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 $157.1 million in investments. 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 $5.7 million. With new and continued investments combined, the FY27 budget dedicates $355.3 million to climate change efforts.

What's New for FY27

The FY27 budget continues to support robust climate initiatives by fully funding nearly all existing programs and initiatives, despite current budget constraints. Changes from last year include one limited targeted reduction and two increases:

Bus Service Additions

- Hours for the Flash Blue Route bus service between Burtonsville and the Silver Spring Transit Center are expanded for continuous service from 5:30 AM to 7:30 PM on Columbia Pike (U.S. 29). Similarly, the Flex on-demand bus service expands to Poolesville and Damascus, offering additional transit options to residents and visitors.

Reduce Commuter Service Outreach Contractors

- Reductions have been made to Commuter Services funding to adjust resources based on the County Council's repeal of the Transportation Demand Management law, which eliminated fees and reporting requirements, making less funding available but also reducing technical assistance needed for certain outreach contractors.

Increase the County's Resilience to Weather Events

- New funds are added for the County's Resiliency Hub Projects, which include upgrades to solar microgrids at the Public Safety Communications Center and the Equipment Maintenance and Transit Operation Center, and a zero-net-energy microgrid at the Holiday Park Senior Center, among other facilities and improvements. These projects will power County buildings through solar energy while ensuring resiliency to the effects of climate change, natural

disasters, and public infrastructure failures. This funding will provide for construction, maintenance, and continual operation of these resiliency hubs.

Ongoing Work of County Departments Funded through the Operating Budget

Alcohol Beverage Services (ABS)

ABS has rerouted all of its current delivery routes to gain efficiencies on deliveries and to reduce the amount of time and miles spent on the roads with their trucks in an effort to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

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

Circuit Court

The Circuit Court has converted an indoor space into a sustainable garden. Sustainable gardening techniques can slow future warming by reducing carbon emissions and improving the wellbeing of the public.

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 43-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's public engagement promotes climate change initiatives by fostering inclusivity and awareness. Through targeted workshops, educational programs and outreach efforts such as the Frontline Community Conversations, the department can ensure community members are actively involved in discussions and decision-making processes to help empower individuals to voice their concerns ensuring that their unique needs and perspectives related to climate change and the environment are considered. By utilizing clear, accessible messaging tailored to diverse audiences, DEP's communications enhancement is essential for promoting climate change initiatives among community members.

Two sections within the Energy, Climate, and Compliance Division (ECCD) focus exclusively on climate change initiatives. Buildings and Transportation Programs Section focuses on reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the built environment and promoting the use of zero-emission vehicles. Building-related programs include implementing the County's Building Benchmarking and Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS) law for commercial and multifamily properties, and a variety of activities designed to educate residents about energy issues and programs enabling the installation of energy efficiency and renewable energy measures. Zero-emission vehicle programs include a variety of activities to increase the use

of electric vehicles (EVs) and increase the availability of EV charging infrastructure. The Climate Programs and State Policy Section focuses on a wide range of climate and climate policy initiatives, including significant engagement with the Maryland General Assembly, the Maryland Public Service Commission, and other state and regional entities that play a role in energy and climate policy, as well as engagement with a wide range of stakeholders involved in these issues. This section also focuses on collaboration with frontline communities that will be most impacted by climate change and building capacity to practice more equitable and inclusive engagement with both internal County employees and community members to strategically inform and advance the County's climate work. Staff also support efforts to develop Community Choice Energy (CCE) for the County, as well as providing management of the County's Comprehensive Flood Management Planning (CFMP) process.

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.

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 to develop the charging infrastructure necessary to make this transition.

Office of Animal Services (OAS)

OAS formed a Climate Team representing managers and staff from various areas of the Animal Services and Adoption Center to implement internal programs, raise external awareness, and further collaborate with other departments. This team reviewed the OAS recycling program to make improvements. Staff, volunteers, and the Scouts built garden boxes on the property where vegetables are being grown to feed small animals housed at the shelter.

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 (OCOC) helps to increase the resiliency of County residents by helping to ensure that common ownership communities maintain the 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 (OHR)

OHR 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 (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 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 Montgomery County's climate goals by helping the farm community adopt practices that not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance environmental sustainability but also increase farm resilience to the effects of climate change. OAG promotes the use of renewable energy, including accessory solar installations, and encourages regenerative agricultural practices such as no-till farming, crop rotation, and soil amendment programs. In partnership with the Soil Conservation District, OAG also advances Best Management Practices (BMPs) including cover cropping to sequester carbon, improve soil health, and increase farm resilience. These efforts directly contribute to the County's targets of an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2027 and achieving net-zero emissions by 2035, while supporting public health, environmental justice, and long-term agricultural sustainability. Through its Soil Amendment program, the OAG also provides free LeafGro compost deliveries to county farmers as the budget allows. These deliveries assist beginning farmers by reducing their input costs and providing a high-quality crop nutrient source. Using compost on farms instead of fertilizer reduces fossil fuel use.

Office of the County Executive

The Climate Change Officer and staff lead the County-wide implementation of the Climate Action Plan.

Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (OEMHS)

OEMHS promotes community and infrastructure resilience to climate-related hazards through planning, operations, and partnerships. The office develops and maintains the County's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) and related preparedness plans, prioritizing strategies that protect vulnerable populations and critical infrastructure from flooding, severe storms, heat, and high winds. Through alerts, guidance, and training, OEMHS equips residents, particularly those most at-risk, with the information and resources needed to prepare for and respond to climate hazards. OEMHS manages the County's flood sensor program, and the office has partnered with the University of Maryland and the Maryland Department of Emergency Management to install several Maryland Mesonet sites across Montgomery County, providing real-time monitoring and data to inform timely response to climate hazards. OEMHS collaborates with public safety departments, utility agencies, non-profits, and community organizations to strengthen response capacity, ensuring high-risk populations are prioritized. The office also coordinates emergency resources and supports hazard mitigation initiatives that improve infrastructure resilience against climate hazards.

Office of Food Systems Resilience (OFSR)

OFSR develops and implements interagency budgetary, regulatory, and operational strategies to build a more equitable, efficient, resilient, and sustainable food system in Montgomery County.

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.

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 initiative promotes literacy while prioritizing environmental sustainability. By offering eco-friendly rewards, the program aligns with the County's effort to minimize waste.
- MCPL's first all-electric Outreach Van enhances access to digital library services for communities facing barriers, while promoting environmental sustainability. Its low carbon footprint aligns with the County's environmental initiatives, demonstrating a commitment to both reducing systemic inequities and meeting climate goals. A charging port was installed at Rockville Memorial Library to ensure staff can use the vehicle without needing to drive their own vehicles to retrieve it. Rockville Memorial Library is Metro accessible, so staff members can travel to operate the vehicle through public transport as well.
- MCPL has added water bottle filler/Hi Lo water fountains to the Collection Management Center, and to Olney and Brigadier General Charles E. McGee Libraries. This will cut down on the number of plastic water bottles that customers and staff bring into the building for use. MCPL has discontinued offering 16-ounce disposable plastic water bottles in its meetings and programs.
- MCPL partners with Pepco and the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services to staff resource tables at 14 libraries that share information on available energy assistance programs.
- MCPL lends out thermal cameras which allow customers to inspect their homes with infrared technology to find insulation, heating, and water problems.
- MCPL has partnered with Montgomery Energy Connect to host a light bulb exchange program. This partnership has also allowed MCPL to lend out Kill-a-watt meters which allow customers to measure electrical energy consumed by appliances.

Additionally, MCPL has implemented several climate change initiatives in its branches and for staff:

- MCPL continues to re-upholster worn-out furniture at the Aspen Hill and Germantown Libraries instead of purchasing new furniture. This saves the furniture from going to the landfill.
- MCPL utilizes an electric delivery truck in its daily delivery operations.

Climate Change Efforts in the County Executive's FY27 Recommended Budget

The chart below details the budget numbers associated with the initiatives and programs discussed in this chapter. The budget dedicates $355.3 million to climate change efforts.

Department	Program	GF	Other Operating Funds	CIP	Ride On	Non-County
	FY27 CE Recommended					
Office of Agriculture	Agricultural Business Development Specialist Position	$151,532				
	Cover Crop Program		$56,840			
	Soil Amendment Program	$20,000				
	Subtotal Office of Agriculture	$171,532	$56,840			
	Total Office of Agriculture	$228,372				
Community Use of Public Fac.	Energy Management of Montgomery County Public Schools Facilities		$142,427			
	Total Community Use of Public Facilities		$142,427			

Department	Program	GF	Other Operating Funds	CIP	Ride On	Non-County
Office of the County Executive	Climate Change Officer	$33,000	$220,853			
	Subtotal Office of the County Executive	$33,000	$220,853			
	Total Office of the County Executive	$253,853				
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	$498,248				
	Total Emergency Management and Homeland Security	$498,248				
Department of Environmental Protection	Planning and implementation of Countywide Flood Management			$1,508,000		
	Outreach and enforcement regarding the amended bag fee law		$332,000			
	Zero Waste Programs		$8,415,017			
	Implementation of Electric Leaf Blower Incentive Program	$300,000				
	Tree Montgomery Program	$1,500,000	$82,000			
	County Recycling Programs		$64,678,883			
	Staff focused on climate efforts	$3,152,207	$1,339,619			
	Subtotal Environmental Protection	$4,952,207	$74,847,519	$1,508,000		
	Total Environmental Protection	$81,307,726				
Department of General Services	Increase the availability of electric vehicle charging stations at County facilities -- New FY27			$2,500,000		
	Solar Resiliency Hubs -- New FY27	$2,072,293				
	Solar Resiliency Hubs -- Base Budget	$7,621,890				
	Green Fleet: DGS is pursuing a zero emission fleet of County vehicles and buses[1]		$19,700,000			
	Office of Energy and Sustainability: Ensures County operations are environmentally sensitive and integrates sustainability into County decision	$879,233		$450,000		
	Subtotal General Services	$10,573,416	$19,700,000	$2,950,000		
	Total General Services	$33,223,416				
Office of Grants Management	Climate-focused Grants Position	$156,454				
	Total Office of Grants Management	$156,454				
Green Bank NDA	Transfer to Montgomery County Green Bank	$19,385,726				
	Total Montgomery County Green Bank NDA	$19,385,726				
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[2]					$1,987,254
	Total Housing and Community Affairs					$1,987,254
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		$1,485,889			
	Green Building Technical Assistance Pilot Program: Help contractors understand green building codes and reduce permitting review times -- FY26 Supplemental		$1,000,000			
	Total Permitting Services		$1,485,889			
Department of Transportation	Ongoing Urban Forest Efforts	$6,206,250		$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	$1,576,330				
	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		$3,764,817			
	All day Flash service at Burtonsville Park and Ride -- New FY27				$243,775	
	Flex expansion to Poolesville and Damascus -- New FY27				$913,796	
	Ride On Bus service, including express bus programs				$200,106,501	
	Subtotal Transportation	$7,782,580	$3,764,817	$3,348,000	$201,264,072	
	Total Transportation	$216,159,469				
Countywide Total	Subtotal Montgomery County	$44,041,507	$100,218,345	$7,806,000	$201,264,072	$1,987,254
	Total Montgomery County (CIP and PSP)	$355,317,178				

[1] Vehicle 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.

[2] Department of Housing and Community Affairs figure is the total balance remaining from the Merger Funds for the rental-unit energy-efficiency program. DHCA will continue to use the funds to support rental housing projects; however, it is premature to estimate how much will be spent on the FY27 pipeline projects based on the existing proposals under review.

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