



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What Is the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge?

The Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge, or Atlanta BBC, is a nation-leading public/private initiative. **The goal of the Atlanta BBC is to reduce energy and water consumption by at least 20 percent in participating buildings across Atlanta by 2020.** Over 70 buildings, representing nearly 50 million square feet, are now participating in the Atlanta BBC, with broader participation expected over the next few years.

2. How does the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge Work?

By joining the Atlanta BBC, building owners and managers pledge to reduce their energy and water consumption by 20 percent by 2020 in their selected buildings against a 2009 baseline. To help building owners and managers of these buildings meet their pledge, the Atlanta BBC teams works with them to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the property that identifies opportunities to improve energy and water efficiency. The Atlanta BBC also provides buildings owners and managers with education and training courses as well as access to project financing.

3. Who Started the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge and Why?

The Mayor's Office of Sustainability in partnership with Central Atlanta Progress and other leading business and community organizations launched the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge in November 2011 with the goal of reducing energy and water consumption in 2 million square feet of commercial space by 20 percent by 2020. Since then, the number has grown to nearly 50 million square feet and continues to grow.

This Atlanta initiative is rooted in the Better Buildings Challenge announced by President Obama and the Department of Energy in February 2011. Atlanta was one of the first three "pilot" cities to join the Challenge, which was introduced in June 2011 at the Clinton Global Initiative and launched locally on November 3, 2011.

4. Why is Atlanta doing this?

In the fall of his first year in office, Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed challenged his administration to become a top-tier city for sustainability. The Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge has become a central component of the city's *Power to Change* sustainability plan.

In addition to the compelling environmental benefits of reducing energy and water consumption, there are significant economic development benefits as well. Investing in programs such as the Atlanta BBC helps keep the commercial buildings in Downtown Atlanta attractive places to do business, leading to a stronger economy and higher employment.

In fact, assessments on the first 20 million square feet point to a potential \$4.7 million in annual utility cost savings, providing building owners with an important price advantage and freeing up cash business owners can use to grow their businesses.

Programs like this also have an important effect on employment. For every \$1 million spent to improve efficiency in commercial buildings, approximately 13 jobs are created.

And building owners profit too: A growing body of research shows that energy-efficient properties have higher occupancy levels, lease-up rates and sale prices than less efficient properties.

5. What has been accomplished to date?

As of December 2012 – about thirteen months after the program's launch – the Atlanta BBC has made real and tangible progress.

Some 70 buildings, representing 50 million square feet of space, have joined the challenge. More than 20 buildings have completed their assessments, which is a comprehensive look at the building's energy and water consumption and an identification of opportunities to improve efficiencies completed by outside engineers. Another 20 assessments are due in 2013.

Central Atlanta Progress created the Atlanta Better Buildings Excellence Award, which was presented to The Hyatt Atlanta Regency hotel in November, 2012. The Hyatt began a series of retrofits in 2009 that has yielded a 35 percent decrease in its energy and water consumption.

And recently, Maria Vargas, the director of the national Better Buildings Challenge for the U.S. Department of Energy, congratulated Atlanta's leaders for the Atlanta BBC's success.

"The commitment that you have made is truly a model for the rest of the country," Vargas told a gathering of the city's top business and governmental leaders at the annual Downtown Development Day. "The work that Atlanta is doing with its private sector is really distinguishing Atlanta."

Atlanta was also the first city to complete its showcase project. As a result of a significant retrofit, the Boisfeuillet Jones Atlanta Civic Center realized an estimated \$200,000 in annual energy savings.

6. Why does the Atlanta BBC focus on water consumption?

A focus on water consumption distinguishes the Atlanta BBC from the programs operating nationally or in other cities. Unlike electricity, which can be generated to meet demand, water is a limited natural resource. Wise and efficient use of water is critical to becoming the city that Mayor Kasim Reed has described in his *Power to Change* sustainability initiative.

7. Who Leads the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge?

Initiated by Mayor Kasim Reed's Office of Sustainability and managed by Central Atlanta Progress, the Atlanta BBC relies on the collective leadership of a growing public/private partnership that includes the city's business, non-profit and governmental interests.

Founding partners include the City of Atlanta, U.S. Department of Energy, General Services Administration, Georgia Environmental Finance Authority and Invest Atlanta, representing the public sector. Representing the private sector, founders include AGL Resources, Central Atlanta Progress and the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District, Midtown Alliance, Davis, Pickren, Seydel and Sneed, Energy Future Coalition, Georgia Power, International Knowledge & Research Center for Green Building at Southern Polytechnic State University, Kendeda Fund, Southface, Sustainable Atlanta, Turner Foundation, U.S. Green Building Council, Hipple & Co Reputation Management, Emerald Cities of Atlanta, IFMA Atlanta, BOMA Atlanta and Weston Solutions and Skye Energy.

8. Why should buildings owners or managers participate?

Taking the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge offers a number of benefits to building owners and managers. By taking a proactive approach to improving the sustainability of their properties, building owners and managers can reduce their utility bills or create an attractive cost advantage for its tenants. A growing body of research shows that energy-efficient properties have higher occupancy levels, lease-up rates and sale prices than less efficient properties.

From a broader perspective, energy and water efficient buildings help reduce the U.S. dependence on foreign oil, protect the environment and stimulate economic growth through cost savings, investment in new technologies and job creation.

Finally, this program conducts a free energy and water assessment of the participating building as well as free monthly education and training courses for building owners and managers.

9. What must buildings owners or managers commit to do?

To participate, building owners or managers must agree to have their building assessed, commit to a specific energy and water savings goal, develop a plan to reach that goal by 2020 and implement it. Buildings must also share its utility data (via Energy Star Portfolio Manager) with the U.S. Department of Energy and be open to sharing information about the tools, technologies and processes used in reaching its goals.

To help building owners and managers reach their goals, the Atlanta BBC teams works with them to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the property that identifies opportunities to improve energy and water efficiency. The Atlanta BBC also provides buildings owners and managers with education and training courses as well as access to project financing.

10. How do I get involved?

Participation in the Atlanta Better Buildings Challenge provides many benefits to property owners, service providers and suppliers, including positive public recognition and educational resources to improve the water and energy efficiency of your organization. For more information, please visit www.AtlantaBBC.com or contact Central Atlanta Progress.

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