



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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Expanding Climate Investments

Since the release of the County's Climate Action Plan in 2021, the County has added \$168.8 million in investments in climate action programs and initiatives. The vast majority of these investments carry into this year's "base budget" and continue to fund key climate actions for this coming year. New climate investments this year total \$77.6 million, including a supplemental appropriation for electric buses. With new and continued investments combined, overall, the County Executive's Recommended FY25 Operation Budget dedicates \$365.0 million to climate change efforts.

What's New for FY25

The County's FY25 budget for climate initiatives provides new resources that supplement the climate resources provided in the FY24 budget. (To review the FY24 climate budget, visit: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OMB/Resources/Files/omb/pdfs/FY24/psp_pdf/75-FY2024-APPR_ClimateChange.pdf).

Support Clean Energy Efforts

- A new Solar Technical Program Manager position for the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will provide technical expertise related to the development of policies, programs, and outreach/engagement to residents and businesses related to solar energy installations. Increasing development of solar installations is a key element of the Climate Action Plan. This solar effort includes rooftop solar on residential and commercial properties, ground-mounted solar installations, community solar in various configurations, and utility scale solar.
- Funding to develop a Solar Strategic Plan will provide the consultant support DEP needs to research and prepare a roadmap for the County to follow. This plan will serve as the blueprint for the County's work to expand solar deployment to decarbonize the energy supply in support of meeting the County's climate change goals. This plan will serve as an actionable roadmap to overcome the barriers to equitably installing more solar in Montgomery County.

Support Greenhouse Gas Reduction from Buildings

- Funding for energy audits in under-resourced buildings subject to Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS) will enable DEP to advance equitable building decarbonization. Comprehensive energy audits examine the operating performance of individual building systems and evaluate options for increasing the efficiency of, or replacing, such systems. Under-resourced buildings (defined by the BEPS law as including affordable housing, non-profit organizations, and small businesses) generally lack the monitoring systems and building staff to develop a long-range plan that may be necessary to meet BEPS requirements. This funding will enable BEPS-covered buildings to identify opportunities that will increase building energy performance and prepare for system upgrades that may be necessary to comply with BEPS requirements.

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- Funding to expand DEP's "Energy Ambassadors" program will enable the County to capitalize on once-in-a-lifetime funding for climate and energy upgrades through the Federal Inflation Reduction Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. DEP will augment the successful Montgomery Energy Connection program with additional partner capacity. The department will support trusted messengers as "Energy Ambassadors" to broaden and deepen community outreach about Federal rebates and incentives. DEP will prioritize outreach to disadvantaged and overburdened communities.
 - Two new positions will allow the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) to address changes to the energy conservation code and implementation of the Climate Action Plan that require increased time for mechanical plan reviews and increased inspections. These positions will ensure timely review and inspection for new energy codes that reduce greenhouse gas emissions from new construction.

Support Climate Change Solutions in the Transportation Sector

- Operational funds for The Great Seneca Transit Network (GSTN) will provide frequent transit options, improving mobility and access to crucial jobs in the healthcare, biotech, and education sectors. GSTN will improve transit equity by connecting riders to jobs, healthcare providers, and medical facilities without auto use, advancing the reduction of reliance on cars in the County. Shifting more transit trips to mass transit is a key component of the Climate Action Plan.
- Increased funds to purchase additional zero emission County vehicles will allow the Department of General Services (DGS) to accelerate the County's elimination of fossil fuel vehicles in the County fleet.
- Funding will support technical assistance and incentives for public charging infrastructure on private property in locations that advance the County's electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure and equity goals. The funding will support electrical capacity and feasibility studies, charging equipment, electrical upgrades, and installation labor, as well as administrative costs for implementation contractors. This may additionally be used to leverage State or Federal investments in the County's charging infrastructure.
- To begin the transition of the Alcohol Beverages Services (ABS) delivery truck fleet to zero emissions, DGS will receive funds for a study to recommend mitigation strategies. The study will further conduct a route analysis to determine the correct size of the ABS fleet and identify the most efficient strategy to provide the existing service with the lowest overall cost of ownership to the County. The results will be used to model a zero-emission vehicle replacement plan and provide a template for an infrastructural plan to meet the ABS future electrification needs.

Accelerate Nature-based Carbon Sequestration

- DEP will gain one new position, Construction Representative II, to conduct inspections as part of the Tree Montgomery Program and to maintain credit for planting these trees under the County's stormwater management MS4 permit. The Tree Montgomery Program has planted over 11,000 trees to date.
- The Department of Transportation (DOT) is gaining funds to accelerate tree and stump removal and tree pruning, allowing new trees to be planted in their place.

Support Zero Waste Efforts

- DEP is gaining two new Zero Waste planning 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. The unit will also evaluate the effectiveness of the new efforts.
- DEP is also gaining funds to build the County's capacity for new zero waste efforts, including: closing the Resource Recovery Facility (RRF), residential food scraps collection, food scraps processing (aerobic or anaerobic digestion), Save-As-You-Throw pilot program, and new processing technologies at the Transfer Station.

Increase the County's Resilience to Weather Events

- To become more resilient to the effects of climate change and power County buildings through solar energy, the County is gaining new funds for the Resiliency Hub Project. This project includes Brookville Bus Depot, Public Safety Headquarters, Animal Shelter, Montgomery County Correctional Facility and the Equipment Maintenance and Transit Operations Center. This funding will avoid delays in construction, maintain service, and guarantee equipment will always be operational.

Accelerating Implementation of the Climate Action Plan

- The Climate Change Planning Non-Departmental Account (NDA) is gaining funds for increased stakeholder engagement and a vigorous public outreach campaign to help residents and businesses reduce their emissions and adapt to climate hazards. The Climate Change Planning NDA will also be used to accelerate departmental Climate Action Plan implementation, using external consultant support to assist with technical analysis of greenhouse gas reduction benefits and of heavy-duty fleet electrification, and with paid fellows and interns to support the County's climate and energy initiatives. Climate fellows and interns provide research, outreach, and communications support to multiple departments.

Ongoing Work of County Departments Funded through the Operating Budget

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. CUPF seeks continuous reduction in paper use by utilizing online forms and digital processes.

Department of Correction and Rehabilitation (DOCR)

DOCR recently installed several recycling stations inside the department's facilities. Informational signs are posted encouraging the participation of both inmates and staff members in the endeavor. The Montgomery County Correctional Facility (MCCF) hosts on its' grounds the largest solar panel installation in the County. The Pre-Release Center has completed numerous energy efficient upgrades to the 42-year-old building in efforts to reduce operational costs. Diversion community service work crews remove debris/waste, work crews have painted electric car ports at County facilities, and they have also used green chemicals to remove graffiti throughout the County.

Department of Environmental Protection

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 Montgomery Energy Connection, a Pepco-Exelon 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 Tree Montgomery, a program that plants shade trees for property owners, free of charge. Additional programs for tree planting are implemented in partnership with DOT. DEP also administers the RainScapes program which provides rebates to properties that 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 supports 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. In addition, the capital budget programs significant funding to address flooding throughout the County starting in FY26.

Department of General Services

DGS is the lead department in greening the County's buildings, fleets, and many of its operations. DGS initiatives include: generating solar, combined heat and power, and other low emissions energy on County facilities; reducing fuel consumption through green fleet operations; building high performance green buildings; continually improving energy efficiency of existing buildings; and clean energy purchasing. DGS leads the initiative to transition to a zero emissions fleet of County vehicles and buses and development of the charging infrastructure necessary to make this transition.

Office of Grants Management (OGM)

OGM supports DEP, DGS, DOT, other departments, and the overall administration in pursuing climate change related grant opportunities to achieve the County's climate change goals. OGM is coordinating the County's effort to secure once-in-generation federal climate funds available through the Federal Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, DHHS has built community resiliency via the establishment and support of public-facing HUBs within the County. Through focus on the social determinants of health impacts, the minority programs at DHHS are keenly aware of the impact of climate change on communities of color, and are committed to better incorporating climate and the environment into their work.

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. LHI will use the findings from these community conversations to develop program activities that address climate and the environment directly, including plans to convene county environmental stakeholders and decision-makers to discuss the processes, results, and findings of the community feedback collected and identify concrete action steps to better inform, educate, and mobilize Montgomery County Latinos around environmental protection and climate change issues.

Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA)

To help increase the resiliency of County residents and to reduce the consumption of energy, the Affordable Housing program is working with DEP to revise DHCA's single-family energy improvement program to include electrification for low-income homeowners. Through this program, residents are able to purchase energy efficient appliances and convert from gas to electric appliances. Additionally, the Affordable Housing program helps to administer the Montgomery County Homeowner Energy Efficiency Program. This program supports energy efficiency upgrades for eligible County homeowners.

The Grants Administration team supports several programs in the Department that address climate change issues through the use of federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership (HOME) funds. CDBG money is contributed to Neighborhood Revitalization projects for such things as stormwater management and LED common area lighting installation. CDBG is also used for Group Homes to install energy efficient appliances and LED lighting. CDBG and HOME assist multifamily and single-family housing projects with similar improvements. The Code Enforcement program is helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by replacing gasoline and diesel vehicles with hybrid or all electric vehicles.

The Code Enforcement program also helps to increase the resiliency of County residents through their inspection process where they identify violations such as faulty HVAC systems, stoves, and windows that help reduce energy consumption. Additionally, violations related to gutters, downspouts, and storm drains help to reduce flooding and stormwater runoff.

Office of Human Resources

The Office of Human Resources administers the County's Telework Policy to encourage County 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 is exploring multiple greenhouse gas reduction avenues through amendments to the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC). These include electrification of commercial buildings, onsite energy generation requirements, onsite storage, increased stringency in greenhouse gas/energy reductions through energy modeling and mechanical system performance measures, and increases in commissioning requirements.

DPS recently adopted the 2018 International Green Construction Code (IgCC) which promotes total building and site improvement through site development, energy efficiency, material selection, commissioning, resiliency, and indoor air quality improvements. Through administration of our sediment control and public right of way permits, the program helps preserve or replace tree canopy on private property and trees within the public right of way impacted by construction activity.

Department of Transportation

DOT 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 Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Areas (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. DOT 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. These programs provide incentives for employers to buy-down the cost of transit and vanpooling for their employees. 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.

OAG also promotes programs and practices that are designed to help sequester carbon in the soil. Conservation Tillage, Conservation Cover, Pasture Management, and Annual Cover Crops provide avenues to increase organic matter in the soil. 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 to restaurants and other businesses. 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 departments and 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 effects and helps guide the County's mitigation and response efforts, including the development of resiliency hubs.

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.

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 incenting 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. The Office of Procurement has lowered resource consumption through the digitization of County contracting.

Public Libraries (MCPL)

MCPL provides many educational opportunities to our customers regarding environmentally responsible choices along with several resources to help them "go green" including:

- MCPL's Summer Reading program partnered with the Chesapeake Bay foundation to offer children (participants) a chance to help preserve the Chesapeake Bay watershed, clean up the Chesapeake Bay, and provide healthy habitats for Chesapeake Bay animals by completing reading missions;

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- a contemporary conversation program with Elizabeth Kolbert, staff writer for The New Yorker and author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Sixth Extinction*, about the topic of climate change and how we can make impacts through our habits and decisions;
 - lending out thermal cameras, which allows customers to inspect homes with infrared technology using their smartphone to find insulation, heating, and water problems in the home;
 - partnering with Montgomery Energy Connection to host on a light bulb exchange program; and
 - library branches that had prominent displays about energy savings for the month of October, which is Energy Action Month.

Additionally, MCPL has implemented several climate change initiatives in its branches and for staff. For example, every branch has recycling receptacles in both the public and staff areas, and policies and procedures are in place to reduce the use of paper and other materials and resources.

Climate Change Efforts in the County Executive's FY25 Recommended Budget

The chart below details the budget numbers associated with the initiatives and programs discussed in this chapter. The CE's recommended budget dedicates \$365.0 million to climate change efforts.

| FY25 CE Recommended | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------|------------|
| Department | Program | GF | Other Operating Funds | CIP | RideOn | Non-County |
| Community Use of Public Fac. | Energy Management of Montgomery County Public Schools Facilities | | \$122,536 | | | |
| | Total Emergency Management and Homeland Security | | \$122,536 | | | |
| Office of Agriculture | Agricultural Business Development Specialist Position | \$111,932 | | | | |
| | Cover Crop Program | | \$70,000 | | | |
| | Soil Amendment Program | \$14,000 | | | | |
| | Subtotal Office of Agriculture | \$125,932 | \$70,000 | | | |
| | Total Office of Agriculture | \$195,932 | | | | |
| County Executive's Office | Climate Change Officer | \$21,825 | \$146,064 | | | |
| | Subtotal County Executive's Office | \$21,825 | \$146,064 | | | |
| | Total County Executive's Office | \$167,889 | | | | |
| Climate Change Planning NDA | Climate Action Plan Implementation | \$488,344 | | | | |
| | Additional External Consultant Support -- New FY25 | \$230,000 | | | | |
| | Total Climate Change Planning NDA | \$718,344 | | | | |
| Emergency Management | Staff and programs on hazard mitigation and climate adaptation planning | \$316,813 | | | | |
| | Total Emergency Management and Homeland Security | \$316,813 | | | | |
| Department of Environmental Protection | Planning and implementation of Countywide Flood Management -- New FY25 | | | \$5,733,000 | | |
| | Implementation of Electric Leaf Blower Incentive Program -- FY24 Supplemental and New -- FY25 | \$1,120,000 | | | | |
| | Inflation Reduction Act Incentive Energy Ambassadors -- New FY25 | \$200,000 | | | | |
| | Technical Support and Incentives for EV Community Charging -- New FY25 | \$200,000 | | | | |
| | Solar Strategic Plan Development and Staffing -- New FY25 | \$345,354 | | | | |
| | Energy Audits for Under Resourced Buildings Subject to BEPS -- New FY25 | \$275,000 | | | | |
| | Building Decarbonization and Outreach Programs Operating Funds | \$2,386,000 | | | | |
| | Clean Energy Programs Support | \$300,000 | | | | |
| | Zero-Emission Vehicles (ZEV) Program Operating Funds | \$50,000 | | | | |
| | Equitable Resilience and Inclusive Engagement | \$363,103 | | | | |
| | Tree Montgomery Program | \$1,613,602 | \$697,358 | | | |
| | County Recycling Programs | | \$68,075,161 | | | |
| | Staff focused on climate efforts | \$4,791,658 | | | | |
| | Subtotal Environmental Protection | \$11,644,717 | \$68,772,519 | \$5,733,000 | | |
| | Total Environmental Protection | \$86,150,236 | | | | |
| Department of General Services | Solar Resiliency Hubs -- New FY25 | \$2,769,825 | | | | |
| | Solar Resiliency Hubs -- Base Budget | \$2,488,455 | | | | |
| | Green Fleet: DGS is pursuing an all-electric fleet of County vehicles and buses -- New FY25 ¹ | \$4,137,000 | | | | |
| | Green Fleet: DGS is pursuing an all-electric fleet of County vehicles and buses -- Base Budget ¹ | \$7,146,000 | | | | |
| | Office of Energy and Sustainability: Ensures County operations are environmentally sensitive and integrates sustainability into County decision making | \$794,159 | | \$450,000 | | |
| | Subtotal General Services | \$17,335,439 | \$0 | \$450,000 | | |
| | Total General Services | \$17,785,439 | | | | |
| Office of Grants Management | Climate-focused Grants Position | \$118,538 | | | | |
| | Total Emergency Management and Homeland Security | \$118,538 | | | | |

| FY25 CE Recommended | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Department | Program | GF | Other Operating Funds | CIP | RideOn | Non-County |
| Green Bank NDA | Transfer to Montgomery County Green Bank | \$19,126,186 | | | | |
| | Total Montgomery County Green Bank NDA | \$19,126,186 | | | | |
| 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 ² | | | | | \$404,334 |
| | Total Housing and Community Affairs | | | | | \$404,334 |
| 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 | | \$1,315,784 | | | |
| | Total Permitting Services | | \$1,315,784 | | | |
| Department of Transportation | Chesapeake Bay Trust Urban Street Trees Grant | | | | | \$66,274 |
| | Ongoing Urban Forest Efforts | \$6,461,206 | | \$3,348,000 | | |
| | 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. | \$1,543,514 | | | | |
| | Green Fleet: Electric bus replacements | | | \$12,400,000 | | |
| | Green Fleet: Electric bus replacements -- FY24 Supplemental ³ | | | \$46,024,000 | | |
| | 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 | | \$5,380,098 | | | |
| | RideOn Bus service, including express bus programs | | | | | \$163,378,364 |
| | Subtotal Transportation | \$8,004,720 | \$5,380,098 | \$61,772,000 | \$163,378,364 | \$66,274 |
| | Total Transportation | \$238,601,456 | | | | |
| Countywide Total | Subtotal Montgomery County | \$57,412,514 | \$75,807,001 | \$67,955,000 | \$163,378,364 | \$470,608 |
| | Total Montgomery County (CIP and PSP) | \$365,023,487 | | | | |

¹Vehicle replacement funds are estimated based on the total budget and how many vehicles are likely to be low- or no-emission vehicles. The kinds of vehicles purchased are subject to availability.

²Department of Housing and Community Affairs figure is the balance of multi-year funding.

³The FY24 supplemental for electric buses is intended to last through FY26.