's plan to contribute to the global movement for education in sustainability via local collaboration.



Kenja McCray, Ph.D.  
AMSC Social Sciences Division  
Program Coordinator



Harry Akoh, **Ph.D.**  
AMSC Social Sciences Division  
Department Head



AMSC Social Sciences Division Dean

May 30, 2017

United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS)  
Global Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Service Centre  
6F, International Organizations Center, Pacifico-Yokohama  
1- 1-1 Minato Mirai, Nish i-ku, Yokohama 220-8502 JAPAN

Dear UNU-IAS RCE Selection Committee:

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) supports the multisector coalition-led application to be designated as a *UNU-IAS Regional Center of Expertise (RCE) on Education for Sustainable Development*. ARC is the regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for the 10-county metro Atlanta area. For over 65 years, ARC and its predecessor agencies have helped to focus the region's leadership, attention and resources on key issues of regional consequence.

The metro Atlanta region faces many challenging sustainability issues common to fast-growing metropolitan areas globally – food access, water quantity and quality, energy and air quality concerns, and transportation and infrastructure expansion and optimization. ARC is dedicated to unifying the region's collective resources to address these issues and prepare the metropolitan area for a prosperous future. It does so through professional planning initiatives, the provision of objective information and the involvement of the community in collaborative partnerships.

ARC has long been a leader in sustainable development issues across a broad spectrum of areas.

- ☐ The Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) program awards planning grants on a competitive basis to communities to prepare plans for the enhancement of existing centers and corridors consistent with regional development policies. A majority of LCI funds go to pedestrian transportation facilities to enhance a multi-modal environment within urban centers or corridors.
- ☐ The Green Communities Program is a technical assistance and voluntary certification program that encourages local governments to lessen their environmental impacts through their policies, practices, buildings and fleets and encourage their communities to do the same.
- ☐ Neighborhood Nexus provides over five thousand data variables combined with visualization tools that allow residents and community leaders to examine past and current socioeconomic and demographic patterns; assess correlations between the equity, health and climate of communities; identify and develop benchmarking metrics; and in so doing make better community decisions.

The Greater Atlanta RCE would further facilitate networking and data-sharing at a local, regional, national and international level that is critical for rapid progress in addressing the sustainability challenges of our region and world. The solutions that the Greater Atlanta RCE is able to develop through its collaborative structure can serve as an important model and inspiration for metropolitan areas around the globe struggling with similar challenges.

ARC staff have been engaged in the RCE formation process led by Emory University, the Georgia Institute of Technology and Morehouse College and our staff will help serve as a conduit to engaging the dozens of local government agencies it serves in future RCE efforts. We look forward to playing a supporting role as a participant in the Greater Atlanta Regional Center of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development should it be established.

Sincerely,



Douglas R. Hooker  
Executive Director





**CO-FOUNDERS**

**Ted Turner**  
**Barbara Pyle**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Laura Turner Seydel**  
*Chairperson*

**Letty Ashworth**  
Delta Airlines

**April Crow**  
The Coca-Cola Company

**Deron Davis**  
Nature Conservancy GA

**Jennie Garlington**  
Eco-Sense for Living

**Marilyn Gardanier**  
Laurel Spring School

**Kiki Goshay**  
Independent Filmmaker

**Paul Howell**  
Voya Financial

**Cara Isdell Lee**  
Isdell Family Foundation

**George McKerrow**  
Ted's Montana Grill

**Brian McPheely**  
Pratt Industries, Inc.

**Charles Orgbon**  
Deloitte

**Barbara Pyle**  
Co-Creator & Executive Producer –  
Captain Planet & the Planeteers

**Randy Rudderman, MD**  
Level Growth

**Erin Shrode**  
Citizen Activist

**Christina Stevens**  
Quantum Wave Media

**Beau Turner**  
Beau Turner Youth Conservation  
Center

**Shirley Watkins**  
USDA, Retired

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Leesa Carter Jones

May 26, 2017

United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS)  
Global Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Service Centre  
6F, International Organizations Center, Pacifico-Yokohama  
1- 1-1 Minato Mirai, Nish i-ku, Yokohama 220-8502 JAPAN

Dear UNU-IAS RCE Selection Committee:

The Captain Planet Foundation is very pleased to support and participate in the Greater Atlanta region's application to become a recognized Regional Center of Expertise as designated by the United Nations University. For the last 25 years, the Captain Planet Foundation has worked to support youth-led projects that result in real-world solutions to challenges in their own communities. Many of the challenges our young "Planeteers" are addressing are closely aligned with the SDGs including food access, environmental quality, and community empowerment. We also work with educators, both formal and informal, to help them empower their students. In this role, we will be able to help the RCE connect with K-12 educators and students throughout the region.

We look forward to working with this exciting collaboration.

Sincerely,

Courtney Kimmel, PhD  
Director of Strategic Partnerships  
Captain Planet Foundation

133 Luckie Street  
Atlanta GA 30338  
404-522-4270  
[captainplanetfoundation.org](http://captainplanetfoundation.org)



# CENTER *for* SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

September 3, 2017

United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS)  
Global Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Service Centre 6F  
International Organizations Center,  
Pacifico-Yokohama 1- 1-1  
Minato Mirai, Nishi-ku, Yokohama 220-8502 JAPAN

Dear UNU-IAS RCE Selection Committee:

The Center for Sustainable Communities is very pleased to support and participate in the Greater Atlanta region's process to become a fully recognized Regional Center of Expertise as designated by the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS). The Center for Sustainable Communities has worked to support numerous projects that have resulted in real-world solutions to challenges in these communities. Further we have worked continuously to make these communities greener, cleaner, healthier, safer and more climate resilient through specialized programs and projects. We routinely do this through an equity, and environmental justice lens. As such we have worked extensively in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education for more than two decades utilizing a broad number of approaches and venues. We have helped to start schools, academies, weekend and after school based programs with substantial success including improving attendance and graduation rates. We have also worked with programs to provide critical teacher professional development and parental engagement. We have extensive experience in educational program and curriculum development, deployment and evaluation. Moreover, we have worked with organizations in many educational areas including research, sponsorship, hosting field trips, and special excursions, and coordinating various competitions and challenges. We have also worked extensively with the educational development of minority students in many facets; receiving several awards and recognition for our work both locally and nationally. Moreover, we have created programming that allows students and families to potentially break the cycle of poverty through scientific achievement, and attainment of associated jobs and identification of high paying science related career pathways. We also worked directly with educators in both formal and informal settings, and in the classroom, to help them empower their students to achieve academic scientific success. We have extensive relationships with educational agencies and collaboratives at all levels; from pre-K through college and university; including local, regional state, federal agencies. We are proud to have developed programming specially geared to accelerate the inclusion of Women in STEM Education called Women in Science, Energy and the Environment -WISE-E. We have also developed programming that spans the gamut of the sciences including robotics, engineering, physics, chemistry, computer science, biology, earth science and life science. Finally we are active as teachers, judges, panelists, facilitators and organizers for local, regional and national science fairs and robotics competitions.

In this role, we will be able to help the RCE connect with Pre K-12 educators and students throughout the region. We look forward to working with this exciting collaboration.

Sincerely

Garry Harris

Center for Sustainable Communities—Atlanta/Hampton Roads, Va

100 Flat Shoals Ave  
Atlanta, GA. 30316

404 936 0620

**KASIM REED**  
MAYOR



## **CITY OF ATLANTA**

55 TRINITY AVENUE, S. W., SUITE 2400  
ATLANTA GEORGIA 30303-0300

TEL (404) 330-6100

May 26, 2017

United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS)  
Global Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Service Centre  
6F, International Organizations Center, Pacifico-Yokohama  
1-1-1 Minato Mirai, Nishi-Ku, Yokohama 220-8502 JAPAN

Dear Members of the United Nations University-IAS RCE Selection Committee:

I am writing to communicate my strong support for the City of Atlanta to earn designation as a United Nations Regional Center of Expertise for Sustainable Development. The City of Atlanta has emerged as a national and international leader in sustainability, and aims to be an outstanding example of how a major urban municipality can take greater responsibility for efficient energy and water use, the conservation of greenspace, and the promotion of a healthier, cleaner and greener environment.

For the past seven years, my Administration has worked to build a better, more sustainable city that is ready to compete in the 21st century economy. Our programs and investments in the City of Atlanta are aligned with several Sustainable Development Goals including "Zero Hunger" and "Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure." For example, the City of Atlanta hired its first ever Urban Agriculture Director who is responsible for fostering partnerships to eliminate food deserts in the city limits. We have a goal of providing access to healthy food within a half-mile of 75 percent of our residents by the year 2020. In addition, we recently made the largest investments in infrastructure in generations by passing a \$2.6 billion expansion of the Metro Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) and a \$300 million TSPLOST on the ballot this past November. These investments will allow the City of Atlanta to synchronize traffic signals, add new bike lanes, repave roads, repair bridges and establish new public-private partnerships to further enhance infrastructure improvements.

The City of Atlanta also leads the nation in square footage of commercial building space committed to energy efficiency through the U.S. Department of Energy Better Buildings Challenge, and passed the first benchmarking and auditing ordinance in the country to include both energy and water efficiency measures for commercial and municipal buildings.

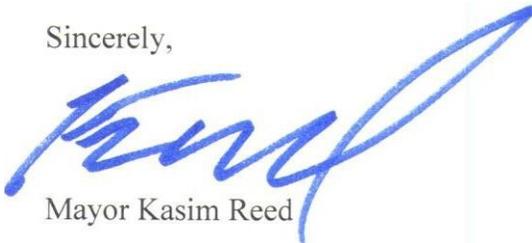
These sustainability advancements made Atlanta a successful candidate to join 100 Resilient Cities, an organization created by The Rockefeller Foundation to help cities around the world build resilience to their deepest social, physical and economic challenges. The City of Atlanta applied to be a part of 100 Resilient Cities and was accepted out of 325 applicants from more

than 90 countries across six continents. As part of the program, we are making great strides in resilience planning.

Local actions like these show that cities can take a leading role in solving some of the world's complex challenges. To continue our efforts, we see tremendous value with joining the RCE network. My Office of Sustainability commits to elevating the RCE network in our interactions across all sectors of the region, and in sharing data to better engage others in our collective work.

Thank for your consideration and we look forward to participating in this network to support a more resilient Atlanta for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kasim Reed', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Mayor Kasim Reed



## CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY

May 30, 2017

Dear Committee Members,

The Clark Atlanta University Sustainability Council supports creation of a Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development that will serve the Greater Atlanta region. We believe that the Atlanta RCE will foster important connections between educational institutions, community organizations, and business groups throughout Metro Atlanta. Although we are not in a position to commit financial resources, we look forward to supporting the important work of enhancing sustainability in our region.

Our Sustainability Council works to promote and implement sustainability initiatives throughout the campus. These efforts include curriculum development, buildings and infrastructure, student activities and community engagement. Clark Atlanta University has been widely recognized for scholarship in the area of environmental justice and our students participate in research projects that support or impact the local community. We believe many of our faculty, staff, and students would be able to contribute to, and benefit from, the creation of the Greater Atlanta RCE.

As we work to update our sustainability plans, launch new programs and enhance campus sustainability this is an opportune moment to factor in strengthening regional relationships that can contribute to collective community resilience. Unfortunately, we are not able to commit specific institutional resources for this purpose, however, the Clark Atlanta University Sustainability Council enthusiastically supports the goals of the Regional Center of Expertise.

We look forward to the establishment of the Atlanta Regional Center of Expertise!

Sincerely,

*Felicia Davis*

Felicia Davis  
Sustainability Coordinator



May 25, 2017

Dear Committee of Peers for RCEs,

I am writing in support of the application for the Greater Atlanta Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development. Our region is ready to formally organize and collaborate around sustainable development and education, and as you can see in our application, many partners have already come together to engage and contribute.

I represent the Corporate Volunteer Council of Atlanta (CVC), a nonprofit that supports its member companies in their strategic commitment to employee volunteerism and civic engagement. Our membership includes more than 100 of Metro Atlanta's most civically-minded companies. Sustainability is a business imperative for many of our corporate members. From volunteerism to philanthropy, companies are investing in sustainability through their dollars and their people. It is essential that corporations work alongside our region's institutions of higher learning as well as nonprofit and public sector experts in order to implement best practices and to have the greatest impact through their work.

The RCE will provide a platform for diverse partners throughout Metro Atlanta to work together within a global network of other local and state governments toward a sustainable future. The CVC and its members intend to be actively engaged in the establishment of Greater Atlanta's RCE, and we are excited about what this collaborative effort will mean for our region.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our application.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Kortemeier  
Executive Director

connect. inspire. impact.

1100 Peachtree Street, NE, Suite 2800 | Atlanta, GA 30309 | 404-745-2458  
[cvcofatlanta.org](http://cvcofatlanta.org)

LAW OFFICES  
**DAVIS, PICKREN, SEYDEL &  
SNEED**

A LIMITED LIABILITY PARTNERSHIP  
2300 MARQUIS Two TOWER  
285 PEACHTREE CENTER AVENUE N, E.  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303

J. RUTHERFORD SEYDEL, II  
RSEYDEL@DPSLEGAL.COM

TELEPHONE (404) 588-0505  
TELECOPIER (404) 588-0137

May 23, 2017

Dear Committee of Peers for RCEs,

I am writing to support the creation of a Regional Center of Expertise ("RCE") on Education for Sustainable Development in the Greater Atlanta Area.

As secretary of numerous foundations, including the United Nations Foundation, I am involved in discussions regarding how to advance education, sustainability, and philanthropy on a local, regional, and global level. As a business owner, I work with executives to develop environmental and socially-conscious business plans, knowing the corporate sector has a responsibility to be good stewards.

The proposed Greater Atlanta RCE will solidify what has already begun organically in the Atlanta area. Business owners, university leaders, and non-governmental organizations have been convening for months to collaborate and leverage networks in the interest of sustainability. The passion for, subject matter experience in, and commitment to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals is present in Atlanta, and I urge you to further this movement by approving the request for a Greater Atlanta Area RCE.

Sincerely,



J. Rutherford Seydel, II, Esq.

*Better World Fund (Secretary)*  
*Captain Planet Foundation (Secretary)*  
*Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (Co-Founder; Former Chairman)*  
*Davis, Pickren, Seydel & Sneed, LLP (Partner)*  
*National Parks Conservation Association (Trustee)*  
*Nuclear Threat Initiative (Secretary)*  
*ProMove (Co-Owner; Board Member)*  
*Ted's Montana Grill (Secretary)*  
*The Conservation Fund (Chairman)*  
*Turner Endangered Species Fund (Secretary)*  
*Turner Foundation, Inc. (Secretary)*

EMORY



Claire E. Sterk, PhD

PRESIDENT

May 24, 2017

United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS)  
Global Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Service Centre  
6F, International Organizations Center, Pacifico-Yokohama  
1-1-1 Minato Mirai, Nishi-ku, Yokohama 220-8502 JAPAN

Dear UNU-IAS RCE Selection Committee:

Emory University's vision is to be an internationally-recognized model for the study, research and implementation of sustainability transformative practices and innovation to promote public health, social justice and prosperity for current and future generations. To further this end, Emory has partnered with the Georgia Institute of Technology and Morehouse College to lead a multi-sectoral coalition applying for recognition from the UNU-IAS as the Greater Atlanta Regional Center of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development.

Emory has been recognized as a leader in sustainability over the past decade, achieving a Gold level rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education. Under that rating system, Emory is ranked third in the country among tier I research institutions. Since 2014, Emory has been an accredited observer to the UN Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, annually sending a delegation of faculty and students to participate. An important part of Emory's sustainability vision is enhancing strategic partnerships with local, national and international institutions to build flourishing and resilient communities. The Greater Atlanta RCE would facilitate networking and data-sharing at a local, regional, national and international level that is critical for rapid progress in addressing the sustainability challenges of our region and world. We are particularly interested in having our students, faculty and researchers engage with their counterparts involved with RCEs around the globe.

The creation of a Greater Atlanta RCE is timely to facilitate collective impact at a regional level that links with the UN sustainable development goals. The Atlanta region faces the most-challenging sustainability issues of fast-growing metropolitan areas globally—food access, water quantity and quality, energy and climate concerns, and transportation and infrastructure expansion and optimization. The solutions that the Greater Atlanta RCE is able to develop through its collaborative structure can serve as an important model and inspiration for metropolitan areas around the globe struggling with similar challenges. We appreciate your consideration and support of our application for recognition of the Greater Atlanta Regional Center of Expertise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Sterk', written over a horizontal line.

Claire E. Sterk  
President

EMORY UNIVERSITY  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
201 DOWMAN DRIVE  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30322  
TEL 404-727-6013  
FAX 404-727-5997  
CSTERK@EMORY.EDU



**ANDREW YOUNG SCHOOL**  
OF POLICY STUDIES

URBAN STUDIES INSTITUTE

404-413-0034 TEL  
404-413-0004 FAX

[www.urbaninstitute.gsu.edu](http://www.urbaninstitute.gsu.edu)

14 Marietta Street NW  
Suite 600  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Mail:  
Urban Studies Institute  
P.O. Box 3992  
Atlanta, Georgia 30302-3992

May 16, 2017

Johannes Nijman, Ph.D.  
Director, Institute for Urban Studies  
Andrew Young School of Policy Studies  
Georgia State University  
Atlanta, GA 30303

Re: Letter of Support for 'Regional Centre of Expertise' Designation

Dear UNU-IAS RCE Selection Committee,

The Urban Studies Institute within the Andrew Young School for Policy Studies at Georgia State University is enthusiastic to support and participate in this regional educational consortium effort to create a Regional Centre of Expertise for the Greater Atlanta area.

As a university institute we utilize an interdisciplinary research approach, on our campus, across local universities and in the community. One of our research clusters, is environmental sustainability within cities, as climate change occurs and population density increases. The establishment of this centre, along with Atlanta's current momentum and focus on resiliency, water access/improvement, and LEED architecture will only lend itself to future successes. Further, as an institute focusing not just on research but the development of academic programs within the urban field, the establishing this type of resource for students to tap into, and learn from, would be monumental.

The institute is currently housed in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies, one of the leading public policy schools in the nation, with extensive research networks in Atlanta and cities around the world. We plan to be engaged participants of the coalition and fully support its establishment.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our application.

Sincerely,

Johannes Nijman

Sara Rosen, Ph.D.  
Dean

Mailing Address:  
PO Box 4038  
Atlanta GA 30302-4038

In Person:  
25 Park Place, 25th floor  
Atlanta GA 30303

Tel 404-413-5488  
Fax 404-413-5124  
Email [srosen@gsu.edu](mailto:srosen@gsu.edu)



May 26, 2017

Dear UNU-Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability Selection Committee:

The College of Arts and Sciences at Georgia State University supports creation of a United Nations Regional Center of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development for the Atlanta Region. We are uniquely equipped to advance the UN-RCE Mission, through our reach across all sectors of the region, and our contributions in research, teaching, and service.

GSU is the largest university in Georgia, and our College in the heart of Downtown Atlanta teaches over 15,000 students in 70 undergraduate and graduate degrees across 24 academic departments and institutes. Aligned with our University Strategic Plan, we are committed to understanding the challenges facing cities, and developing solutions for our region, nation, and the world. We are an engine of innovation and workforce development for cutting edge careers of tomorrow, rooted in our disciplines that span the humanities, social and behavioral sciences, and the natural and computational sciences.

Many of our faculty, staff, and students are making strong contributions to sustainable development in our region, and we are an engaged partner with numerous stakeholders in all sectors of our region. We have strong ties to arms of the City of Atlanta, such as the Watershed Department, the Office of Sustainability, and the Office of Resiliency. Our Creative Media Industries Institute is a leader supporting our region's growth in the communications and entertainment industries, in many instances touching on urban sustainability issues. Our academic researchers and students engage community NGO's, local, state, and federal agencies, and corporations, seeking to understand the complex problems facing our region, and develop effective solutions. This work has included applied research on environmental justice, housing policy, green infrastructure, urban air quality, health disparities, radon hazards, lead contamination, chronic flood hazards, and many others – much of it supported by funding agencies such as the National Institutes of Health, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Science Foundation, and the Department of Transportation.

Our students are diverse in every way. GSU is a Title III/V Minority Serving Institution, graduating more African American bachelors degrees than any other in the nation. Many of our curricula include sustainability components and several are specifically focused on sustainability, including degrees in Environmental Science, Environmental Geoscience, Urban Studies, and Water Sciences. Our alumni fill

the halls of state and federal government here in Atlanta, and are leaders in industry in our region and beyond.

If the RCE is approved, we look forward to partnering and playing our role as an academic leader in the heart of our city. Our faculty and students have already been involved in the proposal development, and we will continue to provide the intellectual leadership and energy needed to implement the United Nations vision for global education in sustainability.



Sara Rosen

Dean



# Georgia Institute of Technology®

Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

May 22, 2017

United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS)  
Global Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Service Centre  
6F, International Organizations Center, Pacifico-Yokohama  
1-1-1 Minato Mirai, Nishi-Ku, Yokohama 220-8502 JAPAN

Dear UNU-IAS RCE Selection Committee:

The most difficult challenges of the future—such as energy, water, sustainability, security, poverty/development, and natural disasters—will require global solutions, and Georgia Tech is engaged around the world in developing these solutions. Regardless of what that future holds, we believe that in the next twenty-five years, many of the world's most critical problems will be solved at research and educational institutions like Georgia Tech. Teams at the Institute are already working on solutions for making solar energy economical, improving environmental and economic sustainability, providing access to clean water, improving urban infrastructure, advancing health informatics, curing diseases, and securing cyberspace. New interdisciplinary fields are emerging that span technology, science, policy, business, law, and the arts, and these interactions are reshaping how we both view the world and define and solve problems. Our success will depend upon our ability to utilize science and technology to build on our history of excellence in all that we do and to shape our future.

Our success will also depend on collaborative action connecting local and regional work to global initiatives. To this end, we are honored to be partnering with Emory University, other institutions of higher education in the Atlanta region, and a broad array of nonprofit, community, government, business, and philanthropic stakeholders, to submit this application to establish a Greater Atlanta United Nations University Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (RCE) to increase communication, collaboration, and impact of initiatives related to sustainability education in our region.

We are confident that the RCE regional and global network will offer many benefits to our students and faculty, including networking and partnering around teaching, service-learning, research, projects, and mentoring; learning from sustainability innovations overseas and developing more global perspectives on sustainability problem-solving; and sharing our own sustainability innovations in pedagogy, research, and practice. Georgia Tech is already well connected to other UN initiatives through our faculty, such as UN Habitat, and one of our faculty members—Dr. Michael Best from International Affairs—even directs a UN University Institute on Computing and Society in Macao SAR, China. So we are well aware of the value that UN connections bring to our faculty and students. Our RCE stakeholder engagement process to date has already brought together over 200 people and generated new collaborations, in the

Rafael L. Bras  
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs  
225 North Avenue, NW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30332-0325 U.S.A.  
PHONE 404-385-2700 FAX 404-894-1277

form of a newly-formed Atlanta student sustainability network and a collaboration with UNU-IAS on our Japan summer study abroad program, even before the formal RCE has been approved and established.

The RCE will also help to strengthen our own internal collaborations among a variety of centers and units working on different aspects of sustainability, including our new Center for Serve-Learn-Sustain, developing curriculum related to sustainability and community engagement—which serves as the Georgia Tech RCE lead; the Ray C. Anderson Center for Sustainable Business in the Scheller College of Business, developing curriculum development related to business and sustainability; the Office of Campus Sustainability, operationalizing a sustainable campus; and the Strategic Energy Institute, integrating energy research from across campus. The Office of International Education is also playing a key role in this RCE initiative, which offers a unique opportunity to further their goals of training students in cross-cultural communication.

Contributing to a Greater Atlanta RCE will be the next step in Georgia Tech's sustainability leadership, which began in 1952, when we began constructing our own electrical grid and steam system and converted our Holland Plant from coal to natural gas, significantly reducing emissions. Since then, we have built 27 LEED certified buildings; signed the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment in 2007, pledging to become carbon neutral by 2050; founded the Strategic Energy Institute (2004), Brook Byers Institute for Sustainable Systems (2009), and Ray C. Anderson Center for Sustainable Business (2013); established Serve-Learn-Sustain in 2015 as our 10-year Quality Enhancement Plan, a required component of accreditation; and begun designing a fully certified Living Building in 2015, with a \$30M gift from The Kendeda Fund, with opening scheduled for 2019. Together with the Living Building initiative, which comes out of the International Living Futures Institute, this RCE initiative will connect our local sustainability work more closely to international goals and action. In particular, with its focus on collaborative sustainability education, the RCE will help us achieve the goal that we set out in our Serve-Learn-Sustain plan, which is to prepare students "to apply what they have learned, working collaboratively to create solutions that value both the environmental and social conditions of diverse communities" and thereby "bring renewed meaning to the Institute's motto of Progress and Service."

Thank you for your consideration and support of our application to establish a Greater Atlanta Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development.

Sincerely,



Rafael L. Bras  
Georgia Institute of Technology

RLB/kh

May 30, 2017

Dear UNU-IAS RCE Selection Committee:

The Ray C. Anderson Center for Sustainable Business strongly endorses the creation of a United Nations Regional Center of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (UN RCE) that will serve the Greater Atlanta region. We believe that a UN RCE will be an important platform for achieving sustainability impact broadly and in our advancing our own objectives that are focused on:

- **Integrating** sustainability into business education and practice
- Inspiring business **innovation** that addresses societal issues and challenges, while also leveraging lessons from the environment (e.g. biomimicry) and social domains that contribute to sustainable business practices.

We strive to facilitate such integration and innovation through a) the academic and research contributions of our 15 Center-Affiliated faculty, b) in our design and delivery of education to students within and beyond the classroom, and c) through collaborative efforts on campus (including our partnership with Serve-Learn-Sustain), among community partners, and via engagement with the Greater Atlanta business community. Our [Strategic Plan](#) offers further detail on our activities, goals, and objectives.

We believe that a UN RCE for the Greater Atlanta area will help to amplify the impacts of our own efforts through enhanced coordination across institutions (such as with other Atlanta-based business schools) and via partnerships with the business community. The portfolio of existing and future business partners on sustainability is rich given that Atlanta is home to (or an important market for) such long established companies as Coca-Cola, Home Depot, Delta Airlines, Kimberly-Clark, IHG Group, Cisco, Walmart, Chick Fil-A, and Arby's among others. The Atlanta region also hosts a thriving start-up culture (e.g. Grubbly Farms) and sustainability innovators, such as Rubicon Global, with whom we continue to partner.

We are excited about the conversations we have had with many of these businesses on how a UN RCE might compliment their local, national, and global sustainability objectives. A UN RCE will provide a platform to help expand the impact of university, corporate, and civil society partnerships that have strong sustainability objectives including companies that have explicitly aligned their activities with the Sustainable Development Goals (see [IHG](#) and [Coca-Cola](#) for two examples). These companies, our own educational institutions, local community organizations, and others will benefit from the UN RCE network of best practices and umbrella for collective action in pursuit of SDG achievement.

For these reasons, we look forward to supporting the UN RCE application as it advances through the process, and to welcoming the collaboration it will continue to facilitate.

Sincerely,

*Michael Oxman*

**Michael Oxman**  
Managing Director & Professor of the Practice



I am writing, on behalf of university student representatives from the Atlanta Student Sustainability Council (ATL-SSC) and their respective institutions, to show our support for the creation of a UN University Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A. The ATL-SSC is a selective council that works with the Sustainability Director, John R. Seydel, in the Atlanta Mayor's Office of Resiliency to incorporate city initiatives on a university level and share best practices in regard to sustainability projects on campus. Representatives from each school are chosen by sustainability offices on campus; there are up to three ambassadors per school. The ATL-SSC currently has 20 members, representing eleven universities and schools in the Atlanta area, including the following: Georgia Institute of Technology, Emory University, University of Georgia, Georgia State University, Kennesaw State University, University of North Georgia, Clark Atlanta University, Spelman College, Morehouse College, Agnes Scott College, and Oglethorpe University.

As a Georgia Institute of Technology ambassador to the ATL-SSC, I have been involved in a variety of sustainability initiatives on my own campus, ranging from working at the Office of Recycling and the Center for Serve-Learn-Sustain, to serving as President of Georgia Tech's chapter of Engineers for a Sustainable World for the past three years. I am a senior Materials Science and Engineering major, and have lead multiple events to encourage sustainability on campus, such as Earth Day, America Recycles Day, and a Sustainable Design-a-Thon. Through my current work as a Student Liaison with Georgia Tech's Center for Serve-Learn-Sustain, I bring students and outside partners together to generate a sustainable community culture. Thus, I feel confident in expressing my full support for the formation of an RCE in the city of Atlanta to create a formal network for the promotion of sustainable development.

The formation of an RCE in Atlanta would bring significant opportunities to students in the area. Atlanta is a perfect candidate city for an RCE, because of our wide array of industry headquarters (Coca-Cola, Bank of America, Home Depot, etc.), supportive local government, involved nonprofit and community members, and the large number of post-secondary institutions in the area. There are in fact 57 colleges and universities within metro Atlanta, each with a wide array of expertise. There is also considerable diversity present, with many universities being comprised of a large proportion of international students, as well as the presence of four historically black colleges and universities (HBCU's) across Atlanta.

An RCE would be ideal for this diverse base of geographically disconnected students from different universities to come together to exchange ideas for sustainable development on their respective campuses and across the city overall. The formation of the ATL-SSC has already been shown to have an exceptional impact in the exchange of ideas — for example, schools are working together to promote a standardized set of recycling labels across universities. However,



to involve more students and have the resources and network to interact with partners in industry, nonprofit, the public sector, and higher education, the development of an RCE is necessary.

Benefits for students could include having a directory of stakeholders committed to sustainable development as a resource. This could be a way for students to get involved with research they are interested in, organize service days with nonprofits, and even search for possible internships and jobs. The ATL-SSC has already been a resource for this, as student ambassadors were given the opportunity to apply for internships with the Chattahoochee Riverkeeper and were invited to design meetings for a vertical garden being led by the Environmental Protection Agency. These types of opportunities would not have been easy for students to learn about if there was not a formal network to disseminate this information. However, as the ATL-SSC is only a small group of students with 2-3 representatives from each school, an RCE would benefit a much wider audience of students.

There would also be significant advantages for other stakeholders by having the support of university students in the RCE. Businesses could use the RCE network as a way to source qualified interns who are committed to sustainable development. Nonprofits could work directly with student organizations who have similar missions to establish formal service relationships. Networking events would allow students to interact with each other and additional stakeholders around Atlanta to learn about new initiatives and find potential areas for collaboration. Interdisciplinary and collaborative relationships between the public, higher education, industrial, and nonprofit sectors will be necessary to achieve major sustainable development goals within Atlanta, such as the newly passed resolution for the transition to 100% clean and renewable energy across the city by 2035. Thus, an RCE in Atlanta would truly be a major asset for the city, joining together disjunctive sustainability initiatives to work collaboratively for a more sustainable future.

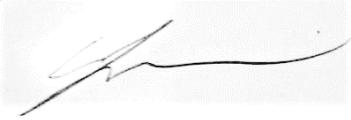
All in all, ATL-SSC members representing the universities listed below are committed to collaborating with the RCE network. Additional student leaders from universities listed below will aid in the coordination of student engagement with the RCE as well. We will serve as representatives to engage our respective student bodies with the network, in hopes of bringing together a wide and diverse student population to collaborate with other stakeholders in the Atlanta area on sustainable development.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicole J.J. Kennard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "N" and "K".

Sincerely,

Nicole J.J. Kennard (*Georgia Institute of Technology, ATL-SSC, GT Center for Serve-Learn-Sustain*)

We commit to providing collaborative support with the RCE network from the student bodies at our respective institutions.

	<p>Delaney Rickles (<i>Georgia Institute of Technology, GT Center for Serve-Learn-Sustain</i>)</p>
	<p>Michael A. Bryan II (<i>Georgia Institute of Technology, ATL-SSC, Tech Office of Campus Sustainability</i>)</p>
	<p>Kyle Kizirian (<i>Georgia Institute of Technology, GT Engineers for a Sustainable World</i>)</p>
	<p>Arush Lal (<i>Georgia Institute of Technology, Volunteers around the World- GT</i>)</p>
	<p>Stephanie Varughese (<i>Georgia Institute of Technology, GT Engineers for a Sustainable World, Energy Club</i>)</p>
	<p>Noor-ur-Rahman Shaikh (<i>Georgia Institute of Technology, ATL-SSC</i>)</p>
	<p>Jonathan Kaminski (<i>Emory University, ATL-SSC, Emory Greeks Go Green</i>)</p>

	<p>Cassidy Schwartz (<i>Emory University, ATL-SSC, Emory College Council</i>)</p>
	<p>Vanessa Ishimwe (<i>Emory University, Emory Greeks Go Green, Gwinnett County Clean &amp; Beautiful</i>)</p>
	<p>Taylor Spicer (<i>Emory University, Office of Sustainability Initiatives</i>)</p>
	<p>Michael E. DeLise (<i>University of North Georgia, ATL-SSC</i>)</p>
	<p>Leah R. Clark (<i>Clark Atlanta University, Living Green Club</i>)</p>
	<p>Kristofer Seth Moore (<i>Kennesaw State University, Green Ambassador Program, ATL-SSC</i>)</p>
	<p>Iesha Baldwin (<i>Spelman College, Spelman College Sustainability Program, ATL-SSC</i>)</p>
	<p>Johali Sotelo (<i>Agnes Scott College, ATL-SSC</i>)</p>
	<p>Jennifer Duenas (<i>Georgia State University, ATL-SSC</i>)</p>



# Greenhouse Accelerator

Helping Entrepreneurs Create Sustainable Local Jobs

May 21, 2017

To whom it may concern:

The Greenhouse Accelerator is a proud and enthusiastic supporter of the formation of the Greater Atlanta Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (ATL RCE). The mission of our non-profit organization is to educate and to advise startup entrepreneurs with green/clean technology business ventures; our objective is to encourage the application, and to help with the implementation, of sustainable business practices, thereby fostering sustainable economic development and the creation of sustainable local jobs.

We are particularly excited about the opportunity to connect students to the practical meaning of sustainability in the context of building and running a business, with the ATL RCE providing the frameworks and tools to do this more broadly and systematically. Our entrepreneurs bring real-world sustainability, with all its promises and challenges, to the students through classroom visits; their cleantech startups provide opportunities for students to contribute to the implementation of sustainable business practices via internships and semester projects. The ATL RCE will also allow us to expand our support of graduating student-entrepreneurs who decide to dedicate themselves to realizing their own entrepreneurial dream.

The ATL RCE will be a platform from which these efforts can be conducted more effectively, and the respective network of resources will be of great value to our own mission.

Sincerely,

Bernie Burgener, PhD  
Executive Director  
Greenhouse Accelerator, Inc.



## Presidential Commission on Sustainability

May 25, 2017

UNU-IAS RCE Selection Committee

Dear Committee Members:

The Kennesaw State University President's Commission on Sustainability supports creation of a Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) on Education for Sustainable Development for the Greater Atlanta region. We believe that the creation of this RCE will foster important connections between educational institutions, community organizations, and business groups throughout the Atlanta area. We look forward to supporting, in ways that meet our institution's mission and vision, the important work of enhancing sustainability in our region.

The Sustainability Commission is composed of faculty, staff, and students of Kennesaw State University (KSU). We have strong representation from colleges with liberal arts, business, and STEM disciplines. The Commission aims to coordinate the resources of each of these colleges in order to enhance educational, research, and policy work regarding sustainability as it impacts our institution and our community. KSU's nationally recognized strengths in environmental studies, environmental engineering, and environmental architecture provide a deep wealth of expertise that have already contributed in important ways to regional work on sustainability. In addition, CIFAL Atlanta (The International Center for the Training of Local Authorities – Atlanta) is currently housed at, and works via a memorandum of understanding with, Kennesaw State University's Division of Global Affairs. CIFAL Atlanta is an affiliate of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research. CIFAL centers focus on working with local governments and NGOs to achieve the sustainable development goals. We believe many of our faculty, staff, and students would be able to contribute to, and benefit from, the creation of the Greater Atlanta RCE and as a member of the RCE, CIFAL Atlanta could contribute programmatic expertise as well as experience working within UN systems.

As a Commission that works to better integrate sustainability initiatives across our diverse colleges, we recognize the need for greater coordination within and between institutions. The Atlanta region contains a myriad of dynamic groups that are working on sustainability projects, and we believe that the Greater Atlanta RCE can provide a forum to foster improved coordination and exchanges of information. The Commission has made important steps in coordinating sustainability work within the KSU community,

and we look forward to participating in efforts to improve coordination between institutions across the region.

While the Commission is eager to work with a Greater Atlanta RCE, it cannot to commit specific institutional resources to the RCE project at this point. However, several of our faculty have already been involved in preparing the application, and are committed to supporting the RCE through their research and teaching activities. We believe that a growing number of faculty, staff, and students will contribute their time and expertise to the project over time, and the Commission may be able to leverage additional resources for specific projects in the future. Overall, we welcome the opportunity to participate in this global and regional effort, and we enthusiastically support the Greater Atlanta RCE application.

Sincerely,

*Vanessa*

DR. VANESSA A. SLINGER-FRIEDMAN  
Chair, Kennesaw State University President's Commission on Sustainability  
Professor of Geography  
Environmental Studies minor Coordinator  
Department of Geography and Anthropology  
Kennesaw State University  
Phone: (470) 578 2068  
Email: [vslinger@kennesaw.edu](mailto:vslinger@kennesaw.edu)



May 23, 2017

United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS)  
Global Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Service Center  
6F, International Organizations Center, Pacifica-Yokohama  
1-1-1 Minato Mirani, Nishi-cu, Yokohama 220-8502 JAPAN

Dear UNU-IAS-RCE Selection Committee:

Morehouse College has begun work to increase sustainability awareness and best practices in the Atlanta University Center (AUC) and West End neighborhood of Atlanta, Georgia. Given this charge, Morehouse has initiated key strategies to engage students, faculty, and staff in transformative sustainability practices. We are delighted to partner with Emory University and Georgia Institute of Technology to apply for recognition from the UNU-IAS as the Greater Atlanta Regional Center of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development.

One of the major goals of Morehouse College is to develop global leaders in sustainability using a robust educational paradigm that includes science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), humanities and social sciences, and business and economics. This educational paradigm includes three key foci: 1) fostering learning everywhere including interdisciplinary, extra-curricular and international experiences; 2) nurturing discovery and active learning, including interdisciplinary and international research; 3) engaging communities (near and far) for impact, including a "greener" campus and local community service to international experiences. Our students' organizations work diligently to provide awareness to the campus, local community, and southeast region by hosting community events providing more exposure to improving sustainable practices. The College engages other community groups in the Atlanta area that promote sustainability for climate change, waste management, and research and development.

Support of the establishment of the Greater Atlanta RCE would allow Morehouse College to partner with other research-intensive institutions in the Atlanta metropolitan area to improve sustainability practices throughout the greater Atlanta region. Morehouse College is enthusiastic to partner with Greater Atlanta Regional Center for Expertise to continue to model the best practices for a growing metropolitan area that will inspire other cities and regions nationally.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William J. Taggart".

William J. Taggart  
Interim President

Cc: Suzanne Burnes, Founder & CEO of Collective Wisdom Group, Inc.  
Jennifer Hirsch, Director, Center for Serve-Learn-Sustain at Georgia Tech  
Ciannat Howett, Director, Sustainability Initiatives at Emory University



May 25, 2017

**Trustees**

Mary Anne Anderson Lanier  
Marietta, GA

Harriet Anderson Langford  
LaGrange, GA

A. Philip Langford  
LaGrange, GA

James A. Lanier, Jr.  
Marietta, GA

**Advisory Board**

Alan Anderson  
Woodinville, WA

Janine Benyus  
Helena, MT

Bob Fox  
New York, NY

Paul Hawken  
Sausalito, CA

Steve Nygren  
Chattahoochee Hills, GA

John Picard  
Atherton, CA

Laura Turner Seydel  
Atlanta, GA

John Wells  
Atlanta, GA

Julie Wrigley  
Ketchum, ID

**Executive Director**

John A. Lanier  
Atlanta, GA

United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS)  
Global Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Service Centre 6F,  
International Organizations Center, Pacifico-Yokohama 1-1-1  
Minatomirai, Nishi-ku, Yokohama 220-8502 JAPAN

Dear UNU-IAS RCE Selection Committee:

I am pleased to write this letter of support for the creation of the Greater Atlanta Regional Center of Expertise (RCE).

The Ray C. Anderson Foundation (RCAF) is a 501(c)(3) based in Atlanta, that was created in honor of the late Ray C. Anderson (1934-2011), founder of Interface, Inc. During his time at Interface, Ray championed the notion of businesses doing well by doing good. It's these noble qualities of advancing knowledge and innovation around environmental stewardship and sustainability that recognized Ray as a pioneer in industrial ecology. The purpose of the Foundation is to perpetuate these shared values and continue the legacy that Ray left behind.

We heartily support the establishment of the RCE, as we see it playing a significant role in increasing awareness about, and access to, education about sustainable development. We believe the RCE will be uniquely qualified to leverage the exceptional resources of the Atlanta region, while creating new partnerships across diverse stakeholder groups in the area. The Atlanta RCE can serve as a key resource for higher education providers, as well as professional and community education programs.

As the funder of a major initiative focused on sustainable business education in the area, the Ray C. Anderson Center for Sustainable Business at the Georgia Tech Scheller College of Business, we view the RCE as a key asset in furthering the implementation of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals in the region. Furthermore, locating an RCE in Atlanta, the business capital of the Southeast US, would establish a critical presence in a region that has traditionally lagged in focusing on sustainable development.

RCAF endorses and supports the group of committed professional and community leaders who have prepared the RCE application. We are honored to be a part of this regional education consortium's effort to apply for status as a RCE, and thank you for your consideration of this application.

Sincerely,

John A. Lanier  
Executive Director and Vice President

Ray C. Anderson Foundation  
1180 West Peachtree St. NW, Suite 1975, Atlanta, GA 30309  
404.477.1461



Tuesday, May 23, 2017

United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS)  
Global Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Service Centre  
6F, International Organizations Center, Pacifico-Yokohama  
1-1-1 Minato Mirai, Nishi-Ku, Yokohama 220-8502 JAPAN

To Whom It Many Concern:

On behalf of Saving Our Sons & Sisters International (SOSSI), I am pleased to write this letter of support for the creation of the Greater Atlanta Regional Centre of Expertise (GA RCE). SOSSI supports GA RCE's role in establishing a collective impact model with shared backbone functions. Currently, no structure exists to provide support to take sustainable development education to the next-level, using community engagement as a key component of strategic planning. SOSSI endorses and supports the group of committed professionals and community members who have prepared the RCE application.

As a nonprofit 501(c)(3) based in Atlanta, Georgia, SOSSI's mission is to transform and improve the overall success of youth, adults, and communities; using a volunteer/ partner driven COMMUNITY PARTNERS for Student Success (COMPASS) Collaborative. The COMPASS Partners are made up of "no excuse" leaders of integrity committed to making a difference in the lives of youth and adults, by transforming and improving their educational experiences and outcomes. Our organized collaborative provides supportive leadership and strategic focus with systematic solutions, often in underrepresented communities. Since 2009, SOSSI has provided and supported best practices in education solutions, academic coaching, community resource guides, strategic planning, trade-skills management, mentorship, entrepreneurship, and career readiness through exposure to Subject Matter Experts (SME) and Industry Professionals. All Industry Certifications and High Demand Career Initiatives (HDCI) are aligned to the Holland Code, and identified by the Georgia Department of Education.

The GA RCE will serve as a key resource for stakeholders, education and industry partners, and providers ranging from birth to K-12, technical and higher education to professional and community education programs to expand program delivery providing pathways to advantage for all families. GA RCE is playing a significant role in leveraging the assets in the Southeast region of the United States to preserve the legacy of the civil and human rights movement in Atlanta and the largest concentration of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, diversity of higher education students, and faculty attending Georgia Tech, Georgia State University, Emory University, and technical colleges, etc., working collaboratively with national/international NGOs, corporations and consulates, and regional offices of federal agencies for expertise and education for sustainability outputs and outcomes. SOSSI supports GA RCE as education, practical experience, work-readiness, and digital literacy skills are vital for preparing students to work, live and contribute to the social and civic fabric of their communities.

Best Regards,

Chuck Barlow, Jr., MSc  
Co-Founder/Executive Director

1708 Delowe Drive

Atlanta, Georgia 30311

[www.iamsossi.org](http://www.iamsossi.org)

678-820-9711



May 31, 2017

Dear RCE Selection Committee,

I am pleased to write this letter of support for the creation of the Greater Atlanta Regional Center of Expertise (RCE) around the dialogue for Sustainable Development.

Southface ([www.southface.org](http://www.southface.org)), a 501(c)3 located in Atlanta, inspires market-based solutions at the nexus of the natural, social and built environments. Since 1978 Southface has served as the Southeast's nonprofit leader in promoting sustainable homes, workplaces and communities through education, research, advocacy and technical assistance. Learn more at [www.southface.org](http://www.southface.org). We have been involved in this process from early on and have been extremely supportive of the coalition working obtaining this important distinction for the region.

In addition to the opportunities to share resources and form partnerships, Southface is interested in the role that RCEs can have in aligning prospects for research, thought leaders for problem solving and for working together within a global network of other RCEs toward a more sustainable future.

Thank you for your consideration of our application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrea Pinabell", written in a cursive style.

Andrea Pinabell, President



## Spelman College

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
PHONE: 404-270-5001  
FAX: 404-270-5010

MARY SCHMIDT CAMPBELL, Ph.D.  
*President*

May 22, 2017

United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS)  
Global Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) Service Centre  
6F, International Organizations Center, Pacifico-Yokohama  
1-1-1 Minato Mirai, Nishi-Ku, Yokohama 220-8502 JAPAN

Dear UNU-IAS RCE Selection Committee Members:

I am pleased to endorse the enclosed proposal and fully support the prospect of a continuing collaboration of Spelman College faculty, students, and staff with the Georgia Institute of Technology, Emory University, and other institutions of higher education in the Atlanta region, on the establishment of the Greater Atlanta United Nations University Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (RCE). This will further strengthen Spelman's commitment to educating for sustainability that started almost two decades ago. The quest for social justice has been the hallmark of Spelman's legacy. As such, we share the goals of ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring prosperity for all as articulated in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that were adopted by more than 190 countries in September 2015.

As part of this collaborative endeavor, we welcome the opportunity for our Sustainable Spelman Committee to work with the UNU- Greater Atlanta RCE. As outlined in the proposal, we will assist in advancing educating for sustainable development. "Sustainable Spelman Committee" (SSC) was established to spearhead the College's effort in not only reducing its carbon footprint but also in greening its curriculum, developing a Climate Action Plan, and enhancing campus stewardship. Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science, Dr. Fatemeh Shafiei and Facilities Director Art Frazier, were appointed to serve as co-chairs of the SSC. In March 2011, the committee established the "Sustainable Spelman" Vision: "Consistent with Spelman's historical mission of promoting ethical leadership and positive social change, we are committed to achieving climate neutrality by reducing our ecological footprint and practicing sustainability as a way of life." At Spelman College students are encouraged to make "A Choice to Change the World." The engagement of our faculty, students, and staff in this collaboration will further affirm this charge.

United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS)

May 22, 2017

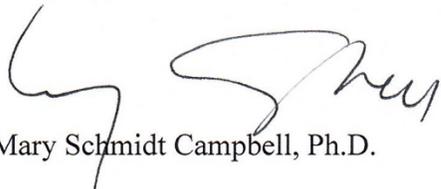
Page 2:

Spelman's leadership clearly understands the environmental challenges that humanity faces in the twenty-first century and has already made great strides toward sustainability, and is committed to placing the college among the leading higher education institutions by serving as a role model in educating for sustainability by integrating this principle into education, research, campus operations and community service.

Establishing the UNU- Greater Atlanta RCE is a very timely initiative in light of the urgent need for finding solutions in order to confront the looming challenges of climate change. There is a consensus among the scientific community that climate change is real. However, the risks associated with climate change are not uniform. Although no country rich or poor will be immune to the adverse impact of climate change, the worst effects of global warming are likely to fall on the shoulders of the very people who were least responsible for contributing to the problem. Even in the United States, the risks associated with climate change are disproportionately affecting low income, and minority communities, as they constitute the majority of vulnerable populations without resources to mitigate or adapt to the problems caused by climate change. Spelman, as a historically Black College occupies a special niche in engaging with other stakeholders in finding solutions to address challenges of climate change. The geographic locations of the majority of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the southern United States make them especially vulnerable to the impact of the increased extreme weather events such as hurricanes, and other climate related natural disasters. As such, it is critical that HBCUs' voices are heard and their perspectives are integrated into the framing of education for sustainable development.

Thank you for your consideration of our application to establish a Greater Atlanta Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Schmidt Campbell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "S".

Mary Schmidt Campbell, Ph.D.



**UNIVERSITY OF  
GEORGIA**  
Office of Sustainability

Global RCE Service Centre

UN Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development Re:

Letter of Support for the Greater Atlanta RCE

Dear Selection Committee Members,

The University of Georgia (UGA) Office of Sustainability supports establishment of the Greater Atlanta Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (RCE). We look forward to continued partnerships through the RCE to translate global objectives into contextual solutions for the communities we serve.

Sustainability leadership in education, research and service is a hallmark of UGA's 2020 Strategic Plan. UGA currently offers 850 sustainability-related courses, with more than 800 faculty members conducting sustainability-related research. More than 120 undergraduate and graduate students from 11 different schools and colleges are currently enrolled in UGA's interdisciplinary Certificate in Sustainability, gaining applied understanding of the principles and practice of social, environmental and economic sustainability. UGA's Sustainable Food Systems Initiative is addressing security and resiliency to feed a growing world population without depleting natural resources or degrading the ecosystems on which long-term sustainability depends. The New Materials Institute is developing supply chains that minimize pollution, promote sustainability and protect human health without sacrificing economic viability and efficiency. The Institute for Resilient Infrastructure Systems is exploring ways to integrate green and blue infrastructure to create less vulnerable systems and communities that are better able to adapt and thrive in the future, and Watershed UGA, an interdisciplinary experiential learning initiative, engages students, faculty, staff and community members in the restoration of our local waterways. Through these and other programs at UGA, we are committed to solving grand challenges for our state and the world, and to training students capable of addressing multifaceted problems that do not have simple solutions.

The University of Georgia will continue to provide meaningful experiential learning opportunities for our students. We are poised to contribute to the RCE, particularly in the area of food systems and natural resources by helping to connect the metro region to its sustaining rural communities through local and regional food systems and natural resource base, recognizing that a strong interconnected urban and rural economy leads to resilient and sustainable cities.

Members of the University of Georgia welcome the opportunity to participate in the Greater Atlanta RCE, and we anticipate mutually beneficial learning through coordinated and collaborative projects.

Sincerely,

Kevin Kirsche  
Director, Office of Sustainability