



MEDIA CONTACTS:

Scott Briskey
Sustainable Atlanta
O: 404-736-3652
C: 678-592-3129

scott@sustainableatlanta.org

Laura Thomas
Sustainable Atlanta
O: 404-736-3652
C: 937-307-4703

laura@sustainableatlanta.org

City Council CD/HR Committee to Vote on Sustainable Building Ordinance

December 1 meeting could provide environmental, economic boom for city

ATLANTA- (November 16, 2009) -- The Atlanta Sustainable Building Ordinance (ASBO) is set to go before the Atlanta City Council's Community Development/Human Resources Committee (CD/HR) on December 1 for a critical vote after months of negotiations and meetings convened by Sustainable Atlanta and the Southface Energy Institute. The ASBO would serve as an update to Atlanta's existing building code, protecting the health and welfare of building occupants.

"In the interim we are working diligently to ensure that Atlantans," said executive director, Lynnette Young of Sustainable Atlanta, "the people who will live, work and play in these buildings understand clearly the health and financial implications of green building. This is more than just having a nice building in which to work."

Sustainable Atlanta also encourages voters to let their Council representatives hear their support for the ordinance. A list of Council members and a letter of support for the ASBO are available on the Sustainable Atlanta Web site.

During the November 10 CD/HR committee meeting, several members of the committee worked to drive the proposed ordinance towards a vote by developing two amendments regarding incentives and historic buildings. One of the committee members (Rep. Ivory Lee Young, Jr.) acknowledged the need to provide sustainable solutions that are meaningful to "ordinary people." Of course, ordinance developers could not agree more as the proposed ordinance is designed first and foremost to

further protect the health and welfare of Atlantans while safeguarding the economic, social, and environmental competitiveness of city.

“Particularly given recent media coverage branding Atlanta’s current environment in a less than favorable light, I would think we’d all recognize the long-term health and economic implications associated with our ability as a city to come together to meet the challenges of the 21st Century with respect to health and environmental sustainability,” said Robert Reed, an ASBO contributor and Program Manager with Southface leading The Home Depot Foundation’s Sustainable Cities Institute.

When the ASBO is passed, it will also help ensure Atlanta’s position as a leader in accepted and proven building practices and improve both Atlanta’s environmental and economic viability. Along with the rising importance of sustainability is the ability to attract the best employers and jobs – particularly in communities that are traditionally underserved - this measure will improve Atlanta’s competitiveness with other leading cities and even provide a competitive edge to businesses.

“This ordinance focuses on the health and welfare of the people of Atlanta – our constituency,” said Townsend Bailey, LEED AP and Vice President of Sustainable Atlanta. “From an economic standpoint, the ordinance also helps reduce lost wages and costs from unnecessary trips to the doctor’s office and emergency room. This is not to mention the environmental health benefits of reducing toxic emissions and pollution.”

For example, according to the 2009 Green Building Market Impact Report published by GreenerBuildings.com, “Operational savings are important, however, the financial benefits in LEED [for instance] are achieved through the enhancement of employee productivity. Salaries represent approximately 90% of the money flow through a building. To this end, we calculate that an average of at least 580,000 employees are currently enjoying improved indoor environments in LEED buildings at present. Looking ahead, the “green building workforce” is expected to approach 29 million by 2020, and almost 64 million strong by 2030. The productivity benefits from LEED buildings to date are estimated at \$230 million to \$450 million; we expect this number to reach between \$11 billion and \$22 billion by 2020, and \$25 billion and \$49 billion by 2030.” Decreased rates of absenteeism lead to fewer missed days from work resulting in fewer trips to the doctor’s office. These issues impact the health and bottom line for all Atlantans and the companies employing them.

The proposed ordinance has been under development since June 2008 through the work of the Sustainable Building Taskforce. It incorporates the feedback of a large group of stakeholders comprised of architects, engineers, developers, lawyers, city planners, citizens and other experts. The Sustainable Building Taskforce has also hosted several large meetings to engage citizens and all sectors of the building industry.

The taskforce has met individually with industry representatives at their invitation and collected responses to the various drafts to date via e-mail, phone and in-person meetings. This process can be tracked by viewing the previous drafts of the ordinance on Sustainable Atlanta's Web site.

The feedback received during this process (along with aforementioned research) has resulted in the current draft. This has been a very inclusive process resulting in the currently proposed ordinance that gives several options for meeting its requirements, providing flexibility to the building industry while ensuring environmentally responsible practices. Once approved by the CD/HR committee, the ordinance would go before the city council for approval.

To learn more about the Atlanta Sustainable Building Ordinance visit www.sustainableatlanta.org.

About Sustainable Atlanta

[Sustainable Atlanta](#) is a catalyst, consultant and facilitator for sustainable progress in Atlanta as well as across the nation. Its core focus lies in convening leaders from academic, business, civic, governmental sectors and non-profits to develop sustainable policy and programs for those who live, work and play in Atlanta. Sustainable Atlanta leverages its expertise to help develop policies, programming, strategies and best practices that make Atlanta, other municipalities, citizens and organizations more bottom-line efficient, environmentally responsible and more competitive when attracting employers/jobs. Sustainable Atlanta is a 501(c) 3 not-for profit organization.

###