

As noted in the introduction, the goal of the Office of Sustainability is to promote sustainability in Montgomery County in collaboration with residents, businesses, and community-based organizations. As discussed in Section 2, the Office manages specific programs related to energy efficiency and renewable energy, green business development, and trees. Through its education and outreach efforts, it supports and promotes these programs, as well as a wide variety of other activities occurring throughout the community.

The Office's efforts would hardly be noticed without the dedicated efforts of a significant number of individuals and organizations that contribute to making Montgomery County a more sustainable community. Some of these efforts are in partnership with the Office, some build on the Office's work, but many are driven by a shared belief that reducing GHG emissions and energy use, preserving and planting trees, adopting more sustainable business practices, or engaging in a myriad of other sustainable activities makes good sense. This section highlights just a few of the individuals, businesses, and organizations we are proud to call partners in sustainability.



Energy efficient HVAC and lighting helped contribute to extendYoga's Montgomery County Green Business certification. Image credit: extendYoga

For Rockville Yoga Studio, Mindfulness Means Green

To the uninitiated, yoga may seem like little more than a group of flexible people bending their limbs in time to dreamy music.

But for the devoted, yoga is a full-fledged lifestyle. Fitness is a big part of the equation, but so is a concept called mindfulness. According to practitioners, mindfulness can help people become more environmentally conscious.

“Mindfulness to me doesn’t mean sitting in a field in silence,” says Arlet Koseian-Beckham, owner of extendYoga in Rockville. “It’s every part of my life, and more awareness of daily things. It’s synonymous with being aware of my surroundings, actions and decisions.”

It seems extendYoga can make a strong Exhibit A: extendYoga was certified by the Montgomery County Green Business Certification Program, and it motivates Arlet to operate her business in a way that attempts to influence all those who walk through the doors.

At the top of extendYoga’s sustainability portfolio is wind power, which provides 100% of the studio’s electricity. Other green measures at extendYoga include:

- Membership in Trees For the Future, a Montgomery County nonprofit that, in the case of extendYoga, plants one tree for every full-price class package purchased;
- Participating in the Montgomery County Adopt-A-Road program;
- Energy-efficient HVAC systems and LED lighting in 90 percent of the studio;
- Using email receipts instead of ink and paper;
- Refilling ink cartridges instead of buying new ones; and
- Avoiding “vampire energy” use by unplugging electronics after closing.

Arlet doesn’t aggressively market her green measures, but anyone who enters the studio would be hard-pressed not to be aware of her commitment. As mindfulness of the environment deepens, so, too, does appreciation for good practices like those at extendYoga.

“As I’ve learned more and more about the commitment Arlet has to minimizing negative impact, and really giving back as much as possible, it makes it much easier to make the decision to support the studio,” extendYoga student Gina Moskowitz observes.



extendYoga teachers and students participated at Metro DC Yoga Week’s Yoga on the National Mall event. Image credit: extendYoga



Silver Spring resident David MacDougall inspects his backyard beehive.

My Green Montgomery Shares Your Stories

There is no one path to living a sustainable lifestyle. Someone living in an apartment in downtown Silver Spring, or a house in North Bethesda or a farm near Poolesville, can be a “green” champion. It is about considering the impact of your choices based on your lifestyle, and making a daily conscious effort to factor the environment into decisions. My Green Montgomery celebrates this and the diversity of the County by serving as a storyboard for how everyone can go green.

Here are some examples of how residents are blazing their own “green” trail:

Beekeeping in Silver Spring

David MacDougall of Silver Spring might not consider himself an environmentalist, but if you could ask his 70,000 bees, they might say different. Since bees are responsible for pollinating one-third of everything we eat, but are threatened by a variety of factors, it would be hard to disagree. David is a new beekeeper – and has been raising a hive in his yard for the past year. He took a class with the Montgomery County Beekeepers Association where he learned proper handling techniques and needed equipment. The bees pollinate nearby flowers and gardens and provide more honey than he knows what to do with. “I’ve been talking about this for a

long time. I just told the neighbors about it and they were pretty open to it...Now everyone comes to me with bee questions. It's fun. I'm their bee guy." We're sure the bees and nearby gardeners appreciate it too!

Lighting in Laytonsville

Changing out lights may not be the flashiest choice for the green-minded homeowner, but the energy savings can be very glamorous indeed. Just ask Sean Boyle of Laytonsville who wanted a more energy-efficient home but was not a good candidate for solar. Thanks to the Pepco Lighting Program, Sean paid approximately \$350 to replace roughly 90 percent of his home's lighting needs. In May when he was interviewed, he estimated his energy use was down 16.5 percent in the nine months since he made the switch, which translates to a savings of about \$30 on each monthly bill.



The Boyle family enjoys new energy efficient lighting in their Laytonsville kitchen. Image credit: Sean Boyle

A Day Without Waste in Wheaton

Ever try going a day without waste? No? Well, if you want to know how tough it is, ask the folks at Roundpeg Benefit LLC. The staff of this small business decided to take the Day Without Waste challenge and keep track of what they reused, recycled and threw away. According to Alison Klein, a Roundpeg employee, they realized that "sustainable behaviors often require more time, energy, thought, preparation and money." But even a moderate effort can have an impact. After taking the challenge, Alison says she is sticking to real silverware and buying reusable snack bags so she can say no to food packaging waste.

To read the full stories about these "green" champions and others who are making a difference in Montgomery County, visit mygreenmontgomery.org. You can also share your story and add to the growing network.



The Aquilino Cancer Center (ACC) achieved Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) Gold and is the only LEED certified cancer center in Maryland. Image credit: Adventist HealthCare

Benchmarked: Case Studies in Leadership

The County's Benchmarking Law does not go into effect for buildings with more than 250,000 square feet until June 2016. But that didn't stop businesses from taking the lead and benchmarking their buildings early. As a thank you for being "Early Birds", those firms were highlighted on the My Green Montgomery website as part of the Benchmarked series.

Adventist HealthCare, Inc. is an "Early Bird" with four buildings currently being benchmarked. Here is an excerpt from their Benchmarked series written by Adventist staff:

Through benchmarking, we have an improved way to see and understand trending performance, as well as understand changes in the space use and building characteristics over time. The ultimate goal is to utilize the data within Portfolio Manager to drive strategic decision making as it relates to operations, physical plant performance, and long term strategic planning.

For example, by benchmarking the power plant's performance, we were able to justify an efficiency upgrade project on chillers that ended up saving 800,000 kWh and \$100,000 per year, while improving comfort and climate control.

Adventist HealthCare is particularly proud of Adventist HealthCare's Physical Health & Rehabilitation facility as being a model within our system for improvement overall. The dedicated employees in this facility made a sincere commitment to the implementation of Efficiency Conservation Measures (ECMs) and strategic management of the facility.

The hospital completed five projects targeting different comprehensive goals. Adventist HealthCare made an initial investment of \$137,050 to fund the improvements. As the annual savings generated from the project are approximately \$52,269, payback should be completed in 2.4 years. The result is an optimized healthcare experience for patients and a healthier work place environment for Adventist HealthCare staff.



The Physical Health and Rehabilitation (PH&R) facility has performed well over the last year and has a current ENERGY STAR score of 73. Image credit: Adventist HealthCare



Adat Shalom's new conservation landscape not only beautifies their campus, its native plants also serve as important habitat for pollinators.

Congregations and Conservation: Bethesda Synagogue Tells Runoff to Hit the Road

Adat Shalom is ahead of the curve in building a green congregation. They have installed solar panels on their roof and grow vegetables on their grounds, among other green features.

Most recently, those upgrades have included about 2,800 feet of new conservation landscaping.

These new areas are serving as natural filters for runoff from nearby lawns and roads, and were made possible by support from two places: the congregation's leaders and the Montgomery County RainScapes program.

According to Shelley Rudick, a congregation leader at Adat Shalom and one of the members who helped plan for and develop the landscapes, getting the buy-in was easier than you might think.

"It's very important to bring clergy and lay leaders on board from the beginning," Shelley advised. "The clergy sets the tone, and if they're on board, it makes it much easier."

“We have an area where water pools. It was really dirty and toxic water, a lot of runoff from the road,” said Shelley, who is also a master gardener. “It had oil, gas, lawn chemicals and other things in it, and regular turf was not a good filter...Since putting in the conservation landscaping, the absorption of those chemicals has gone up exponentially.”

On the temple grounds, stormwater converges in a basin area. Even though there is a drainpipe at the center of the basin, water still fills the area during a major storm.

“We could not have done this without RainScapes,” Shelley said, adding that Adat Shalom has received a total of \$10,000 in rebates from the program for its projects. “The money was critical for the projects, but they also provided enormous technical support.”



Before (left) and after (right) photos of the conservation landscape project on the Adat Shalom property.



Wheaton's Hollywood East Café worked with Pepco to take advantage of energy incentives for their business.

For One Wheaton Restaurant, Incentives Made Efficiency a Reality

If the idea of an energy utility helping people *save energy* sounds crazy to you, then you need to talk to Janet Yu.

Janet owns Hollywood East Café in Wheaton, and her business has been transformed into a model of sustainability thanks to programs and rebates offered through the EmPower program by her utility, Pepco.

“I wanted to use as many energy-efficient things as possible,” Janet explains. “In my old place, the utility bills and heating and air conditioning costs were very high...[I wanted] to do this for the next generation, to give them a healthier life and a healthier world.”

According to EPA statistics, restaurants can use up to 2.5 times more energy per square foot than other commercial buildings.

So, several years ago, when moving from her old location to Westfield Wheaton shopping mall, Janet decided the time was right for some changes. She started with small things: LED lights on dimmable switches, low-flush toilets and hand dryers instead of paper towels.

But addressing the biggest resource users—her appliances—was beyond her financial reach. Until, that is, Janet learned about Pepco’s Small Business Program. Pepco provided a free energy assessment and financial incentives, which allowed Janet to switch all eight of her refrigerators with new Energy Star models. The program covered a significant portion of the cost of her refrigerators.

“Energy costs go up, but [my bill] stayed pretty much the same while those of others are rising,” Janet said. “And there’s [lower maintenance costs] because it’s newer equipment.” With lower than anticipated energy and water costs, Hollywood East customers can feel good about where they eat, so it’s not surprising that Janet sums up her experience, “I’m very happy with it.”



Hollywood East Café is located in the Westfield Wheaton shopping center. Like Hollywood East Café, Westfield Wheaton also took advantage of energy incentives to make lighting upgrades throughout parking areas, saving them \$5,000 per week in energy costs.



Rockville Town Square's ice rink is now more energy efficient and eco-friendly.

Skating on Green Ice: Eco-friendly Ice Rinks

Those who design, build and maintain ice rinks make a conscious effort to make their ice white and keep it that way. It's more attractive and, because it reflects more sunlight, stays colder longer. But how can you achieve whiteness in the ice in a more environmentally sensitive way?

That was the challenge for Tri-State Ice Management which manages the public ice rink at Rockville Town Square. Tri-State did some research, developed a few prototypes, and eventually found their answer.

The solution: Add a special paper to its ice that has been bonded to thin layers of aluminum foil and pressed into sheets. The company calls it low-e ice foil, and it's more sustainable because it is easy to collect after the ice has melted, and is actually more reflective than the commonly used alternative, calcium carbonate. Low-e ice foil creates cooler ice and saves energy.

It's also very easy to recycle. More and more products are packaged in aluminized paper or plastic similar to low-e ice foil, which means that technologies for recycling these materials also are growing. This means the options for recycling low-e ice foil are readily available.

Low-e ice foil is created using a new process, and one that's exclusive to Tri-State. In fact, the company is in the process of patenting this green solution.

But Tri-State didn't stop there. They also wanted to make the Rockville ice rink more energy efficient. So they installed a newer, smarter chiller system (to keep the ice cold) that uses up to 80% less energy. That could mean financial savings up to \$18,000 over a five-month cold-weather season – that's a lot of skates. And it means greener fun for everyone hitting the rink.



Ice foil allows rink operators to keep the ice white, while also keeping it cooler and saving energy.



Joyce Breiner and David Yaney pose with their son next to their electric vehicles. Image credit: Joyce Breiner and David Yaney

Poolesville Home Goes Solar

There's a time and a place for everything. If you listen to Joyce Breiner and David Yaney, the time for solar is now.

"People think it's a lot farther into the future than it is," Joyce said. "But it's not. It's here today."

It's not hard to detect the enthusiasm this married couple has for the subject. Just ask for a tour of their Poolesville home or a test-drive of one of their electric cars.

"We wanted to do the right thing and wanted it to make basic financial sense," David said. "We wanted to do something where we could say we weren't just standing around talking about the problem."

About three years ago, Joyce and David, a former air traffic controller and an electrical engineer, respectively, laid down a little challenge for themselves: try to live a "net-zero" lifestyle, in which they used no fossil fuels in their day-to-day lives.

Almost 70 solar panels and two electric cars later, they're just about there. Although they still use natural gas for heat and some gasoline for the cars, Joyce and David say they now actually produce more power than they use.

The savings are substantial. Joyce and David—who leased 52 panels in 2012 for an up-front cost of about \$16,500 and purchased outright 17 additional panels last fall for about \$12,000 after a \$5,000 federal tax credit—expect to realize a full return on their investment in as little as five years, when factoring in gasoline savings. When the experiment began, their monthly electric bill was about \$150, Breiner estimates. Today, it is \$5.36, thanks to a few administrative costs.

“No one thinks traditional energy costs are going to stay the same or go down over the long term,” Joyce said. “When you invest in something, you want to say ‘I believe in this.’ That’s what makes it worth an investment.”



Breiner and Yaney's solar panels are hooked up to a central metering hub on the side of their house. Image credit: Joyce Breiner and David Yaney



Sweetgum leaves turn a variety of beautiful colors in the fall.

Residents Benefit from Free Shade Trees

Shade trees conjure up some old-fashioned imagery: lemonade, hammocks, old rope swings. But these icons of timelessness have some very modern uses. A new program from the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is planting large shade trees on eligible county properties, and residents are lining up to take advantage.

A substantial portion of the funding for the program comes from developers and builders in the County as a result of the Tree Canopy Law. The law requires the planting of trees during certain development activities, or the payment into a fund to support County tree planting.

When one of the trees in his backyard began to die, Bob Metzler was bummed.

“I had a nice tree, and it just kind of died on me,” the Bethesda resident recalled. “It was diseased, so I had to cut it down.”

He wanted a new tree, but costs and logistics were daunting. That is, until a neighborhood listserv clued him in to Tree Montgomery, a new DEP program that provides shade tree species to qualifying county residents for free.

“It made my answer easy. I could just apply and get a tree,” Bob says. “It was very easy to do. We started corresponding by email and they came out for one visit.”

According to Laura Miller, DEP’s Forest Conservation Coordinator and manager of Tree Montgomery, eligible properties may receive one or more young trees and the County will maintain them for two years—that’s a value of over \$500 for each tree. Although the new trees are only 10- to 12-feet tall when planted, in time they will grow to more than 50 feet tall.

“Once these trees mature, homeowners’ energy bills will be lower and their property values will increase,” Laura notes.

Large shade-producing trees like oaks can reduce energy costs by cooling roofs and walls of homes and lowering air temperatures around air conditioners. AC units don’t need to run as often when homes and air are cooler because of the shade.

“It should reduce the amount we have to pump out in air conditioning costs,” Bob says. “We have a sunny backyard, and shade from trees is one way of reducing consumption.”

Along with all their concrete benefits like increased property values, air quality, and stormwater management, shade trees also can increase a personal sense of well-being. For Bethesda resident Lynda Gattozzi, this was more important than any tangible return.

“I lost three mature trees, and I was very sad about it,” Lynda said. “I heard about [Tree Montgomery] and I immediately signed up. We wanted to have them just for privacy.” As of last fall, Lynda is the proud owner of a new red maple and willow oak.

That, in turn, may help explain Tree Montgomery’s runaway popularity. Since it planted its first tree in spring 2015, Program Manager Evan Keto says the program is responsible for planting over 500 shade trees. And he’s looking forward to a busy year.

“It was very efficient. Everything ran on schedule,” said Lynda. “I was so impressed with how the process ran.”



Bob Metzler stands with his new tree from Tree Montgomery. Image credit: Bob Metzler



A Bikeshare station in downtown Rockville. Image credit: MCDOT

Bikeshare Rolls into Montgomery County

Have you seen those bright red bikes tooling around downtown D.C.? Maybe you've noticed them more recently in some of the urban centers of Montgomery County and wondered how that works? Well, you too, can go green and get rolling!

Montgomery County has 52 bikeshare stations and growing. They're located throughout many of our urban centers and growth areas, including downtown Silver Spring, Takoma Park, Friendship Heights, Bethesda, Rockville and the Shady Grove/Life Sciences Center area.

Capital Bikeshare, or "CaBi," is a short term bike rental system. You can join online at www.capitalbikeshare.com for just \$85 for an entire year -- or you can just try it out by swiping your credit card at one of the stations to become a member-for-a-day for \$8. The idea is to encourage use of these bikes for short, point-to-point trips. The website has a map of all the stations in the entire region -- and there's a cool mobile app called "Spotcycle" to help you find the closest bikeshare station when you're out and about.

More Montgomery County residents than ever are using Capital Bikeshare to get around. In 2015 a total of over 2,000 members from Montgomery County used CaBi to take nearly 3,000

trips. They traveled over 5,400 miles, saving lots of gas, time and emissions. The County Department of Transportation is responding by creating more bike lanes and trails, including 250 miles of off-road facilities– and even the first two-way separated bike facility along Woodglen Road in White Flint.

When you sign up for a membership online you can buy a brand new CaBi bike helmet for just \$16, shipped to your door. And if you or someone you know can't afford to join let us know – MCDOT has a special program called MCLIB to help qualified low-income residents and employees use Capital Bikeshare for free!

Contact Commuter Services at mcdot.commuterservices@montgomerycountymd.gov for more information.



A Bikeshare station in downtown Bethesda. Image credit: MCDOT



One of the County's new electric vehicle charging stations. Image credit: MCDOT

Charging the Electric Car Market

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is ensuring that the County's transportation infrastructure is ready to accommodate cleaner, greener, electric vehicles (EV) by installing charging stations in County parking garages. Electric vehicles are not only energy efficient, they also significantly reduce air pollution compared to conventional gasoline or diesel powered ones.

An issue with many EV vehicles currently on the market is their somewhat limited range. By providing charging stations in public facilities, MCDOT hopes to expand options for using EV cars.

MCDOT is installing EV charging stations in 12 County parking garages and lots, capable of charging 26 vehicles. As usage increases, the department will expand the EV program to a total of 24 facilities with the capacity to charge more than 50 vehicles.

"I believe the expanded use of technology is essential to helping us realize a better future, said MCDOT Acting Director Al Roshdieh. "Our infrastructure must be ready to accommodate the use of these cleaner, smarter vehicles. MCDOT is meeting the demand for EV charging stations and will expand their number as electric vehicles become more widely used."

Electric vehicle charging stations in the County are part of the nationwide ChargePoint network of searchable charging stations. To use one of these stations, drivers pay \$0.13 per kilowatt hour to charge their vehicles in addition to the same parking fee as other vehicles in the garage.



A close up of one of the County's electric vehicle charging stations.



*Students at Ashburton Elementary School collecting data on recyclables and contaminants in recycling bins.
Image credit: MCPS*

The Students Become the Teachers

The mission of the SERT program is to provide support to MCPS schools to significantly reduce energy and natural resource consumption and increase recycling participation systemwide.

The SERT program instructs and guides staff and students at all MCPS schools as they work together to foster a culture of conservation. Classroom activities, toolkits, videos, and friendly contests with awards give students rich and rewarding experiences in environmental stewardship. By actively monitoring and promoting resource conservation at schools, individual SERT/green teams are creating awareness and affecting behavior change. The SERT teams at individual schools lead the way to a sustainable future by monitoring and promoting resource conservation, including energy, water, natural gas, recycling, materials, and goods.

Each year MCPS spends tens of millions of dollars to light and heat the schools and facilities, dispose solid waste, and to provide water and sewer services. MCPS has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by over 70,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO₂e) through a variety of programs and initiatives. This represents a 28 percent reduction in the MCPS carbon footprint since 2003. And that's not all. In 2014, MCPS schools and facilities avoided over \$2

million dollars in electricity costs, which in turn greatly reduced its carbon dioxide emissions, and recycled over 3,359 tons of paper, which avoided over 57,000 trees from being cut down.

Keeping it Green by Keeping it Clean – Ashburton Green Team Strives for Perfection

Environmental stewardship is not a new initiative at Ashburton Elementary School. Successfully certified as a Maryland Green School in 2010, and recertified in 2014, the Green Team at Ashburton Elementary School constantly finds different ways to improve their sustainability efforts year after year.

The 2015 focus for the Green Team was to reduce the contamination in their centralized recycling stations. To help build awareness of this problem, the Green Team collected weekly data on the number of recyclables and contaminates in the recycling bins throughout the school. Students analyze the data and post graphs by each bin to show how many recyclables and contaminates were found in specific bins. The Green Team found that some bins were more likely to be contaminated than others, so increased signage and awareness were brought to these locations. By posting the graphs weekly, each student and staff member at Ashburton Elementary School was given an update on their progress as a school, bin by bin.

Francis Scott Key Middle School SERT Team In Action!

The SERT team at Francis Scott Key Middle School (FSK MS) has focused its efforts on classroom energy conservation, recycling auditing and monitoring. The student members of the FSK MS SERT team monitor the school's energy use and recycling by circulating throughout the building once or twice a week, checking on unoccupied rooms to make sure their classroom lights are turned off and other electrical equipment is shut down. They also check for recycling contamination, and at the same time they collect the paper, bottles and cans from the classrooms for recycling. The SERT team students record their findings on a classroom audit sheet that is mounted by each classroom's door. By doing so, the students are giving direct observed feedback to the classroom students and staff when they find resource conservation measures that are and are not in place.



All smiles after completing the Green Cleaning training in September 2015. Supervisors and team leaders from Rockville and Germantown campus pose with Dr. Dewey Yeatts, Vice President for Facilities and Security (standing, center). Image credit: Montgomery College

Keeping It Clean (and Green) at Montgomery College

In the summer of 2015 Montgomery College's Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus was awarded Green Seal certification for cleaning services, becoming the first community college in the country to ever earn certification under the GS-42 standard for Commercial and Institutional Cleaning Services. Green Seal is the nation's premier environmental organization and the original "Green Seal of Approval."

"We are so proud to have received this certification because it aligns our cleaning operations with one of our College values, sustainability," said Terrence Evelyn, director of facilities on the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus.

Green Seal's certification process involves an in-depth review of the cleaning service's processes, procedures, and purchasing records. It also includes an on-site audit of facilities cleaned by the service. Periodic monitoring is required to maintain certification.

"We now recognize the significant role each custodian plays in protecting the health and well-being of the students, faculty and staff," Evelyn said. "There has been a positive change in the

overall motivation and outlook of each custodian as training, environmental and procedural changes are implemented."

Certification means that a cleaning service has been evaluated according to Green Seal's science-based standard, without bias or conflict of interest. Cleaning services qualifying for certification must meet environmental and health requirements for cleaning operations, cleaning techniques, waste reduction and environmentally responsible procurement, as well as requirements for communications and training.

The other two campuses – Germantown and Rockville -- are now implementing similar programs.



Staff from M-NCPPC and MCDOT transformed a parking space into an area for pedestrians and bicyclists during Park(ing) Day 2015. Image credit: M-NCPPC

Park(ing) for a Day!

The Montgomery Parks and Planning Departments, part of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), in collaboration with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) invited the public to celebrate PARK(ing) Day on September 18, 2015.

PARK(ing) Day, an annual event held on the third Friday in September; is celebrated by cities around the globe to address issues related to urban infrastructure, including the role of open space, transit and the environment.

To spark local discussion, staff from M-NCPPC and MCDOT transformed a parking space in downtown Silver Spring into a temporary pop-up park. This parklet, located at the corner of Fenton Street and Wayne Avenue, featured plants, seating and the bean bag toss game, Cornhole. Visitors stopped by and enjoyed the activity from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Next to the parklet, a bike corral showed how eight bicycles can fit into one parking space. Such bike corrals are especially useful in areas with narrow sidewalks or areas heavily trafficked by pedestrians, where it would be impractical or obstructive to install a sidewalk bike rack.

Although the parklet project was temporary, it encouraged people to get involved in the civic process to promote more urban open space, influence how such public space is created and improve the quality of urban areas.



A view of the bicycle parking inside the transformed parking space. Image credit: M-NCPPC

PARK(ING) DAY 2015

THANKS FOR VISITING!

The mission of PARK(ing) Day is to call attention to **the need for more urban open space**, to generate critical debate around how public space is created and allocated, and to improve the quality of urban human habitat... at least until the meter runs out!

#PARKSMATTER
#PARKINGDAY
#PARKINGDAY2015
#MONTGOMERYCOUNTYMD

For more information on urban parks, bicycle and pedestrian initiatives please visit:

<http://www.parkplanning.org>
<http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/transportation>
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-pedsafety>



This PARK(ing) Day site is brought to you by M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks, M-NCPPC Montgomery County Planning Department, and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation with assistance from the Silver Spring Urban District.



Bus Rapid Transit in Los Angeles, California. Image credit: MCDOT

Growing Transit in a Growing Community

Montgomery County is a vibrant, fast-growing area that is part of a highly congested region. Average commutes are over 35 minutes, and roadway congestion is predicted to increase 70% by 2040. Montgomery County will continue to grow, but mostly through redevelopment, so options for building new roads or expanding existing roads are limited. As a result, the County is striving to increase its transportation connections among communities, including frequent, reliable transit service that can move greater numbers of people to and from jobs, homes, shopping, and entertainment areas.

Montgomery County is studying the development of a Rapid Transit System (RTS), including Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), which would greatly increase high-quality transit service to the County's most densely developed areas, areas planned for redevelopment, and areas planned for new dense development. BRT offers a cost-effective and versatile way for communities to meet their transit needs. It uses well-planned bus routes and facilities that provide for high speed travel at a lower cost than other forms of transit. Some of its distinctive features are its high frequency all-day service, off-board fare collection, attractive stations, dedicated roadway, and real-time passenger information. BRT buses have features similar to light rail, including level floors, multiple wide doors for easy boarding and departures, and comfortable interiors that include space for wheelchairs and bicycle storage.

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation is working with the State of Maryland to study three corridors for possibly BRT implementation. This is a community process and the planning studies are anticipated to be completed in 2016. The following three corridors are being studied:

- MD 355 (Wisconsin Ave and Rockville Pike)
- US 29 (Colesville Rd and Columbia Pike)
- MD 586 (Veirs Mill Rd)

All of these studies are being led by the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), but are a collaborative effort between SHA, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation.



A Bus Rapid Transit Center in Las Vegas, Nevada. Image credit: MCDOT



Poolesville's solar panels save the town approximately \$30,000 per year. Image credit: Town of Poolesville

Did You Know We Have Certified “Green” Municipalities in Montgomery County?

Cities and towns across Maryland are working towards a more sustainable future, and nowhere is this more evident than in Montgomery County. The Sustainable Maryland program, an initiative of the Environmental Finance Center at the University of Maryland, certifies municipalities that complete a certain number and range of sustainability related actions and programs. Since the inception of the program in 2012, four County municipalities have become certified: Rockville, Gaithersburg, Takoma Park, and Poolesville.

The City of Rockville, first certified in 2012, has long been a home for “green” projects. The City has operated a community garden program at Woottons Mill for over 40 years, and has hosted a downtown Farmers Market for over 25 years. On the transportation front, the City boasts more than 34 miles of dedicated bicycle infrastructure, participates in Capital Bikeshare and was recently recognized as a Bronze-level *Bicycle Friendly Community* by the League of American Bicyclists.

The City of Gaithersburg's certification in 2013 was notable for its emphasis on green building requirements for new development. Certain commercial and high-rise buildings are required to

achieve certification from the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED Green Building System. The City has also conducted energy audits on its twelve municipal buildings, providing a road map for future energy-efficiency projects.

The City of Takoma Park, certified in 2014 and that year’s Sustainability Champion for most points on the program, has a national reputation with respect to its green credentials. In 2013, Takoma Park became the first city of its size to pass a law banning cosmetic use of certain pesticides on privately-owned properties. Its comprehensive stormwater management program demonstrates the City’s commitment to the health of the local Sligo Creek watershed, and a “Live Local-Shop Local-Give Local” campaign strengthens the City’s social networks and sense of place.

The Town of Poolesville’s 2015 certification highlighted its efforts to become more energy-efficient and energy-independent, with the installation of a 1.1 megawatt solar photovoltaic system at the town’s wastewater treatment plant, generating savings of approximately \$30,000/year. LED streetlights were also installed in two of the Town’s most prominent parks, providing better lighting and cost-savings.

“These Sustainable Maryland Certified awards are a testament to the passion and dedication of these Montgomery County municipalities’ volunteer residents, municipal staff and elected officials to go green, save tax dollars, and improve the quality of life in their communities” said Mike Hunninghake, Program Manager for Sustainable Maryland. For more information about the Sustainable Maryland program, go to www.sustainablemaryland.com.



Rockville Mayor Bridget Newton and Sustainability Coordinator Erica Shingara with their 2015 Sustainable Maryland award.



A proud group of Weed Warriors pose while working in the field. Image credit: Montgomery Parks

Weed Warriors to the Rescue

They're Weed Warriors, an apt identification for a dedicated group of Montgomery Parks' volunteers combating the spread of non-native invasive plants. During each growing season, and beyond you will find these warriors clipping, cutting, pulling and bagging Oriental Bittersweet, Japanese Knotweed and Mile-a-Minute or ground cover plants such as Garlic Mustard, Celandine or Asiatic Stiltgrass, amongst others. These plants steal nutrients and sunlight, killing native plants which provide more effective services to clean air and water, ecological function and wildlife benefits. Often these sites are restored with native grasses and plants, propagated by volunteers at Montgomery Parks' Pope Farm Nursery, to retard further threat of non-natives and to more quickly restore function.

To date, some 1,100 Weed Warrior volunteers have generated 76,600 hours (equivalent to 36 work years) in 40 parks to rid non-native invasive plants and providing space for native species to repopulate.

The Weed Warrior Program demonstrates the education, advocacy and breadth of action achieved of citizen science based programs, and the collaborative effects of utilizing a willing and able volunteer corps to accomplish important work program elements in a fiscally efficient manner.