



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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Sustaining Climate Investments

Since the release of the County's Climate Action Plan in 2021, the County has added \$171.7 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 \$18.7 million. With new and continued investments combined, the FY26 budget dedicates \$367.9 million to climate change efforts.

What's New for FY26

The County's FY26 budget for climate initiatives provides new resources that supplement the climate resources provided in the FY25 budget.

Support Climate Change Solutions in the Transportation Sector

The budget increases funds to purchase additional zero emission County vehicles. These funds will allow the Department of General Services (DGS) to accelerate the County's elimination of fossil fuel vehicles in the County fleet.

Support Zero Waste Efforts

Funds are added for outreach and enforcement of the amended bag fee law, which goes into effect January 1, 2026. The law bans plastic bags from most retail transactions and increases the fee for a paper bag from 5 cents to 10 cents.

Increase the County's Resilience to Weather Events

New funds are added for the Resiliency Hub Project to become more resilient to the effects of climate change and power County buildings through solar energy. This funding will avoid delays in construction, maintain service, and guarantee equipment will always be operational.

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 has completed the move to cloud-based applications and systems, reducing on-premise servers. 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)

DEP provides leadership for the County's actions on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to a changing climate. DEP manages 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 program, 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 the Department of Transportation (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.

Department of General Services (DGS)

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.

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, HHS 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 health programs at HHS 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 with 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 Office of Common Ownership Communities helps to increase the resiliency of County residents by helping to ensure that common ownership communities maintain the proper funding necessary to properly maintain their communities. This is done through board training and also through reserve studies.

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, identifying violations related to gutters, downspouts, and storm drains help to reduce flooding and stormwater runoff. The Community Revitalization program has helped to increase the resiliency of County residents by replacing outdated and inefficient lighting with new LED lighting in that several CDGB eligible neighborhoods.

Office of Human Resources

The Office of Human Resources administers the County's Telework Policy to encourage County staff to reduce vehicle miles traveled.

Department of Permitting Services (DPS)

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)

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 U.S. 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 practices reduce trips across fields by equipment that produces greenhouse gases. Other benefits of this practice include improving soil tilth. By making small soil clumps it is easier for plants to establish roots, improving soil tilth that minimizes soil compaction. The district's programs include practices to increase the infiltration of stormwater during storm events, reduce the intensity of flow to create less erosive conditions, promote forest and vegetative buffers to protect streams from negative impacts from storm events, and to recommend land management strategies to not only address resource concerns but improve efficiency of an operation.

The District also promotes programs and practices that are designed to help sequester carbon in the soil, conservation tillage, conservation cover, pasture management, annual cover crops provide avenues to increase organic matter in the soil. Research shows the more soil is tilled, the more carbon is released to the air and the less carbon is available to build organic matter for future crops.

Conservation cover, Pasture Management and annual cover crops protect the soil from erosion while increasing the organic matter in the soil. All of these practices promoted by the District and implemented by farmers help to sequester carbon in the soil.

Office of the County Executive

The Climate Change Officer leads the Countywide 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. The Office of Procurement has lowered resource consumption through the digitization of County contracting. The Office of Procurement is currently 95 percent paperless and working towards the goal of being 100 percent paperless.

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.
- Hosting 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 a light bulb exchange program.
- Having prominent displays at library branches 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. The department considers the climate impacts of administrative decisions and policies in all aspects of its work.

Climate Change Efforts in the FY26 Budget

The chart below details the budget numbers associated with the initiatives and programs discussed in this chapter. The budget dedicates \$367.9 million to climate change efforts.

FY26 Approved						
Department	Program	GF	Other Operating Funds	CIP	Ride On	Non-County
Office of Agriculture	Agricultural Business Development Specialist Position	\$111,932				
	Cover Crop Program		\$70,000			
	Soil Amendment Program	\$16,500				
	Subtotal Office of Agriculture	\$128,432	\$70,000			
	Total Office of Agriculture	\$198,432				
Community Use of Public Fac.	Energy Management of Montgomery County Public Schools Facilities		\$135,377			
	Total Community Use of Public Facilities		\$135,377			
Office of the County Executive	Climate Change Officer	\$32,027	\$214,340			
	Subtotal Office of the County Executive	\$32,027	\$214,340			
	Total Office of the County Executive	\$246,367				
Climate Change Planning NDA	Climate Action Plan Implementation	\$488,344				
	Total Climate Change Planning NDA	\$488,344				
Emergency Management	Staff and programs on hazard mitigation and climate adaptation planning	\$333,856				
	Total Emergency Management and Homeland Security	\$333,856				
Department of Environmental Protection	Planning and implementation of Countywide Flood Management -- New FY26			\$2,500,000		
	Outreach and enforcement regarding the amended bag fee law -- New FY26		\$250,000			
	Outreach and enforcement regarding the amended bag fee law -- Base Budget		\$82,000			
	Zero Waste Programs		\$565,657			
	Implementation of Electric Leaf Blower Incentive Program	\$300,000				
	Tree Montgomery Program	\$1,500,000	\$753,814			
	County Recycling Programs		\$68,301,205			
	Staff focused on climate efforts	\$4,058,746	\$869,288			
	Subtotal Environmental Protection	\$5,858,746	\$70,821,964	\$2,500,000		
	Total Environmental Protection	\$79,180,710				
Department of General Services	Increase the availability of electric vehicle charging stations at County facilities -- New FY26			\$3,861,000		
	Solar Resiliency Hubs -- New FY26	\$2,363,610				
	Solar Resiliency Hubs -- Base Budget	\$5,258,280				
	Green Fleet: DGS is pursuing an all-electric fleet of County vehicles and buses -- New FY26 ¹		\$9,700,000			
	Green Fleet: DGS is pursuing an all-electric fleet of County vehicles and buses -- Base Budget ¹		\$15,000,000			
	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	\$8,416,049	\$24,700,000	\$4,311,000		
	Total General Services	\$37,427,049				
Office of Grants Management	Climate-focused Grants Position	\$131,198				
	Total Office of Grants Management	\$131,198				
Green Bank NDA	Transfer to Montgomery County Green Bank ²	\$16,900,252				
	Total Montgomery County Green Bank NDA	\$16,900,252				
Department of Housing and Community Affairs	Electric Efficiency Appliance Program: Assists homeowners and low-income residents in reducing home energy use by providing energy inspections, energy-efficiency appliance upgrades, and gas-to-electric system retrofits, if applicable. ³					\$614,010
	Total Housing and Community Affairs					\$614,010
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		\$1,435,823			
	Total Permitting Services		\$1,435,823			

FY26 Approved						
Department	Program	GF	Other Operating Funds	CIP	Ride On	Non-County
Department of Transportation	Ongoing Urban Forest Efforts	\$6,064,698		\$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.	\$1,567,314				
	Green Fleet: Electric bus replacements			\$16,870,000		
	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.		\$5,324,031			
	Ride On Bus service, including express bus programs				\$197,617,934	
	Subtotal Transportation	\$7,632,012	\$5,324,031	\$20,218,000	\$197,617,934	
	Total Transportation	\$230,791,977				
Countywide Total	Subtotal Montgomery County	\$39,920,916	\$102,701,535	\$27,029,000	\$197,617,934	\$614,010
	Total Montgomery County (CIP and PSP)	\$367,883,395				

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.

²Due to affordability, the transfer to the Montgomery County Green Bank is less than the County's goal of appropriating 10 percent of the Energy Tax. This is for FY26 only.

³Department of Housing and Community Affairs figure is the balance of multi-year funding.

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