



LEADERSHIP PROFILE

Commissioner of Watershed Management
City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management

Atlanta, GA

"Building the capacity to be a strong partner in the resilience of our City."

A Unique Opportunity

The City of Atlanta is the capital city in the state of Georgia. With a population of more than 510,823 living within the city limits, Atlanta is the eighth most populous city in the Southeast and rapidly growing. Situated among the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, Atlanta features a picturesque topography that includes rolling hills, lush greenery and one of the densest tree canopies of any major city in the U.S. The beauty of Atlanta is complemented by the Chattahoochee River. This 430-mile body of water is the source of Atlanta's drinking water. The Chattahoochee runs approximately from the southern half of the Alabama-Georgia border, as well as a portion of the Florida-Georgia border. Metro Atlanta is home to more than 6.3 million people and will need water reserves to meet the growing population's needs.

The Department of Watershed Management is responsible for the City of Atlanta's drinking water and wastewater systems and provides the highest quality drinking water and wastewater services to the city's businesses, residents and wholesale customers, while protecting urban waterways, conserving natural resources and ensuring clean, safe water for downstream neighbors.

The Department of Watershed Management is the largest department within the City of Atlanta government, with an annual operating and capital budget of over \$1 billion. The Department of Watershed Management ensures the City of Atlanta meets National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit requirements at all permitted wastewater treatment facilities and CSOs with a goal of zero permit violations, as well as compliance with Consent Decree and other state/federal environmental mandates. The Commissioner is responsible for driving results consistent with the Administration's goals and objectives as well as the Department of Watershed



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Management's vision, mission, core values and strategic business plans.

Tasked with compliance to stringent environmental standards and operational excellence, the Department of Watershed Management is an award-winning agency with its share of significant challenges. In 2024, the department was honored by the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies with the Sustainable Water Utility Management Award and the Georgia Association of Water Professionals presented the Platinum Water Distribution System Excellence Award, the Gold Compliance Awards for the Hemphill & Chattahoochee Treatment Plants and the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Water Fluoridation Quality Award. There is much work to be done. Atlanta's wastewater treatment facilities have been underinvested for many years, there are redundancy and reliability issues that need to be resolved.

The next Commissioner must manage a billing and collections system that is accurate, effective and ensures the timely collection of outstanding balances. The Commissioner is responsible for managing all regulatory requirements to assure remedy and compliance is timely as required.

Mission

- Provide customers with reliable, high-quality water services in a safe, respectful, responsive and environmentally responsible manner, all at value.
- Deliver excellent customer service through a motivated, skilled and empowered workforce.
- Ensure professional stewardship of Atlanta's drinking water, wastewater, stormwater and natural systems.

- Protect and enhance the region's water resources, public health and property while promoting sustainability and economic vitality.

The Commissioner of Watershed Management has an important and transformational role.

The Commissioner of Watershed Management is responsible for the executive leadership, strategic planning and operational oversight of all activities related to the management of the city's water resources, including stormwater, wastewater and drinking water systems. Atlanta has invested billions of dollars into infrastructure that supports our growing region. There have been numerous upgrades and expansions to our drinking water and wastewater systems from when they were originally constructed. The Department of Watershed Management is currently midway into the \$4 billion Clean Water Atlanta Program, a complete overhaul of the City's water and sewer infrastructure. There is much work to be continued to improve and repair systems.

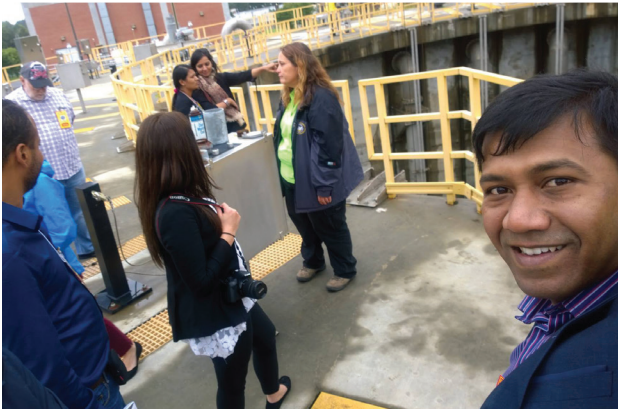
The Commissioner ensures compliance with federal, state and local regulations and promotes sustainable water management practices to support the environmental, public health and economic objectives of the City of Atlanta.

The City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management serves over 1.2 million customers daily. The Commissioner of Watershed Management oversees and manages the city's watershed resources, including water supply, stormwater management and wastewater treatment. The ideal candidate will have extensive experience in environmental management, water resource engineering and public policy. As the City of Atlanta grows, the ideal candidate is a future-forward strategic builder and innovator. The next Commissioner must have deep experience and success managing a complex and dynamic enterprise. A skilled leader, the next Commissioner must be a transformative leader who thrives



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managing complex systems and implementing innovative plans for solutions-focused goals.

The core services of the Department and eight strategic priorities include:

- Service Delivery
- Financial Resiliency
- Infrastructure Reliability
- Compliance
- Workforce Development
- Smart Utility
- Operational Efficiency
- Safety & Security

The Mandate

The Commissioner of Watershed Management will be an experienced, adaptive, broad-gauge leader with a passion for the environment and public health. This position will report to

the City of Atlanta, Chief Operating Officer.

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A problem-solver, the next Commissioner will be a valued strategist and thought partner for Mayor Andre Dickens, the Chief Operating Officer and the Atlanta City Council. The

Commissioner will manage six Department of Watershed Management Deputy Commissioners, provide oversight to two drinking water plants and storage facilities, three wastewater treatment plants, seven combined sewer overflow treatment facilities and 16 sewage pump stations, motivate and coach direct reports and more than 1600 FTEs, negotiate and manage vendor and contractor

relationships and ensure the highest customer service to more than 170,000 customer accounts.

This leader directs, manages and otherwise oversees the operations of the City of Atlanta's watershed management functions as generally required by the City of Atlanta Code of Ordinances. Responsibilities include the development and administration of the operations and maintenance budget as well as the development and administration of the capital improvement program and associated budget inclusive of compliance-driven projects. The Commissioner will formulate and advocate for policies and programs that promote water conservation, flood risk management and environmental protection.

The Commissioner is responsible for the development of policies, procedures and programs necessary to conduct an effective oversight function and response to citizen service requests and other concerns within established service levels. The Commissioner provides direction to direct reports and executive-level staff that are engaged in multiple activities related to watershed management functions including department administrative and operational divisions oversight, talent management and employee relations, customer care and billing services, financial administration, watershed protection and compliance, engineering and construction management services, linear infrastructure operations, water treatment and reclamation and Consent Decree Program management.

The Department of Watershed Management Programs are managed by the Commissioner and will provide oversight to:

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) - The Department's five-year CIP organizes needs for sustaining, restoring and modernizing the facilities and infrastructure that support Atlanta's



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water and wastewater systems. The projects identified in the \$1.26 billion CIP are prioritized based on the most critical infrastructure needs and the program provides a framework for the comprehensive delivery of schedules for design and implementation.

The Municipal Option Sales Tax (MOST)

Program – a City of Atlanta voter-approved initiative, provides funding for repair and rehabilitation work on stormwater projects. This program helps to ensure the reliability of the City’s water and sewer infrastructure. Up to 10 percent, or approximately \$12.5 million, of MOST revenue will fund stormwater projects annually, allowing for improved water quality, better flood management, the creation of public amenities and compliance with clean water laws.

The Clean Water Program – Clean Water Atlanta is a comprehensive, multi-program initiative to improve water quality in Atlanta through capital construction programs and enhanced operation of the City’s drinking and wastewater systems. The city adopted an aggressive 10-year capital improvement program in 1993, spending more than \$1 billion on wastewater and sewer improvements to the drinking water system.

Clean Water Atlanta expands this program to include all projects required to comply with two Federal Consent Decrees and a State Consent Order, to improve water quality throughout Metro Atlanta, secure drinking water facilities by National Homeland Security guidelines and provide holistic management of the City’s resource operation.

Through the programs associated with Clean Water Atlanta, the City of Atlanta will establish, operate and maintain state-of-the-art water resource and infrastructure systems. Clean Water Atlanta will also enable the city to meet water quality requirements in the near and distant future.

The Water Supply Program – The Water Supply Program will increase Atlanta’s reserve water supply from three days to potentially up to 90 days. The \$320 million investment includes the construction of a five-mile tunnel connecting the Chattahoochee River, the Hemphill Water Treatment Plant and the former Bellwood Quarry, which will be transformed into a 2.4-billion-gallon water reservoir.

The Commissioner will be key in coordinating with other city departments and external stakeholders to address water-related challenges and promote environmental resilience. Strong leadership, communication and collaboration skills are essential for success in this role.

Key Responsibilities

Executive Leadership and Management

- Lead and oversee the Department of Watershed Management, including the development, implementation and monitoring of all departmental policies, procedures and programs.
- Provide strategic direction and vision for water resource management initiatives aligned with the city’s long-term goals.
- Oversee the day-to-day operations to deliver the core mission of the department: drinking water treatment and distribution, wastewater collection and reclamation and watershed protection.
- Develop and implement crisis communication plans to address emergencies related to water quality, flooding, or other watershed management issues.
- Professional certifications related to water management or environmental protection (e.g., Certified Floodplain Manager, Professional Engineer) are preferred, not required.

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Responsibilities of the Commissioner include ensuring compliance with all relevant federal, state and local regulations, including the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Strategic Planning

- Develop and implement long-term water supply and infrastructure strategies.
- Ensure the integration of sustainability and resilience principles into water management practices.
- Manage all existing and anticipated regulatory requirements.
- Develop and administer operational expansion and improvement plans.
- Manage department safety and risk.

Budget and Financial Oversight

- Oversee the development and management of the department's budget, ensuring fiscal responsibility and efficient allocation of resources.
- Ensure the financial viability of departmental projects and programs through sound economic planning and the pursuit of funding opportunities.
- Develop and manage the annual operating budget. Reviews and/or approves expenditures and performs other duties as necessary to prevent the over-expenditure of budgetary allocations.

Regulatory Compliance

- Meet requirements of all Consent Decrees.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant federal, state and local regulations, including the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act.
- Interface with regulatory agencies, community stakeholders and other external entities to maintain and improve water quality standards.

- Represent the City of Atlanta on various committees, boards, task forces on watershed management issues, including, the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District activities including Board and Executive Committee meetings.
- Serve as a member of the technical committee for the Atlanta-Fulton County Water Resources Commission (AFCWRC) for oversight of the North Area Water Treatment Facility; provide technical and policy support to the City of Atlanta's members of the AFCWRC board.
- Review and certify compliance documents and reports required for all operating permits and compliance programs, including monthly operating reports, discharge monitoring reports, raw water withdrawal reports and biological monitoring reports.
- Reviews reports concerning efficiency, system maintenance and water quality.

Operational Oversight

- Oversee the operation and maintenance of water treatment, distribution and wastewater facilities.
- Oversee the planning, execution and evaluation of major watershed and stormwater projects, including infrastructure improvements and maintenance.
- Manage emergency response and recovery efforts related to water services.
- Create and implement an on-going communications plan with consumers.
- Effectively manage receivable accounts and implement innovative programs to ensure account collection.

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Stakeholder engagement responsibilities include representing the Department before the City Council as required including the City Utilities and Finance Executive Committees; and assigning designees as appropriate.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Act as the primary spokesperson for the Department of Watershed Management.
- Foster relationships with key stakeholders, including government agencies, community organizations, businesses and residents.
- Confer with citizens, civic organizations and others necessary to provide information or respond to complaints/concerns.
- Represent the Department before the City Council as required including the City Utilities and Finance Executive Committees; assigns designees as appropriate.
- Lead public education campaigns and community outreach programs to promote water conservation, environmental stewardship and responsible watershed practices.

Performance Metrics and Reporting

- Establish performance standards, conduct evaluations and implement professional development programs to enhance staff capabilities and productivity.
- Prepare and present reports on the status and progress of watershed management initiatives to the Mayor, City Council and other stakeholders.
- Leverage data and analytics to monitor water quality, assess program performance and inform decision-making processes.

Human Resources Management

- Lead, mentor and support departmental staff, fostering a culture of excellence and continuous improvement.
- Ensure the department's workforce is well-trained, diverse and equipped to meet the challenges of modern water management.

- Be a visible leader visiting worksites to acknowledge and affirm the team.
- Oversee the recruitment and hiring processes to ensure that the department attracts and retains top talent.
- The Commissioner of Watershed Management will be an experienced leader of vision, strategy and operations. Technical expertise is welcome; however, the Commissioner must be a proven leader with business acumen offering a combination of strategic, technical and operational abilities. The Commissioner will ensure the sustainability, safety and effectiveness of water resources management for the City of Atlanta and its customers.
- The Commissioner will be an engaging and trusted leader committed to collaboration, ethics, equity and inclusion. A superior communicator, the Commissioner will establish and nurture relationships with the community, stakeholders, customers and neighboring municipalities.
- The city seeks a transformative leader who will bring an innovative lens to this role. The Commissioner will evolve the department's approach to operations and technology to meet emerging needs. The Commissioner will offer transparency and responsible stewardship of the department's resources.

Personal Characteristics

- The ideal candidate is a compelling leader who thrives innovating and improving systems.
- An authentic leadership style that inspires and welcomes people and ideas.
- Superior listening, communication and relationship building skills.



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The Dickens Administration is deeply committed to making talent and resource investments in the Department of Watershed Management, the largest of the departments within the City of Atlanta government.

- A calm engaging demeanor.
- A visible leader who will visit Watershed Management facilities to motivate and empower teams.
- A proactive, high-energy and optimistic leader.
- A balance of confidence and humility.
- A leader who builds consensus and has the courage to make tough decisions.
- Ability to thrive amid complexity, ambiguity and change.
- Ability to lead and inspire a diverse team, manage complex projects and drive organizational change.
- Strong analytical and problem-solving abilities.
- Able to interpret complex data and make informed decisions.
- Exceptional verbal and written communication skills, with the ability to effectively convey information to diverse audiences and build consensus.
- Strong interpersonal skills with the ability to collaborate with various stakeholders and navigate political and organizational dynamics.
- Advanced knowledge of water management principles, environmental regulations and related technologies.

The Organization

Under the leadership of Andre Dickens, the 61st Mayor of Atlanta, the administration is focused on bringing opportunity and equity to the city. Mayor Dickens' agenda is rooted in **Moving Atlanta Forward**, through improving public safety, increasing opportunities for the city's young people, empowering neighborhoods and investing

in housing and combatting homelessness, all while fostering a culture of integrity in the city. As he shared in his first State of the City address, his vision for Atlanta is:

One city with one bright future. A city of safe, healthy, connected neighborhoods with an expansive culture of equity, empowering upward mobility and full participation for all residents, embracing youth development and an innovative, dependable government moving Atlanta forward, together.

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The Relationships

Reports to:	City of Atlanta, Chief Operating Officer
Direct Reports:	Six Deputy Commissioners
Stakeholders:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Atlanta City Council,Watershed customers - municipalities, residential, and businessRegulatory agencies

The Location

This position will be in Atlanta Georgia. The birthplace of the Civil Rights Movement and the home of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Atlanta is home to major corporations and premier tourist attractions such as the Georgia Aquarium, the world's largest aquarium, the World of Coca-Cola and CNN.



For potential consideration or to suggest a prospect, please email relevant materials to ATLDWM@BoardWalkConsulting.com or call **Cynthia Moreland, Sam Pettway, or Diane Westmore** at 404-BoardWalk (404-262-7392).

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