



Climate Change

LINKAGE TO COUNTY RESULTS AREAS

- A Greener County
- A Growing Economy
- Thriving Youth and Families
- Effective, Sustainable Government

PROGRAM CONTACTS

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What's New for FY24:

The County's FY24 budget for climate initiatives provides new resources that supplement the climate resources provided in the FY23 budget. (To review the FY23 climate budget, visit: <https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/basisoperating/Common/Chapter.aspx?ID=CC>).

Accelerate Nature-based Carbon Sequestration

- DEP's Tree Montgomery program is expanding to plant additional shade trees and increase the County's tree canopy. The Tree Montgomery program provides free shade trees for planting on private properties across the County.
- DEP will add a new Program Manager position for Tree and Forest programs in FY24. This position will enhance the Tree Montgomery program, expand efforts in equity areas, and expend grant funds awarded to the County.
- DEP will receive funding to expand the RainScapes Rewards rebates to properties. RainScapes are green infrastructure techniques that help reduce stormwater runoff from individual properties and sequester carbon by improving soil health. Projects include rain gardens, conservation landscapes, green roofs, water harvesting, permeable pavement, and pavement removal. Demand for the program continues to exceed its budget, and the program provides MS4 (Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System) credits on privately-owned land.

Support Clean Energy Efforts

- DEP receives funding for the continued use of technical consultants to assist staff with developing and implementing a Community Choice Energy program for Montgomery County. A Community Choice Energy program would enable the County to become the electricity supplier to residential and small commercial electricity customers in the County, with a goal of providing electricity at a price that is competitive with the electricity offered through the three utilities serving the County and that has a higher percentage of the supply produced by renewable energy sources. The County is working with a variety of stakeholders through a Maryland Public Service Commission Work Group to develop regulations governing the program.

Enhance the County's Climate Governance Capacity

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- DEP is gaining two new Grants & Incentives Program Managers to identify programs and activities in need of grant funding, develop and submit grant proposals, execute grant-related documents and report on grants, as well as develop and monitor the distribution of County funds and incentives to residents and businesses associated with various climate programs. Recently adopted federal legislation, including the Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, promise to provide opportunities for a wide variety of funding opportunities from federal and state agencies. In addition, many climate programs under development or proposed for future implementation will involve the distribution of County funds and/or incentives to residents and businesses.

Support Zero Waste Efforts

- DEP is gaining two new Zero Waste Planner positions to establish a unit focused on Countywide zero waste efforts. Zero waste initiatives include waste reduction, reuse, and recycling efforts, adding to the kinds of materials that can be recycled, drafting legislation and regulations, conducting research and data analysis, and evaluating the effectiveness of the new efforts.

Climate Change Non-departmental Account (NDA)

- Funds in this NDA are used to implement the Climate Action Plan. In FY24, the Climate Change NDA will support studies and programmatic efforts related to clean energy, electric vehicle charging, zero emissions fleet transition, building codes, climate finance, residential home labeling, climate communications and engagement, and climate resilience. The NDA will also be used to support paid climate fellows and interns.

Ongoing Work of County Departments

Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF)

CUPF covers the personnel cost of an energy management position in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) to monitor community use of school buildings and control the HVAC settings in each school based on the weekly schedule. CUPF continuously fine tunes the MCPS' weekly energy management schedule to reduce unneeded energy use. CUPF makes every possible effort to consolidate community use into buildings by not placing groups in an empty building when a building nearby already has scheduled use.

Department of Correction and Rehabilitation (DOCR)

The Department's diversion community service work crews remove debris/waste, and work crews paint electric car ports at County facilities and use green chemicals to remove graffiti. The department has recently implemented a Food Waste Composting initiative within its Kitchen/Dietary Services.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

DEP provides leadership for the County's actions on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to a changing climate. DEP administers the County's Benchmarking Law, whereby commercial and multifamily building owners with properties greater than 25,000 square feet use a standard metric to measure energy usage, identifying energy savings opportunities. DEP manages a new zero-emissions vehicle outreach and engagement program to help residents and businesses electrify their ride and continues to provide residential energy programs to assist County residents with energy efficiency opportunities. DEP also administers the Montgomery Energy Connection, a merger-funded program whose goal is to be a trusted source of information about home energy efficiency and renewable energy options for residents.

DEP administers the Tree Montgomery program, a program that plants shade trees for property owners, free of charge. Additional programs for tree planting are implemented in partnership with MCDOT. DEP also administers the RainScapes program which provides rebates to properties to install green infrastructure.

DEP provides curbside collection services to all single-family residences for recyclables including cardboard and paper, and commingled material such as plastics, glass, and yard trim. These materials are then sorted and marketed to recycling processors or turned into compost material and sold to customers, keeping large volumes of material out of the waste stream.

DEP is supporting the development of a Flood Management program for the County, including development of comprehensive strategies for planning for, responding to, and communicating about flooding issues; and the identification of areas at high risk of flooding due to the built environment. Phase II of the plan is funded in the Council Approved FY23-28 Amended CIP.

Department of General Services (DGS)

DGS' Office of Energy and Sustainability ensures County operations are environmentally sensitive and integrates sustainability into County decision making. Over 7.6 megawatts (MW) of electricity are generated from solar panels on County facilities. A 6.0 MW installation is underway at the decommissioned Oaks Landfill and in FY23 DGS has completed Phase I of the Brookville Bus Depot electric bus charging station installation which will include a 2.0 MW solar installation and microgrid. DGS also leads the initiative to transition to a zero emissions fleet of County vehicles and buses.

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

The various public-facing HUBs within the County are building community resiliency. Through its focus on the social determinants of health, the DHHS Office of Community Affairs which include the three minority health programs and Community Action Agency are keenly aware of the impact of climate change on low-income communities and communities of color. Programs have incorporated climate action messages into their community engagement efforts and offer educational opportunities to staff on the intersections of climate and public health. A Climate Action Team within the Office of Community Affairs has developed a Climate and Health Lunch & Learn series training for staff and will continue to develop capacity building opportunities for department stakeholders.

The Latino Health Initiative (LHI) has conducted a series of Latino community conversations to assess the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of a sample of Latino community members regarding environment-related practices associated to consumer waste and recycling and will continue to incorporate climate into health promotion activities. LHI will develop a Climate and Health education workshop series in coordination with climate focused community partners.

The Community Action Agency's Community Advocacy Institute (CAI) has also been successful in recruiting graduates from the CAI to be trained as climate ambassadors.

HHS is committed to continue to thoughtfully and meaningfully design activities around education and outreach on climate action for both staff and communities.

Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA)

The Energy Efficiency program assists homeowners and low-income residents in reducing home energy use by providing energy inspections, air leak identification, insulation, and energy efficient lighting.

Office of Human Resources

The Office of Human Resources has rolled out the County's Telework Policy to encourage MCG staff to reduce vehicle miles traveled. The Office conducts virtual trainings related to climate change and works to build awareness among all County staff about climate change.

Department of Permitting Services (DPS)

Through the Sustainability, Energy, and Mechanical program reviews, DPS enforces the County's requirement for new construction, additions, and alterations to conform to the State-adopted International Energy Construction Code. New

commercial construction and additions of 5,000 square feet or greater must conform to the State-adopted International Green Construction Code.

Department of Transportation (MCDOT)

MCDOT continues to build an extensive network of bikeway facilities including protected bike lanes, particularly in areas associated with the Purple Line and Bethesda Metro Station projects, and those in BiPPA and master plan areas. Capital Bikeshare offers stations throughout the County, providing a low-carbon alternative for short trips. The shared E-bike and E-scooter pilot program provides additional low-carbon, low-cost options for residents, employees, and visitors for short trips and to connect with transit.

Ride On, the County's public bus system, provides an affordable alternative to driving. MCDOT is conducting a comprehensive study, "Ride On Reimagined," to guide the future direction of the County's transit system with a focus on three priority areas: Safety and Vision Zero, Environment and Climate Resiliency, and Economic Development and Equitable Access. The goal is to recommend system-wide changes to address the current and future needs of the community for both Ride On and Metrobus services.

Meanwhile, diesel buses in the Ride On fleet are being replaced with zero-emission buses according to an ongoing replacement schedule. MCDOT facilitates and encourages the use of public transportation with programs like FareShare, which works through employers to assist employees with their commuting costs, and the Commuter Choice Tax Credit available to businesses. These programs provide incentives for employers to buy-down the cost of transit and vanpooling for their employees while benefiting from tax credits. Express bus programs including FLASH on US 29 and Ride On extRa on MD 355 provide fast, reliable bus service along major County corridors.

Office of Agriculture (OAG)

OAG supports the farm community in its utilization of renewable energy through accessory solar and regenerative agricultural practices such as no till farming, crop rotation, and others. OAG promotes Best Management Practices (BMP) such as cover cropping to help sequester carbon. The Soil Conservation District works with local farmers in promoting conservation practices that help to reduce greenhouse gases such as conservation tillage. Conservation tillage reduces trips across fields by use of equipment that produces greenhouse gases. In addition, the OAG Soil Amendment program offers free deliveries of Leafgro to farmers to increase the organic material in the soil, retain moisture, and promote soil health. By supporting County table food and beverage producers and helping expand their markets, OAG is encouraging local purchasing of food and beverages, which reduces the amount of fossil fuel energy needed to transport these products. Finally, OAG encourages farmers to have nutrient management plans, which help make sure that farmers do not use more fossil fuel-derived fertilizers than necessary.

Office of the County Executive

The Climate Change Officer leads the County-wide implementation of the Climate Action Plan.

Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (OEMHS)

OEMHS is working closely with County departments to prepare for the current and future impacts climate change will have on weather-related disasters. OEMHS has a Climate Adaptation Program Manager who collaborates with DEP and other County agencies to pursue State and Federal grants to prepare for the effects of climate change. OEMHS works with County departments and community partners to identify areas at high risk for urban heat island effect and helps guide the County's mitigation and response efforts, including the development of resiliency hubs. The Office also works to educate the community about the impacts of climate change, such as flooding, and how to prepare and respond to it.

As climate change increases the intensity of rain events, OEMHS has a hydrologist position to help identify areas that will become prone to flooding and help the County prepare for, mitigate, and respond to the impacts. The office also identifies

critical infrastructure that may be vulnerable to climate change, such as dams, roads, and structures, and works with owners of the infrastructure to prepare for and mitigate those vulnerabilities. Early in 2023, OEMHS staff completed installation of 35 flood sensors at the most frequently flooded sites around the County to provide early warning about flooded roadways or infrastructure. OEMHS is updating the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan, which will incorporate how climate change affects the County's natural hazards and vulnerabilities.

Office of Procurement

The Office of Procurement works with other County departments to employ sustainable procurement practices and specifications to help reduce environmental impacts and total cost of ownership. Examples include: (1) language inciting meatless menu options as well as local produce sourcing in cafeteria solicitation, and (2) responsible disposal or donation of County surplus to maximize return and reduce waste for the County.

Public Libraries (MCPL)

MCPL partners with other County and community partners, including DEP, DHHS, and Pepco to place informational and resource tables at libraries to inform residents about access to energy assistance and energy conservation programs. MCPL also partners with DEP to make items such as compost bins, thermal cameras, reusable and recyclable bags available to residents. MCPL offers climate change educational programs and workshops for residents of all ages. For adults and seniors, these include workshops to help residents manage energy usage and explore energy efficient technology. Programs are planned for large audiences to disseminate the information in a wider manner as well as for small groups, where conversations about the personal impact on climate change and energy saving of individual residents can be explored. One example is a May 2023 program with Urban Gardener Karen Washington. For children, teens, and families, MCPL offers STEM educational programs about the environment and climate change. The 2023 Summer Reading Challenge includes a partnership with the Montgomery Parks Foundation that will provide funds to power local parks with solar energy. In addition, the Department refurbishes furniture when possible to prevent old furniture from winding up in the landfill.

Climate Change Efforts in the Council Approved FY24 Budget

The chart below details the budget numbers associated with the initiatives and programs discussed in this chapter. The Council Approved FY24 Operation Budget dedicates \$268.7 million to climate change efforts.

Department	Program	FY24 CC Approved				
		GF	CIP	Other Operating Funds	RideOn	Non-County
Office of Agriculture	Agricultural Business Development Specialist Position	\$128,029				
	Cover Crop Program			\$70,000		
	Soil Amendment Program	\$14,000				
	Subtotal Office of Agriculture	\$142,029		\$70,000		
	Total Office of Agriculture	\$212,029				
County Executive's Office	Climate Change Officer	\$30,043		\$201,062		
	Subtotal County Executive's Office	\$30,043		\$201,062		
	Total County Executive's Office	\$231,105				
Climate Change Planning NDA	Climate Action Plan Implementation	\$486,500				
	Total Climate Change Planning NDA	\$486,500				
Department of Environmental Protection	Increase Tree Canopy Conservation Appropriation -- New FY24	\$750,000				
	Community Choice Energy Consultant -- New FY24	\$250,000				
	Grants and Incentive Program Managers -- New FY24	\$174,924				
	Community Justice Academy	\$300,000				
	Efficiency and Climate Resiliency for Low- and Moderate-Income Housing	\$675,000				
	BEPS Program Operating Funding	\$700,000				
	High Road Economic Development Implementation	\$127,725				
	Project Equity Worker Coop Implementation	\$50,000				
	Sustainability Zoning and Code Review	\$150,000				
	The County's Benchmarking Law: DEP offers assistance to building owners with compliance	\$39,999				
	Decision Support Tool License	\$20,000				
	Electrification Incentive Program	\$1,000,000				
	Broadscale Climate - Alert Montgomery Communications Campaign	\$150,000				
	Agrivoltaic Tech Assistance	\$50,000				
	Tree Montgomery Program	\$1,199,408				
	Staff focused on climate efforts	\$2,990,006				
	Staff support for climate-focused programs	\$703,139				
County Recycling Programs				\$64,412,777		
Energy Connection					\$423,483	
	Subtotal Environmental Protection	\$9,330,201		\$64,412,777		\$423,483
	Total Environmental Protection	\$74,166,461				
Department of General Services	Office of Energy and Sustainability: Ensures County operations are environmentally sensitive and integrates sustainability into County decision making.	\$841,422	\$150,000			
	Brookville Bus Depot Microgrid	\$2,247,307				
	Green Fleet: DGS is pursuing an all-electric fleet of County vehicles and buses.			\$3,200,000		
	Increase the availability of electric vehicle charging stations at public parking facilities and other County locations.			\$277,000		
	Subtotal General Services	\$3,088,729	\$150,000	\$3,477,000		
	Total General Services	\$6,715,729				
Department of Housing and Community Affairs	Program Energy Efficiency Program: Assists homeowners and low-income residents in reducing home energy use by providing energy inspections, air leak identification, insulation, and energy efficient lighting. ¹					\$295,685
	Total Housing and Community Affairs					\$295,685
Department of Permitting Services	The Commercial Sustainability, Energy Section and Green Building Program Review: Enforces the County's requirement for new construction, additions, and alterations to conform to the International Energy Construction Code. New commercial construction and additions of 5,000 square feet or greater must conform to the International Green Construction Code.			\$1,187,496		
	Total Permitting Services			\$1,187,496		
Department of Transportation	Chesapeake Bay Trust Urban Street Trees Grant					\$148,233
	Ongoing Urban Forest Efforts	\$5,707,834	\$3,100,000			
	Capital Bikeshare, e-scooters, and e-bikes: Capital Bikeshare offers stations throughout the County, providing a low-carbon alternative for short trips. The E-bike and E-scooter Pilot Program are another option for residents and visitors.	\$1,650,604				
	Green Fleet: Electric bus replacements.		\$17,040,000			
	Commuter Services: Facilitate and encourage the use of public transportation through Transportation Demand Management and programs like FareShare, the Commuter Choice Tax Credit, and Get In.			\$5,097,025		
	RideOn Bus service, including express bus programs.				\$152,442,981	
	Subtotal Transportation	\$7,358,438	\$20,140,000	\$5,097,025	\$152,442,981	\$148,233
	Total Transportation	\$185,186,677				

Department	Program	FY24 CC Approved				
		GF	CIP	Other Operating Funds	RideOn	Non-County
OEMHS	Staff and programs on hazard mitigation and climate adaptation planning.	\$263,602				
	Total Emergency Management and Homeland Security	\$263,602				
Countywide	Subtotal Montgomery County	\$20,699,542	\$20,290,000	\$74,445,360	\$152,442,981	\$867,401
Total	Total Montgomery County (CIP and PSP)	\$268,745,284				

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