

Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Report on **MONTGOMERY COUNTY'S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN**



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A MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE



Montgomery County is steadfastly committed to bold climate change solutions that reduce pollution, improve our quality of life, and advance innovation. Climate change involves long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. We are all experiencing hotter summers, more extreme weather events, and more frequent severe storms. The record-setting heat each summer is a stark reminder of the dangers of continuing to burn fossil fuels.

Montgomery County declared a climate emergency in 2017 and set nation-leading goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, climate change pollution, by 80% by 2027 and 100% by 2035. Through extensive community input, the County created an ambitious, actionable Climate Action Plan in 2021. The plan charts the way to meet the County's climate change goals, become resilient to a changing climate, and address environmental injustices of the past.

I am proud to present the fiscal year 2024 Annual Report on the County's Climate Action Plan implementation progress. This progress includes making significant strides in transforming the County's RideOn bus fleet to all zero-emission vehicles, installing solar on County facilities, sponsoring a successful collective buying program for rooftop solar, and planting thousands of trees throughout the county. The County has started 78 of the 86 actions in the Climate Action Plan and made significant progress on, or completed, 55 actions.

In fiscal year 24, the County's actions to advance racial equity and social justice through climate change solutions included supporting four community-based organizations to reduce pollution from and increase the efficiency of low- and moderate-income houses, expanding public transit, and expanding Spanish language outreach capacity for environmental programming.

This report also includes plans for fiscal year 2025 to chart the course of progress. We will install solar on Parks buildings' rooftops, make the 6th District Police station net zero emissions, expand public transit, expand cycling and scooter programs, and remove invasive plants that harm trees in Long Branch and Wheaton Regional Parks.

The County will remain relentless in pursuing climate solutions, but we need your help. Please take a look at your own day-to-day life and adopt practical, climate smart changes like taking the metro or bus instead of driving when you can, recycling, switching to energy-efficient lightbulbs, and installing solar panels on your roof.

Together, let's confront this challenge head-on and advance a healthier, more sustainable future for Montgomery County.

Sincerely,
Marc Elrich

Introduction

The Montgomery County Climate Action Plan (CAP) charts the course to cut communitywide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 80% by 2027 and 100% by 2035 while becoming resilient to a changing climate. This annual report shares Fiscal Year 2024 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024) achievements and presents forward-looking work plans for Fiscal Year 2025 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025).

Organized around eight CAP categories — Clean Energy, Buildings, Transportation, Carbon Sequestration, Climate Adaptation, Governance, Public Engagement, and Partnerships and Education — the report highlights Racial Equity and Social Justice actions as a key focus across all areas. It also includes a summary of the approved budget and staffing, and a legislative and regulatory policy agenda.

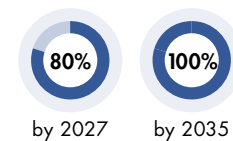
Notably, the Buildings and Transportation sectors account for 92% of the County's emissions, making them critical areas to transform. In addition to reducing emissions, the CAP addresses resilience. Efforts like resilience hubs, flood planning, and weather alert systems help our community be prepared for a changing climate. Preserving and expanding nature both sequesters carbon and improves resilience.

The achievements and planned actions in this report reflect sustained, committed, and creative collaboration among County departments, offices, elected officials, organizations, businesses, and residents.

Montgomery County Climate and Energy Goals

Climate Neutral
and Climate Resilient
by 2035

Cut Greenhouse Gas
(GHG) Emissions



I'm honored to lead Montgomery County's efforts to combat climate change. Together with our vibrant, dedicated, community members, we're making real progress. We are transforming our buildings, transit systems, green spaces, and creating green jobs, but we can't do it alone —we need your help. Visit our [climate website](#) to get involved and be part of the solution. We are not just confronting climate change — we are building a legacy of justice, progress, and possibility for generations to come."



Sarah Kogel-Smucker
Montgomery County
Climate Change Officer



Clean Energy

Montgomery County uses and invests in clean, reliable, affordable energy.

The Montgomery County Green Bank deployed \$37 million in clean energy and climate-resilient projects across 60 unique projects in the public, commercial, multifamily, residential, institutional, and nonprofit sectors that achieve at least a 2.5x ratio of private sector investment to deployment, totaling \$129.5 million in total project investment.

For the third year, Montgomery County promoted another round of the successful Capital Area Solar Switch program in collaboration with Solar United Neighbors, iChoosr, and other Capital Area governments, including Rockville, Takoma Park, and Bowie, MD. Capital Area Solar Switch helps for homeowners and small businesses to learn about rooftop solar, battery storage, and installation. This program takes advantage of group-buying power and Solar United Neighbors expertise to ensure participants receive a quality solar photovoltaic (PV) system at a lower price. In 2024, over 1,843 households registered to be a part of the program and 566 households paid the \$100 deposit to go solar.



Wow! More than half of the households that paid their deposit have already signed contracts to go solar!

The Montgomery County Public School System (MCPS) made significant progress on the installation of 8 additional rooftop solar sites across MCPS with a target operational date of January 2025. During Spring 2024 MCPS began purchasing off-site ground mounted solar to provide electricity to up to 4 schools, with another comparable site scheduled to come online in the winter of 2025.



The County's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) participated in the Maryland Public Service Commission's Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) workgroup to develop recommended regulations governing the CCA. CCA offers an important tool for expanding the use of renewable energy. Final regulations were adopted by the Public Service Commission and became effective on February 5, 2024. In FY25 activities will continue to develop the Aggregation Plan and local County law authorizing the CCA as required by the State's authorizing statute.

The County's Department of General Services (DGS) completed the 6MW Oaks Landfill solar PV project, providing 4MW to Community solar and 2MW for County facilities. The 4MW Community solar PV project reduces greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 4,888 MTCO_{2e} annually, the equivalent of powering 637 homes in one year. Construction costs for the 2MW Solar PV project was paid for under a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). PPAs are agreements the County enters into with the Solar PV Design/Construction contractors for the design, construction, and ongoing operations and maintenance of solar PV arrays, that are paid for based on yearly electric commodity purchase.

The Oaks Landfill Solar PV project reduces County GHG emissions, reduces County costs, and increases County electric grid reliability, while supporting County GHG goals and is a budget neutral cost to the County.

As a part of the Oaks Landfill Green Hydrogen Project, the County will explore the use of Fuel Cell or Battery Electric trucks to deliver hydrogen to Montgomery County bus and truck depots to ensure that the hydrogen supply chain is renewable.

In FY24, DGS signed design and construction contracts for the following three projects:

1. The microgrid project at the Equipment Maintenance Transit Operations Center (EMTOC).
2. The microgrid project at 6th District Police Station. This project was also awarded \$259,200 under the Maryland Energy Administration Solar Canopy and Dual Use Technology grant program in FY24.
3. The microgrid project at the Public Safety Communication Center. DGS was also awarded \$300,000 under the Maryland Energy Administration Solar Canopy and Dual Use Technology grant program FY24.

The 2021 Solar Photovoltaic Codes went through public review. The County anticipates enforcement of 2021 codes will start in January of 2025.

The County's Technology and Enterprise Business Solutions (TEBS) team saved a thousand tons of CO₂ annually by upgrading to a new server infrastructure and moving to the Equinix data center, a more energy efficient location. TEBS also supported reducing the environmental impact of work-related activities through teleworking by providing laptops, support for virtual meetings, enhanced security, relevant training, and technical support.

TEBS also ensures environmentally safe and efficient products for our customers by replacing devices with EnergyStar-rated EPEAT Gold-certified devices and recycling to prevent tech waste.

TEBS partnered with an AI provider with a commitment to sustainability.

This past summer, the County's Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA), in partnership with DEP, won an Energy Efficient and Conservation Block Grant of \$764K, a no-cost, county-match requirement funding source from the U.S. Department of Energy. Of that funding, \$614K will go towards an existing DHCA program that provides energy-efficiency appliance upgrades to low-income single-family homeowners. The program started in 2017 when the County was awarded merger funds from the Pepco-Exelon merger. Since then, the Energy Efficiency program of DHCA has served (291) homeowners, earning 68% of the area median income or below. In FY24 DHCA served 24 households.

DHCA plans to relaunch this program in spring 2025 with some minor tweaks. The Efficient Electric Appliance Program will be renamed to address its function better and highlight the electric component. Under the new funding, DHCA will cover the costs of retrofitting fossil-fuel system to efficient electricity to support the County's climate efforts. This grant will provide for removing gas systems and converting them into more efficient and environmentally conscious electric systems.

On the multifamily side of DHCA, in FY24 the Pepco-Exelon merger assisted funding Montgomery Housing partnership to rehabilitate 78 low income rental units, and the National Center for children and families to rehabilitate 8 group home.

DEP will use another \$150K of the grant money to purchase a refrigerated truck to create a new Edible Food Recovery pilot program. The vehicle will drive to various restaurants after hours to collect leftover food. The food will then be taken to housing shelters in the County to provide nutritious meals to people experiencing homelessness and those facing housing instability.

RACIAL EQUITY + SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Montgomery County Green Bank plans to deploy at least 40% of its funds in Low Income and Disadvantaged Communities (LIDACs), including the delivery of climate solutions to at least 1,375 low- and moderate-income households and at least \$2.75 million dedicated to reducing the cost of energy and climate resilience to all residents and businesses.

LOOKING FORWARD TO FY25

The Montgomery County Green Bank plans to support the acceleration of the Climate Action Plan goals by catalyzing 6.2 MW of onsite renewable energy and the mitigation of 13,500 tons of GHG. The team's plan is to contribute to increasing the climate resilient capacity of Montgomery County through: (i) a completed roadmap for action that defines local needs, capacity and expected outcomes of resilience interventions, and is communicated through at least six sessions of stakeholder engagement, and (ii) a minimum of 4 pilot programs that increase access to climate resilience and improve public health.

The County's Department of Permitting Services (DPS) has transitioned out of its eSolar pilot phase in 2024 and has worked with local installers through outreach. DPS is applying for Solmart platinum designation in FY25. DPS has taken specific actions to encourage onsite energy generation and have completed exceptional solar permitting achievements within the community.

In FY25, MCPS plans to complete a design of a pilot solar canopy over one of its parking lots, design and install owned rooftop solar at 2 schools via an Energy Savings Performance Contract, and issue Requests for Proposals (RFP) for new Power Purchase Agreements for additional rooftop installations.

The University of Maryland will complete its agrivoltaic research project, which includes conducting a literature review and convening four distinct focus groups

(Environmental Advocates, Energy/Solar Companies, Farmers, and Government Officials) to identify potential technical, socio-political, and economic barriers; create a ranking analysis to show how scientific dimensions of co-location intersect with the social and political barriers; meet with County officials to discuss research.

The County's DEP continues to promote the Capital Area Solar Switch program. The program will be promoted from April – August with the goal of having another 100 households go solar as a direct result of this program.



DEP will also continue to advocate for an overarching strategy and associated policies to help Maryland transition to 100% clean energy sources through engagement with the Maryland General Assembly, Public Service Commission, State agencies, and Commission on Climate Change.

In FY25, DGS is planning to complete construction for the microgrid project at the Equipment Maintenance Transit Operations Center (EMTOC). The completed microgrid Phase I project will include Solar PV, battery storage, with charging infrastructure for battery electric buses in FY26. After microgrid completion, the County will move forward with Phase II comprising of an onsite solar powered hydrogen electrolyzer system. This type of advanced energy system uses solar PV generated electricity to

power an electrolyzer, which splits water molecules into hydrogen and oxygen gas, effectively creating hydrogen fuel directly from sunlight- scheduled for completion late FY26 to early FY27.

The EMTOC microgrid project reduces County GHG, reduces County costs, while increasing County electric grid reliability and supporting County GHG goals at a budget neutral cost to Montgomery County.



What is EMTOC? What is EMTOC is the County's Equipment Maintenance and Transit Operations Center. The facilities include parking for 200 buses, bus maintenance, and fueling stations for buses and county heavy equipment. When the construction is complete, the EMTOC microgrid project will be the largest renewable energy-powered zero-emission bus depot in the nation and the first on the East Coast to produce green hydrogen on-site.

DGS also plans to complete the Solar PV project at the 6th District Police Station, making this facility the first NetZero County facility. The completed Solar PV project will generate 400 kW with 500 kW backup power using

a natural gas generator, thus powering the police facility off grid during extended power outages.

At the Public Safety Communication Center (PSCC) DGS will complete the Solar PV project. This critical facility receives incoming 911 calls and routes to critical County resources necessary to respond quickly and efficiently. The completed Solar PV project will include Solar PV and two 750 kW backup generators capable of powering the PSCC facility during extended power outages.

The PSCC Solar PV project will reduce County GHG, reduce County costs, while increasing County electric grid reliability and support the County's GHG goals. The project is a budget neutral cost to Montgomery County via a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA).

M-NCPPC-Parks has a new equipment building for Laytonia Recreational Park under construction that will include an 11 kW PV system on the roof. This project will be completed in FY25.

In addition, M-NCPPC-Parks plans to initiate the installation of solar panels on the roof of the Olney Manor Maintenance Yard building addition in FY25.

Also, in FY25 M-NCPPC-Parks will be designing a new storage building programmed with roof top solar panels for the Rubini Maintenance Yard (at Wheaton Regional Park).





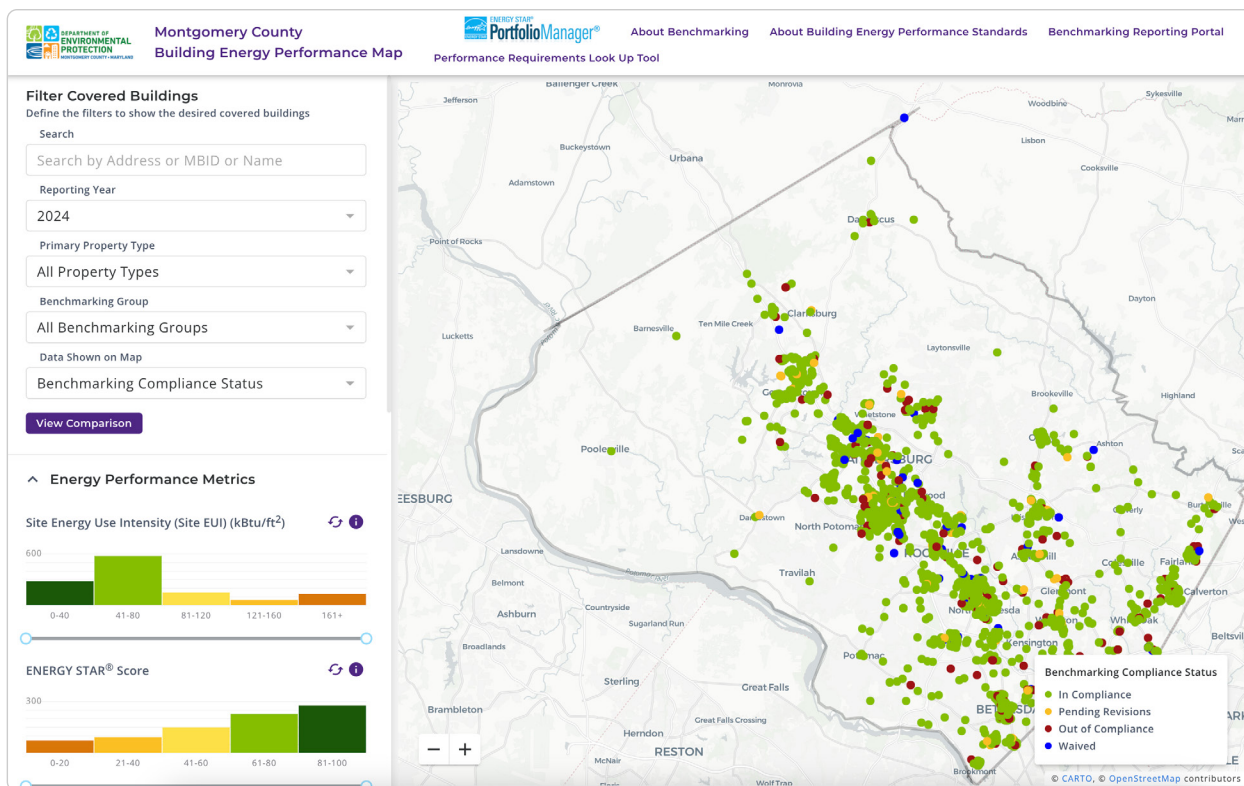
Buildings

Montgomery County is home to resilient and efficient buildings.

The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) continues to advance building energy performance standards (BEPS) regulations that will require most buildings in the County over 25,000 gross square feet to meet long term site energy use intensity performance standards or submit and implement building performance improvement plans. After proposed regulations were transmitted to County Council in early 2024, the Transportation and Environment Committee held a series of listening sessions to solicit additional feedback on the regulations. The current Council deadline to deliberate on the regulations is February 28, 2025.

The first requirement of buildings covered by the BEPS law is to benchmark annual energy consumption and building data and report to DEP by June 1 each year. For the first year, in 2024, all covered buildings, roughly 1,800 commercial and multifamily buildings, across over 230 million gross square feet of existing building area, were required to report. To date, 90% of covered buildings have submitted their required energy benchmarking reports. DEP has developed a new [building energy performance map](#) to help building owners and stakeholders track compliance and each building's progress towards building performance standards.

DEP's Electrify MC pilot operated for a full year with 35 households completing a total of 55 electrification



projects, including 19 cold-climate heat pumps. Over 500 residents were contacted by the County's contractor, Elysian Energy.

DEP participated in the Maryland Public Service Commission's grid Electrification Study Work Group to advise development of a report produced for the PSC evaluating the electricity grid's ability to handle the anticipated increased electricity load from building electrification.

The County's DEP staff continued to advocate with the Maryland General Assembly and Public Service Commission that fossil fuel equipment no longer be incentivized with ratepayer funds through the EmPOWER Maryland program and for building codes to encourage and/or require electrification.

The County's Department of General Services (DGS) completed 37 energy efficiency projects for county owned properties to support the County's greenhouse gas (GHG) emission goals and comply with the Building Energy Performance Standard law. The 36 energy efficiency projects include 19 lighting and lighting controls projects, 3 building automation system upgrades, and 15 Monitoring Based Commissioning (MBCx) projects. FY24 total project costs were \$2.7 million; however, offset by \$919,426 in state grant funding and utility incentives. These projects are estimated to deliver \$882,524 annual energy savings and 4,537 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent (MTCO_{2e}) annual GHG savings- the equivalent of 883 electric homes for a year.

The Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS) has completed a code and regulation technical analysis with the New Buildings Institute to help determine the best path forward relating to energy code amendments.

The 2021 building code adoption cycle is underway, including the Montgomery County Energy Code which has an amendment proposal to adopt a Net-Zero Energy,

energy modeling standard. The transition to Net-Zero Energy will take approximately three code cycles.

In FY24, DPS filled two new technical positions approved in the FY23 budget. One position focuses on electrification and decarbonization; the second position focuses on green buildings and the International Green Construction Code.

The Montgomery County Public School System (MCPS) applied for and received grants from Maryland Energy Administration (2024 Decarbonizing Schools Grant Program, Net Zero Energy Schools) to design and construct a geothermal system and solar array to achieve Net Zero at the new Burtonsville Elementary School.

In FY24, MCPS reviewed Investment Grade Audits for 50 schools and executed Energy Savings Performance Contracts with two contractors to complete approximately 244 projects in the next 2 years. Savings Projects are primarily self-funded from energy savings and supplemented by the Sustainability Initiatives Capital Improvement Program, Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief (SSER) grant funding, and incentive/rebate funding.

MCPS's Fiscal Management Committee received regular briefings on sustainability work including presentations on "Current and Historical GHG emissions Data" and "Key Strategies for Getting to Zero & Conservation Measures."

MCPS also received a report on "Net Zero Energy for New and Existing Construction" that it is assessing and reviewing for potential implementation.

In FY24 the Montgomery County Planning Board (M-NCPPC) transmitted the recommendations of *Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master Plan* to the Montgomery County Council which approved and adopted the plan in July 2024. The Plan recommends incorporation of green building standards for certain priority projects beyond the county's building construction code.

RACIAL EQUITY + SOCIAL JUSTICE

DEP's HEECAP grant program was launched in June 2024 with four community-based organizations to electrify low- and moderate-income houses (single- and multi-family). The program also supports pre-weatherization repairs, climate adaptation and serves as a companion to the market-rate Electrify MC electrification program.

LOOKING FORWARD TO FY25

The County will continue to advocate with the Maryland General Assembly and Public Service Commission that fossil fuel equipment no longer be incentivized with ratepayer funds through the EmPOWER Maryland program and for building codes to encourage and/or require electrification.

As required by the Comprehensive Building Decarbonization Law, the County's DEP prepared and submitted to county council a report regarding system capacity needs and investments required for an all-electric building code standard no later than October 3, 2024.

DGS plans to implement over 37 energy efficiency projects: lighting and lighting controls, building automation system upgrades, and Monitoring Based Commissioning (MBCx). The FY25 energy efficiency projects are expected to deliver similar results as the FY24 projects (an estimated delivery of \$1.57 million in annual energy savings and 7.829 (MTOC2e) in annual GHG savings, the equivalent of 1,552 electric homes for one year).

DPS anticipates enforcement of 2021 Codes, to start in January 2025. The codes will encourage All-Electric Buildings.

MCPS plans to continue evaluating the feasibility of maximizing energy conservation and increasing electrification as part of systemic renovations, including continued design work of the new Burtonsville Elementary School to achieve Net Zero Energy.

MCPS will also begin energy audits at a new set of 50 schools. During the summer of 2024, 51 energy saving projects were completed (building envelope, window film, duct sealing, etc.) with additional projects underway this fall.

The Planning Board draft of the *Great Seneca Plan* was finished in FY24 and went through County Council review for approval at the beginning of FY25. It includes numerous recommendations for increasing energy conservation and on-site renewable energy generation. In addition, Zoning Text Amendment 24-03 (Great Seneca Life Sciences Overlay Zone) was approved by the County Council, which implements the recommendations of the *Great Seneca Plan* by creating incentives that achieve plan goals in exchange for additional development density. Among the incentives are actions that increase requirements for building energy conservation and renewable energy generation, up to full Net Zero status.

The *University Boulevard Corridor Plan* slated for consideration in FY25, focuses on a three-mile stretch of University Boulevard (MD193), between I-495 and Wheaton, with the aim to address community needs related to environmental sustainability, corridor-focused growth and economic development.





Transportation

Montgomery County safely, affordably, and sustainably moves people and connects places.

The Montgomery County Bus Rapid Transit System (BRT) has made significant progress in FY24:

- Design is continuing on the Veirs Mill Road Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, which has completed 65% of the design and is working toward Final Design completion in Winter 2024/25.
- The MD 355 BRT project has completed preliminary engineering and work on a Request for Proposals and Draft Contract has been completed for a Progressive Design Builder to complete design and construction of the project.
- Planning was completed for the US 29 BRT Phase 2. Preliminary engineering is continuing on the project, which will add median dedicated bus lanes to a portion of the corridor.
- Planning has advanced on the Alternatives Analysis for the New Hampshire Avenue BRT and the North Bethesda Transitway. The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) anticipates recommending an alternative for each study in 2025.

MCDOT and Howard County Department of Transportation are working on an MOU for expansion of the US29 BRT service up to Columbia. Vehicles will be purchased with support from a \$3.35M Federal Congressional earmark. MCDOT is actively working with Howard County to start this service in FY26.

MCDOT has started the design work for the Lakeforest Transit Center. This facility will support local Ride On and the MD 355 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) services.



What is the BRT? The Bus Rapid Transit network is a limited-stop, frequent service network. BRT will run in its own lanes, where possible, to bypass existing traffic congestion. It will also use queue jumps and transit signal priority to avoid traffic at select intersections to provide faster and more reliable service. The stations are designed to make boarding easier, provide weather protection, pre-payment stations and real-time transit information.

MCDOT completed the initial Zero Emission Bus (ZEB) Transition Plan in April, 2024. MCDOT aims to achieve a 100% transition to zero emission transit buses by 2035. The release of this ZEB Transition Plan represents a snapshot in time and its development is fluid and dependent upon many external factors.

MCDOT is currently collaborating with the County's Department of General Services (DGS) to develop a master plan for the mixed use/transit-oriented Jeremiah Park Project. This project will include a new transit depot in support of the Zero Emission Bus transition.

DGS ordered 75 electric transit buses in FY24 with anticipated delivery throughout FY25.

For use by the County's workforce, DGS purchased 55 electric vehicles. DGS took advantage of the steep decline in the EV used car market by purchasing 31 used electric vehicles. The used vehicles were purchased from a local dealer as they were returned from lease.

In FY24, DGS also received its first electric medium-duty box truck and an electric vehicle for community outreach; both vehicles support Library Services.



The State of Maryland awarded DGS a \$1.5 million grant to purchase 9 Medium/Heavy-Duty trucks and buses to support multiple County agencies.

DGS is moving forward with large scale EV charging locations at thirteen initial sites, first developing schedule and costs, then implementing. Once initial sites are complete, schedule and budget will be developed to implement EV charging at remaining County facilities.

The State of Maryland also awarded DGS a \$60,000 grant to purchase an electric loader. The loader will be the first zero emission construction vehicle procured by the County.

The County tracks the number of micromobility trips. These are trips taken by bicycles, e-bikes, e-scooters and the like.

In FY24 the total number of trips was 252,033 which is a 41% increase from FY23. MCDOT estimates this type of transit covered 229,490 miles!

Cycling & Scootering are healthy, climate-friendly modes for short trips and easily connect with transit. In FY24 MCDOT

continued to increase the use of cycling and scootering by:

- Offering Learn-to-Ride bike (14 classes) and e-scooter classes around the County. These classes are either low cost or no cost.
- A free Capital Bikeshare program for lower income riders was begun by MCDOT and has now been expanded region-wide. "Capital Bikeshare (CaBi) for All" offers free use of bikes, & free helmets to income-eligible participants.
- MCDOT's "BikeMatchMoCo" program received 238 donated bikes & matched them with recipients.

In collaboration with Pepco, MCDOT installed two EV charging station ports in Lot 34 in Wheaton. The stations will be commissioned and available to the public in FY25. Level 2 and DC Fast Charging stations are in the planning and design phase for multiple garages in Bethesda.

In FY24, the County's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) continued to implement the EV Purchasing Co-op, which included promoting incentives and special offers from participating Electrified Dealer partners each month. The monthly EVPC Newsletter subscriber list increased to over 4,500 subscribers.

DEP continued to educate residents about federal and state incentives on electric vehicles and EV charging equipment through local events and community outreach. DEP also engaged with local utilities, the Public Service Commission, and state partners to support the continued availability and effectiveness of incentive programs.

DEP coordinated with DGS on selecting sites for public EV charging that could complement County fleet electrification.

DEP worked closely with other departments to develop strategies for community EV charging, including charging at public facilities and rights-of-way. DEP applied for grant funding and was successfully awarded \$2.68 million in funding for EV charging at up to 17 sites through the Maryland Carbon Reduction Program. DEP submitted other grant applications in FY24 that were pending an award decision.



DEP applied for and won a \$150K grant from the Maryland Energy Administration for a pilot program to replace diesel food truck generators with battery electric generators with incentives for food truck operators. The program will provide direct subsidies of \$10K to \$25K to food truck operators to offset and finance the cost of electric generator systems.



The Food Truck pilot program to replace diesel generators is the first of its kind in our region and supports reducing carbon emissions, improved public health and our local small businesses.

The County Executive initiated and the County Council passed legislation in FY24 that will ban the sale of gas-powered handheld, backpack, and walk behind leaf blowers by July 1, 2024, and ban the use of them as of July 1, 2025. There are an estimated 30,000+ leaf blowers in the County. DEP established a rebate program to provide \$300,000 in funding to begin in FY25 to support residents and businesses in making the transition.



In FY24, the County's Department of Permitting Services (DPS) drafted a code amendment proposal that requires a dedicated percentage of all new parking to be electric vehicle supply equipment ready.

Photovoltaic (PV), Electric Vehicle (EV), and Energy Storage System (ESS) language supports steps towards climate adaptation by allowing for the generation, storage, and transfer of energy for transportation.

Approved in FY24, M-NCPPC-Planning's *Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master Plan* recommends a joint comprehensive corridor study by MCDOT and Maryland's MDOT to realize the plan's vision for a 'transit-first' corridor along Columbia Pike (U.S. 29), north of Tech Road. Recommended solutions to be addressed by this study include: prioritizing transit movement on U.S. 29 over single-occupancy vehicles, building high-quality, dedicated transit lanes on U.S. 29 and Briggs Chaney Road, completing the planned BRT route on East Randolph Road, which would intersect with the existing US. 29 Flash BRT and establishing additional or enhanced BRT stations at key Columbia Pike intersections.

The Planning Department prepared the Working Draft of the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways* in June 2024. The draft plan includes designation of new and modified transitways and transit stations and recommended removing planned (but unbuilt) lanes on two streets in Germantown to accommodate bikes and other forms of transit. In addition, Planning Staff has recommended the addition of master planned target speeds on all streets in the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways* that currently do not have assigned master planned target speeds. A target speed is a desired operating speed along a particular street, and it can be used as a long-term goal to reduce vehicle speeds through design strategies, including traffic calming, lane narrowing, and other measures to create a sense of enclosure/sense of space.

The Planning Board held the public hearing on the Working Draft of the 2024–2028 Growth and Infrastructure Policy and conducted several work sessions.

The Planning Board Draft of the Great Seneca Plan approved in FY24 includes recommendations to help implement the Great Seneca Transit Network and the Corridor Connectors in the *Corridor Forward Plan*, including repurposing traffic travel lanes as dedicated transit lanes.

The M-NCPPC-Planning teams include transportation planning in all of its master plans and related documents. In FY24 the following projects moved forward:

- The Pedestrian Master Plan was approved by County Council. The biennial Travel Monitoring Report was published. It helps track implementation of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.
- Planning Staff reviewed several active transportation mandatory referrals and conducted other related Planning Board briefings, including: Flower Avenue Separated Bike Lanes, Bowie Mill Bikeway, Downtown Bethesda Two-Way Traffic Study, Life Science Center Loop Trail and the Germantown Multimodal Study.

Master Plans included many transportation recommendations from M-NCPPC-Planning. For example:

- The *2023 Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master Plan* recommends expansion and enhancement of the active transportation network and comfort level for plan area communities. Plan recommendations also call for enhanced micromobility facilities (e.g, parking, repair, access routes) at existing and planned BRT stations. The Plan also recommends establishment of electric vehicle charging stations at BRT stations and park-and-ride facilities (envisioned as “mobility hubs”), as well as at public parks.

In FY24 the M-NCPPC-Parks team installed 13 new EV Charging stations in four additional parks, Wheaton Regional Park, North Four Corners Local Park, Laytonia Recreational Park, and Needwood Golf Course.

In FY24, the Montgomery County Public School System (MCPS) added six electric cargo vans and two plug-in hybrid vehicles to its fleet of staff vehicles. These eight vehicles are in addition to the existing 13 hybrid vehicles. Four Level 2 EV charging stations with dual ports were installed to charge these vehicles. In addition, a total of 206 electric school buses are part of the fleet.

RACIAL EQUITY + SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Lakeforest Transit Center will be planned, designed and constructed to reduce exposure to harmful emissions for transit dependent populations in addition to servicing the bus routes necessary to connect disadvantaged communities to jobs, services and businesses. Sustainable and net zero practices and standards will be applied to the design and construction of these facilities.

In FY24, the number of “Micromobility Trips” in Equity areas increased 51% to 139,250 from 92,218 in FY23.

MCDOT’s Zero Emission Bus Transition Plan aims to progress implementation of zero emission buses in disadvantaged communities to reduce exposure to

harmful emissions for transit dependent populations while also connecting these communities to jobs, services and businesses.

The County ensured that outreach and education activities reached underserved communities, including by organizing an EV demonstration at an affordable apartment community.

The Approved and Adopted *2023 Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master Plan* recommends expanding the U.S. 29 Flash BRT service as a dedicated transitway to better serve the racially diverse and economically underserved communities of East County.

DEP's strategy for community charging focuses heavily on expanding EV charging access for low-income and underserved communities by identifying locations in Equity Emphasis Areas and supporting the installation of chargers at or near apartment communities.

In its FY24 research, DEP focused on how to implement car sharing in ways designed to benefit lower-income residents, such as basing shared vehicles in apartment communities.

MCDOT worked with an Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) apartment project to pilot test a car sharing arrangement in downtown Silver Spring under a Traffic Mitigation Agreement, using a nearby County parking garage. Costs for the program were originally covered by the project developer, but the program was so successful the car sharing company decided to continue it on their own at the end of the pilot period.

DEP developed communication materials in Spanish (radio, streaming, bus ads, mailers, digital ads, etc) to help educate residents on the new electric leafblower laws taking effect in 2025. In addition, an in-person "boots on the ground" outreach was conducted with Spanish-speaking small business landscapers.

LOOKING FORWARD TO FY25

In September of 2024, MCDOT launched Phase 1 of the Great Seneca Transit Network with "Pink" and "Lime" bus routes, making transit more reliable and accessible to medical centers, education and life science facilities. The buses have access to dedicated bus lanes and signal priority along stretches of each route. The new lines run east-west connections between the Shady Grove Metro and the Trville Gateway Transit Center.

In FY25, MCDOT plans to complete Final Design and environmental clearance of the Veirs Mill Road BRT project; obtain Federal Transit Administration (FTA) rating and funding recommendation; complete FTA Project Readiness process; and enter into a final contract with Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR).

MCDOT also plans to issue a Request for Proposals for a Progressive Design Build (PDB) for the MD355 BRT project; select a contractor and enter into contract for first phase of the PDB project.



In addition, the Preliminary Engineering for the US 29 BRT Phase 2 project will be completed, the Alternatives Analysis for the New Hampshire Avenue BRT and the North Bethesda Transitway projects will be completed and the MOU with Howard County for expansion of the US29 BRT service up to Columbia will be completed.

MCDOT will continue to grow the micromobility program, expand cycling and scootering programs, and expand participation in the CaBi For All program which provides free bikeshares to low income individuals.

In FY25, DEP will continue to expand the network of dealers participating in the Electric Vehicle Dealership Incentives program and deepen its outreach and partnership with dealers. DEP will also continue its successful community engagement strategy by organizing supporting events for landscaping companies and other gardeners (such as congregations) to experience EVs and learn about the state, federal, and utility incentives that are available.

In FY25, DEP will release a Zero-Emission Vehicle Strategic Plan that lays out a long-term strategy for expanding the EV charging network. The Plan will include strategies for EV car sharing. DEP will also continue to pursue state and federal grants and begin the implementation of grants awarded in FY24.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Maryland Energy Administration, DEP will implement the Food Truck Electrification Pilot program in FY25.

M-NCPPC-Planning staff will be a lead participant in MCDOT's upcoming Curbside Management Study.

M-NCPPC-Planning staff will also lead the parking lot design study through a USDOT grant. This study will update parking lot design guidance so new parking lots are less impactful and conflicts between modes in these spaces are reduced.

The County Council will review the:

- *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways Technical Update 2024–2028 Growth and Infrastructure Policy*, which will be an important tool to promote transit and support construction of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure through development, especially away from project frontage. The Policy also includes updated

Non-Auto Driver Mode share (NADMS) goals for several portions of the county.

The Planning Board will review the:

- MD 355 BRT Mandatory Referral
- New Hampshire Ave BRT Alternatives Analysis
- Shared Streets Design Guidelines

The upcoming *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan* will seek to accommodate a planned BRT Corridor Connector between Germantown and Clarksburg along a master planned construction of Observation Drive that is expected to recommend dedicated transit lanes.

Planning Staff will review several active transportation mandatory referrals and conduct other related Planning Board briefings, including:



- Burlington Ave/13th Street Separated Bike Lanes, Carroll Ave Separated Bike Lanes, East Silver Spring Neighborhood Greenway, Cheltenham Drive Bikeway, Cherry Hill Road Bikeway, North High Street Extended, Piney Branch Road Bike Facility, Summit Avenue Extended, and Washington Grove Connector Crabbs Branch Way Extension.

The Biennial Travel Monitoring Report will be published in June 2025. It tracks progress in implementing recommendations from the Growth and Infrastructure Policy, the Pedestrian Master Plan, and the Bicycle Master Plan.

Planning Staff will work with MCPS staff to conduct a fall 2024 student travel tally to better understand how students are arriving to and departing from school. Findings will be used to help guide prioritization of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure construction.

Planning Staff will conduct a countywide survey of pedestrian and bicycle activity, perception, and preference. The results from this iteration of the survey will be compared with those from the 2019 survey

to assess change over time and findings will be used to guide prioritization of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure construction.

Planning staff will be working with a consultant to develop a tool to estimate Vehicle Miles Traveled for development projects based on their development program and location. The project team will coordinate with MCDOT staff to potentially incorporate this information into the county's Transportation Demand Management program.

Five additional charging sites at two parks, North Four Corners Local Park and Cabin John Regional Park, are currently under construction and will be completed and operational in FY25, finalizing the initial pilot program with PEPCO totaling 38 stations in 11 Parks.





Carbon Sequestration

Montgomery County has conserved and enhanced its nature, including forest, meadow, and wetland ecosystems, greenspaces, and trees, while reversing carbon dioxide emissions.

The County's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) through its Tree Montgomery Program, worked with seven public schools to plant shade trees with students. More than 750 student, faculty, and staff participated in events to learn how to plant trees and why they are important to our future. To date, more than 2,000 shade trees have been installed and provided aftercare at more than 40 schools.

In FY24 more than 4,250 shade trees were installed on more than 580 separate properties throughout the County.

Since its inception Tree Montgomery has planted 15,400 shade trees, through the Spring 2024 planting season. To continue increasing capacity DEP added a full Program Manager I to the team in FY24.

In FY23, DEP received a grant award from the Chesapeake Bay Trust — Urban Trees through the Maryland 5-Million Tree Initiative for \$135,970 to plant 250 urban shade trees at Montgomery County facilities and public schools (MCPS). Implementation is on-going with all required trees installed during FY23 and the first full year of aftercare and watering completed in FY24.

In FY24, DEP received a grant from the Chesapeake Bay Trust—Urban Trees through the Maryland 50-Million Tree Initiative for \$813,710 to plant 1,348 shade trees at 27 MCPS properties.

In FY24 the M-NCPPC-Planning team's Reforest Montgomery program launched a new tree planting partnership with MCPS. Through this program, 6 trees were planted at Oak View Elementary School and 16 trees were planted at



Takoma Park Elementary School, providing shade to the exposed playground and helping to launch a community food forest effort. In addition, Reforest Montgomery planted 55 large trees in Aberdeen Local Park, Darnestown Local Park, Little Falls Parkway, and Little Bennett Regional Park through a partnership with Montgomery Park's Pope Farm.

Reforest Montgomery planted 123 trees were planted on private properties throughout the County in Priority Funding Areas in FY24.

Reforest Montgomery's Native Tree Coupon Program allowed residents to purchase 553 discounted trees at participating local nurseries

The M-NCPPC-Planning team supported Casey Trees, a DC-based nonprofit, in their successful application for a \$9.1 million grant through the US Inflation Reduction Act. The grant will be distributed over 5 years, and the Reforest Montgomery program will receive a portion of these funds by partnering with Casey Trees on free shade tree applications from Justice40 areas. This will allow more requests for free trees throughout the county to be met.

DEP received approval for funding for a FY22 Congressionally Directed Spending of \$731,816 to plant and provide aftercare for 475 shade trees, remove an unused tennis court and reforest it with 75 shade trees, and convert 3 acres of lawn to forest. The Agreement is expected in January 2025.

In FY24 DEP assisted the Montgomery County Council to amend the Tree Canopy Law to increase the fee-in-lieu for trees required as mitigation to reflect the actual cost for Tree Montgomery to install trees. The fee increased from \$250 to \$470 per tree. All fees are dedicated to planting and establishing shade trees.

The M-NCPPC-Planning team made recommendations to support a significant increase in the percentage of tree canopy coverage in the *2023 Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master Plan*, and the *Great Seneca Master Plan*. The *2023 Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master Plan* recommended a significant increase in the percentage of tree canopy coverage within the plan area, with priority given to areas with excessive impervious surface (e.g., a minimum 50% on surface parking lots) and within the public realm (e.g., a minimum 60% in all public gathering spaces on private property and pedestrian corridors

in the public right-of-way). The master plan draft of the *Great Seneca Plan* included many recommendations to increase tree canopy, including requiring a minimum of 35% green cover on developing properties (can include tree canopy), requiring at least 50% tree cover over new and reconstructed surface parking lots, and planting trees to shade paved and hardscaped areas.

In FY24, the M-NCPPC-Planning Reforest Montgomery team organized and funded several reforestation projects including 2.66 acres of reforestation in Montgomery County Parks (364 trees), 3.06 acres of reforestation in Category I Forest Conservation Easements on private property (551 trees) and 3.33 acres of reforestation in the Agricultural Reserve through the Re-Leaf the Reserve program (656 trees).

In addition, 173.5 acres of new forest conservation easements were added. Of those, 6.41 acres were newly planted forest banks. The M-NCPPC holds over 10,500 acres of forest conservation easements throughout the county.

DEP submitted a grant proposal to the EPA for FY25 Congressionally Directed Spending effort to support two



projects, one of which is for \$40,000 to reforest and supplemental plant 14 acres at the Oaks Landfill.

DEP is in on-going implementation of a grant award of \$96,250 towards a total project cost of \$286,378 through MD Department of Natural Resources "Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund" to reforest approximately 2 acres and supplemental plant 5 additional acres at the Wheaton Branch Regional stormwater management pond, to increase forest cover and enhance water quality.

A new position was hired for M-NCPPC-Parks in FY24 to identify identified urban forest patches for non-native invasive plant treatment and understory plantings in FY25. Understory plantings have already been done in the urban forest patches in Waverly-Schulkill NP, Edgewood NP and Stewartown LP.

In FY24 M-NCPPC-Parks also implemented 5 Enhancement projects: Sligo Creek (2 projects), Meadowbrook in Rock Creek, Glen Hills in Watt Branch, and Ten Mile Creek in Little Seneca. These projects included wetland enhancement and creation, water quality and habitat improvements, and native plantings of 296 trees, 191 shrubs and 12,000 herbaceous plugs.

The very popular, third annual M-NCPPC- Parks urban wood sale was held on 12/9/23 and 12/10/23. This program also took approximately 17,500 board feet of logs and sawed them into lumber that was used for park projects.

DEP continued to promote and support the installation of conservation landscapes, rain gardens and provided public outreach to educate the public on the importance of improving soil health in the effort to reduce runoff, support soil biology and allow for deep root development which grows more vigorous plants. DEP continues to educate the public about the ban on pesticides and the importance of organic lawns to promote soil health.

The County's Office of Agriculture (OAG) contribute substantially to greenhouse gas reductions by

encouraging sequestration of carbon in the soil and reducing the need for fossil fuels in agriculture.

In FY24, county farmers practiced conservation tillage on 33,404 acres and cover cropping on 12,180 acres, reducing their GHG by 16,147 tons of carbon dioxide equivalents through the use of these and other best management practices.

Nutrient management plans are offered to farmers as a free service to help reduce fertilizer and fossil fuel use. In FY24, 25 nutrient management plans were written for county farmers by the University of Maryland Extension Service with support from OAG.

OAG also provides free LeafGro compost deliveries to county farmers to reduce the use of fertilizers. In FY24, the OAG provided 677 cubic yards of Leafgro.

In FY24, the Montgomery County Food Council (MCFC) purchased an outdoor refrigeration unit for installation on the OAG property. The unit will provide expanded cold storage capacity for county farmers and will serve as an aggregation site so that food assistance providers and, in the future, schools and businesses can pick up farm products from a single, central location.

What is Leafgro? See the Zero Waste section to learn why Leafgro is so interesting.



In FY24, the OAG also completed construction of a food scrap composting demonstration hub on-site with grant funding obtained by the Institute for Local Self-Reliance. The hub will be used by the Master Gardeners group to teach farmers and home gardeners how to properly compost food scraps.

RACIAL EQUITY + SOCIAL JUSTICE

In FY24, all the schools that received trees from the Tree Montgomery Program were located in urban areas with high unemployment and low income.

For the Reforest Montgomery parks reforestation and forest conservation easement reforestation programs, projects were prioritized in the priority watersheds of the county identified by the Forest Conservation Law. These watersheds, which make up most of the downcounty and midcounty areas, have the highest rates of forest loss in the county and overlap with many of the county's underserved communities.

The understory plantings completed by M-NCPPC-Parks in the Waverly-Schulkill, Edgewood and Stewartown Parks are in Equity Focus Areas.

For the Reforest Montgomery free shade tree program, applications from Equity Focus Areas are prioritized. In the Fall of 2024, 24% of the trees planted through this program were in Equity Focus Areas. In Spring 2024, this percentage grew to 31%. In order to promote more applications from Equity Focus Areas, M-NCPPC-Planning staff did an interview in English and Spanish that aired on the Latino radio station El Sol on the day applications opened for the Spring 2024 season. Additionally, the department makes targeted posts on advertising this program on NextDoor in Equity Focus Areas with low levels of tree canopy.

The new Reforest Montgomery partnership with MCPS prioritizes Title 1 schools and schools in Equity Focus Areas.



Printed materials for DEP's RainScapes program were translated into multiple languages. A new DEP website was launched that enables live translation to any language, including RainScapes webpages.

LOOKING FORWARD TO FY25

In FY25, DEP is planning to install and maintain additional shade trees, as well as hold tree planting events with students and integrate education on the climate benefit of trees.

DEP will continue to implement and enhance the Tree Montgomery program.

DEP will also continue the Countywide watershed assessment. In FY25, the project (Wheaton Branch Regional Stormwater Management Pond) will be implemented.

On July 1, 2024, Maryland state law changed to allow forest banks protecting existing forest in addition to planted forest. Through this program, administered by M-NCPPC-Planning, landowners may protect existing forest or plant new forest and sell credits to developers to satisfy a forest mitigation requirement.

In FY25 MNCPPC-Planning will continue reforestation projects on park property, forest conservation easements, and in the Agricultural Reserve. Reforestation projects will specifically target Urban Forest Patches in Equity Focus Areas and previously encroached upon areas of parks.

In Fall 2024, the Reforest Montgomery program will install a multilingual sign at the Takoma Park ES planting to educate students and community members on the benefits the trees provide to the community.

In Fall 2024, 69% of the trees planted through the Reforest Montgomery free shade tree program will be in Equity Focus Areas.

In addition, a non-native invasive plant management program to protect existing trees and to defend native regeneration will be conducted in Long Branch and Wheaton Regional Parks.

Management plans for urban forest patches in the Olney Manor and Rock Creek Management areas will be created in FY25.

In FY25 M-NCPPC-Parks will convert 18.5 acres of cropped agricultural field within an environmental buffer to permanent native vegetated cover; and convert 30 acres of cropped agricultural field to wildflower meadow (Royce Hanson Conservation Park). Also, the team will conduct 11 acres of prescribed burning at Bennett Creek Conservation Park and 10 acres at Serpentine Barrens Conservation Park to eliminate non-natives and unwanted weeds and woody material and to enhance heartiness and resiliency of native grasses.

All the farm ponds within the park system, that pose a potential risk of failure, will be identified and converted to wetland habitat.

In FY25 the OAG plans to get the cold storage unit set up with electrical power, develop user protocols and train local farmers on its use.

OAG plans to seek permission to allow farmers to use the commercial kitchen at the Agricultural History Farm Park so farmers could meet the requirements for procurement by MCPS and other institutions, as well as produce value-added products.





Adaptation Actions

Montgomery County is equipped with the resources and infrastructure to withstand the impacts of climate change.

The County's Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (OEMHS) updated The Extreme Temperature Plan in FY24. The plan now incorporates new wording and graphics that are clear and actionable to the public in both English and Spanish.

Effective September 2, 2024, the Hyperthermia and Hypothermia Alert terms were officially retired and replaced by Extreme Heat and Cold Alerts as part of a move towards plain language to make messaging more easily understandable to the public.

OEMHS staff continue to generate temperature alerts for the public through Alert Montgomery during extreme heat and cold events. Alert Montgomery has 249,382 registered contacts and continues to be the largest mass notification system in Maryland and the National Capital Region, with an average of 1% to 3% growth each month.



How to sign up for Alert Montgomery.
Visit [Alert Montgomery](#), or call 311 during business hours.

In FY24 OEMHS continued to coordinate with Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) and the University of Maryland (UMD) on the state-level weather system, called [Mesonet](#). Permits have been submitted for approval to install the first Montgomery County site in Layhill, expected to be complete by fall of 2024. Two other sites in Dickerson and Potomac have been identified and permitting will begin in FY25. Once installed, the Mesonet stations will feed information directly to UMD and be available to staff to provide advance warning of changing weather conditions at the local level.



OEMHS staff has also begun to provide messages and graphics about emergency preparedness and weather events via social media platforms in English and Spanish.

The County's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) released its 9th Clean Water Montgomery grant program and issued 23 grants to nonprofits in FY24 in partnership with the Chesapeake Bay Trust. Federal EPA appropriations will fund a portion of 6 projects amounting to \$268,186. The cohort of grantees from FY23 began their work, and one of the grants, awarded to The Mater Amoris Montessori School, for its permeable pavement project was installed and completed in FY24. Two additional grants are focused on winter salt pollution: one focused on pollution rapid response for some tributaries to the Potomac River and another for the County's "Salt Wise" program, an outreach and education effort to residents.

DEP is currently performing a Countywide watershed assessment. This assessment will document changes in impervious cover and watershed health throughout Montgomery County and may identify areas to potentially limit stormwater management waivers.

In FY24 work continued on the development of the Comprehensive Flood Management Plan (CFMP). The CFMP involves (1) understanding the County's current and future flood risk and vulnerability through engineering-based studies, and (2) making recommendations to

modify the County's programs, policies, and other governance attributes that address, or contribute to, flood risk and vulnerability.

Reports resulting from Phase 1 included identifying 17 specific outcomes that would enable the County to improve the delivery of flood management services and reduce flood risk for residents, businesses, and other stakeholders, as well as the prioritization of watersheds for detailed modeling. Work began on modeling the Sligo Creek watershed, which was selected as the pilot study watershed.

In FY24 DEP continued with the design and permitting for the Wheaton Dam Flood Mitigation.

The County's RainScapes program added a Planner to its staff, to support the ability of the program to deliver technical assistance, demonstration projects in equity areas and financial rebates for RainScapes projects such as conservation landscapes and rain gardens which reduce runoff and maximize carbon sequestration.

In FY24 DEP continued to install pet waste stations to reduce bacterial inputs from dog feces left on the ground, distribute signs to remind owners to pick up after their dogs, and provides public education, in English and Spanish, on the impacts of pet waste to water quality.

The County's Department of Permitting Services (DPS) drafted a code amendment proposal that will require new construction to comply with more aggressive Solar Reflectance Index (SRI) values.

In FY24 M-NCPPC-Planning recommended that the 2023 Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master Plan include the establishment of a network of public open spaces along the plan area's trail and path network. The recommendations require modern green infrastructure practices using nature-based solutions on all newly developing and redeveloping properties. The plan further recommends that the Montgomery Parks Community Gardens Program, serving as the food systems subject

matter expert, should work in collaboration with commercial property owners, farmers' market cooperatives, homeowners' associations, the Montgomery County Food Council, Montgomery County Office of Agriculture, Montgomery County Office of Food Systems Resiliency, community development corporations, community centers, food providers, and distributors to conduct a food system assessment of the plan area to identify existing components and areas of potential support for a robust local food system, including growing, processing, distribution, sales, consumption, and waste management.

In FY24 M-NCPPC-Planning also recommended that the *Great Seneca Master Plan* include additional green public spaces, including Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS), as well as recommendations to convert travel lanes along Great Seneca Highway and Key West Boulevard to linear green spaces. The plan also includes recommendations to incorporate Nature Based Climate Solutions into landscaped areas and to enhance the ability of landscaped areas to detain and infiltrate runoff using the County's Rainscapes program and similar approaches.

M-NCPPC-Parks is on track to address nutrient and sediment load reduction requirements as outlined in the Phase II MS4 Permit through restoration efforts for 20% of existing developed lands that had no stormwater management by 2025.

M-NCPPC-Parks sustains a robust stormwater maintenance program that oversees the maintenance and functionality of more than 700 stormwater facilities on county parkland. In FY24 the Nolte Park Storm Water Management plan was complete.

In FY24 M-NCPPC-Parks and Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) staff held quarterly coordination meetings on outfall projects throughout parkland and have advanced the design and permitting of 5 outfall projects to be implemented in FY25. In FY24 the Howard Ave outfall project was completed.



What's an outfall project? An outfall is a structure utilized for transferring water during storm events into a subsurface drainage system or stormwater basin.

M-NCPPC-Parks completed stream restoration for the Pope Farm Tributary and expects the Long Branch and Glenallan Tributary Stream Restoration projects to begin construction in FY25. Carderock Springs Tributary, Rich Branch, and North Creek stream restoration projects are all in design/permitting.

The Community Garden Program completed a Demographic Study to understand and identify gardener population. The Community Garden Program was awarded the GIS in Excellence award for implementing GIS based inspection processes. The Community Garden website has been updated with more descriptive maps. The new Stonehedge Community Garden is still in the design phase and should begin construction in the spring.

In FY24 the Washing Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) Water hosted regional Salt Summit and Salt Management Workgroup meetings to help facilitate information exchange and better coordinate salt application management strategies and procedures among the participating agencies.

WSSC convenes a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) that hosts an Agriculture Workgroup which developed a survey for tenants and landowners of rented agricultural land. The survey will help the TAC understand how to best promote water conservation practices on rented agricultural land.

The TAC is using the Patuxent Reservoirs Geodatabase to conduct a stream buffer restoration analysis. The analysis will identify potential stream buffer restoration sites, evaluate different implementation scenarios for pollution reduction potential, and will estimate implementation costs.

DEP, through Tree Montgomery, continues to target frontline communities for shade tree plantings to increase benefits of shading built surfaces and AC units. Several grants received to install shade trees in urban areas with high unemployment and low incomes.

RACIAL EQUITY + SOCIAL JUSTICE

By moving to incorporate bilingual messaging and graphics in emergency alerts and social messaging, Alert Montgomery and OEMHS will be more effective at reaching Spanish-speaking residents with emergency and preparedness messaging.

Throughout the design and construction of the Wheaton Dam Flood Mitigation project, the outreach coordinators will have regular communication and engagement with community leaders, and impacted residents, businesses, and neighbors. Community engagement methods and demographic information about the community will be considered and used when developing material during the design phase and construction phase.

DEP's new Planner for the RainScapes Program, hired in FY24, has Spanish language skills and will begin to expand outreach strategies to underrepresented communities.

Clean Water Montgomery grants issued in FY24 include 7 focused on underrepresented audiences and/or communities.

The 2023, *Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master Plan* recommends adding and enhancing amenities in all existing and new parks and open spaces to serve diverse populations and interests by offering a range of recreational opportunities, social gathering spaces, and nature enjoyment. These include designing gathering spaces that accommodate sports, holiday observations, and cultural festivities.

LOOKING FORWARD TO FY25

OEMHS plans to have the second and third Mesonet sites installed and connected in spring of 2026.

OEMHS is in the process of redesigning their website and will incorporate information on preparing for and reacting to hazards in the County's priority languages (Amharic, Chinese, English, French, Korean, Spanish, and Vietnamese). Once the redesign is complete, visitors to the site will have access to detailed information on how to prepare for, respond to, and recover from each hazard in any of those languages. Completion of the website redesign is expected by early 2025.

Additionally, OEMHS plans to pilot a new procedure to incorporate a link to each hazard's webpage when a specific alert is sent regarding that hazard. This would then allow residents to click on a link for more information that would be provided in all of the County's priority languages. This will allow for better outreach and comprehension about the meaning of alerts and the actions steps to take to protect lives and homes.

Once the pilot process is ready, OEMHS will conduct an outreach campaign with County partners to reach limited English proficiency (LEP) communities to inform them about the link, demonstrate how it works, and encourage speakers of our target languages to register for Alerts. This is anticipated in mid-2025.

The Wheaton Flood Mitigation Project is expected to be completed by Summer 2025, and construction is

expected to be begin after the MCDOT Dennis Avenue Bridge Project is completed.

The County's stormwater management waiver process is one of the most stringent in the area. DPS and DEP will collaborate in reviewing the existing fee structure for stormwater management waivers and will propose updates to the stormwater management waiver fees.

DEP will release its 10th Clean Water Montgomery grant program RFP for watershed implementation grants in August 2024 in partnership with the Chesapeake Bay Trust. As part of one of the CWM grants, a training for privately contracted road salt applicators is being developed and will be conducted on October 3, 2024.

The County (DEP, MCDOT, DGS, and MCPS) will start working on its Salt Management Plan (SMP), which must be completed by FY25. The SMP shall be based on the guidance provided on the best road salt management practices described in the Maryland Department of Transportation, State Highway Administration's Maryland



Statewide Salt Management Plan (SMP), developed and updated annually as required by Maryland State law. The County's SMP shall include but not limited to a plan for evaluation of new equipment and methods, and other strategies for continual program improvement, training, and outreach for County personnel and contractors, developing and distributing best salt management practices outreach for educating residents within the County, and tracking and reporting.

In FY25 DEP anticipates receiving the preliminary flood maps for Montgomery County from FEMA, which will update the flood insurance program. Upon receipt of the flood maps, FEMA will undertake a six-month public comment period. DEP will also participate in the Maryland Department of the Environment stakeholder consultation group to revise State stormwater management regulations.

In FY25 M-NCPPC-Parks will continue to work with MCDOT to identify and prioritize county storm drain outfall projects that repair damaged assets and erosive channels. Projects to be implemented in FY25 include Vandever St (Reddy Branch), Garrett Park Rd (Rock Creek), Lilly Stone Dr (Cabin John), Desmet Pl (Cabin Branch tributary of Great Seneca Creek), Ottenbrook Ter (2 outfalls- Crabbs Branch tributary of Rock Creek), and Littleton St (Turkey Branch).

In addition, Stormwater Retrofits for untreated impervious surfaces planned for FY25 include Black Hill Regional Park, Colesville Local Park, Glen Hills Local Park, and Kemp Mills Estates Local Park.

Outfall Restorations planned for FY25 include Flower Avenue Outfall, Parker Avenue Outfall, and Desmet Place will likely begin construction.





Governance Actions

Montgomery County is institutionalizing an organizational culture and structure that fosters creativity, cross-department collaboration and innovation to implement systemic climate solutions.

The Department of Environment Protection (DEP) continued to co-lead and leverage the Maryland Coalition of Counties and Cities for Climate Action local government staff coalition to share information and help advance progress on climate issues at the State level.

The Climate Energy and Air Quality Advisory Commission (CEAQAC), supported by DEP, continues to meet monthly to advise the County on climate, energy, and air quality issues. In FY24, the Climate Change Officer attended 3 CEAQAC meetings in FY24 to discuss climate topics.



In FY24 DEP, in partnership with M-NCPPC-Parks, completed a “Climate Ready Office Challenge” checklist of actions, resources and draft application. The program is a fun and friendly competition and recognition program designed to inspire climate action at the staff level across all ALL departments and agencies.

DEP signed a small contract with the Good Food Purchasing Program to analyze the Department of Correction’s food purchasing, with a particular focus on sourcing local, and sustainably and ethically produced food. The Good Food Purchasing Program analysis is scheduled for completion near the end of FY25.

The Montgomery County Public School System (MCPS) and M-NCPPC-Parks participated on the Food Council to allow them to identify trends in food insecure populations and potential partnerships where it aligns with their agency’s food and climate goals.

DEP and M-NCPPC partnered with the County’s Innovation Office to offer a three-day, Climate Innovation Accelerator training course to 16 Climate Ambassadors and other interested County Government and M-NCPPC employees, designed to help them overcome barriers to climate action and utilize tools and methodologies to facilitate innovation.

The County’s Office of Management and Budget (OMB) included climate considerations during budget development for FY25 (which occurred in FY24). Departments responded to climate questions in their operating and capital budget submissions, and the Climate Action Team provided feedback and recommendations as well. Work was also done to implement the Climate Smart CIP for future budgets. DEP and DGS continued to train on the Climate Smart CIP module with the University of Washington and provided suggestions for enhancements to the tool so that it is tailored to the County’s needs.

The County’s Department of Finance activities in FY24 include:

1. Actively engaging with the Montgomery County Green Bank through ex-officio Board participation of the Director of Finance
2. Supporting the C-PACE program by billing, collecting and disbursing C-PACE assessments to the Montgomery County Green Bank who, as administrator of the program, ensures loan payments are transmitted to the lender.
3. Providing climate action disclosure in the County’s General Obligation Bond documents for the purpose of informing investors of the County’s climate related activities.

M-NCPPC-Planning staff continued to participate in the Heat Mapping Study led by the County’s DEP and

OEMHS. This project will help us understand: 1) how different land uses (particularly tree canopy) influence heat; 2) how urban heat may disproportionately impact specific, disadvantaged communities in the County; and 3) how and where to prioritize heat management strategies such as tree planting and cooling centers. In FY24, a multivariable regression model was developed that accounts for spatial autocorrelation relating land surface temperature (LST) derived from satellite imagery to 20 land use variables. This model can predict changes in land surface temperature resulting from changes in land use.

M-NCPPC-Planning staff have continued to create the climate assessments for master plans and ZTAs required by Bill 3-22. In FY24 staff completed four climate assessments for master plans: the *Takoma Park Minor Master Plan Amendment*, the *Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master Plan*, the *Great Seneca Plan*, and the *Pedestrian Master Plan*. Staff also completed the required climate assessments for nine ZTAs.

In FY24 M-NCPPC-Parks provided in-person and virtual training opportunities for staff to learn more about sustainability and gain technical knowledge to implement climate action within their work. It's Bi-County Sustainability Committee launched 4 Lunch & Learn events for 250 attendees. In FY24, all Montgomery Parks Naturalists received training around climate communications and education.

M-NCPPC-Parks' 5-year *Sustainability Plan* sets goals to create and maintain reliable indicators to measure and track sustainability project performance and cost-effectiveness. Through the EmPOWER Maryland Rebates Program, Montgomery Parks received \$87,873.50 in utility rebates to reduce the upfront costs of certain projects. In FY24 large interior LED retrofits of both the Cabin John and Wheaton Ice Rinks were completed. Over \$28,700 in utility rebates were received which covered 82% of the material cost of the retrofits. The projects resulted in 404 lights being retrofitted to LED and an energy and cost savings of nearly 130,000 kWh and \$31,000 annually.

Montgomery College continues to participate with other County Agencies and supports the Climate Action Goals of Montgomery County Government and the State of Maryland. Montgomery College offers climate related credit and non-credit courses, and certificate programs or integrates the subject matter into existing academic coursework. Through its Homer S. Gudelsky Institute for Technical Education, Montgomery College provides climate related skilled trades training to Carpenters, Electricians, Auto Mechanics, and HVAC Technicians. Montgomery College, through its Office of Workforce Development and Continuing Education (WDCE) works with other County Agencies to develop climate related educational programs. Montgomery College's MC Green Team, consisting of representatives from Academic, Administrative and Students, meets monthly to discuss sustainability and climate change issues and provides outreach to the College and Community to inform and engage stakeholders.

RACIAL EQUITY + SOCIAL JUSTICE

M-NCPPC-Park's Sustainability Team organized clean-ups at 4 different parks, providing staff with 2 hours of admin leave to participate. The clean-ups resulted in 250lbs of trash being removed. Two of these clean-ups took place in Equity Focused Areas.

M-NCPPC-Park's Volunteer Services and Montgomery Parks Foundation collaborated and secured a total of \$121,500 of grant funding to provide additional resources for community outreach and engagement in the Volunteer Park Clean Ups Program, specifically to increase the capacity in Equity Focused Areas.



LOOKING FORWARD TO FY25

A handful of Climate Ready Office Challenge teams will pilot the Challenge and recommend enhancements to the program and application which will be incorporated before the end of the fiscal year.

DEP's Quarterly learning sessions will be offered to Department Climate Ambassadors throughout the year.

The County's Office of Human Resources (OHR) will research other employer's competencies and share draft language with DEP and the Office of the County Executive (CEX) for proposal of a non-mandatory performance competency.

OMB will continue to collect and review climate information provided by departments in their FY26 budget submissions and implement the Climate Smart CIP.

In FY25, M-NCPPC-Planning anticipates completing climate assessments for three master plans: the University Boulevard Corridor Plan, the Eastern Silver Spring Community Plan, and the Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan. Staff will continue to complete climate assessments for ZTAs as they arise.





Public Engagement, Partnership, And Education Actions

Montgomery County's community members are empowered, engaged, and motivated to take action on climate change, while striving for equity among all members of the community.

The Black Hill Regional Park is the location of the County's new Sustainable Education Every Day (SEED) classroom, including a roof top solar array, which was successfully opened on May 18, 2024. The purpose of SEED is to host community open house events, as well as, nature preschool, school groups, camps and other programs. SEED is a project of the M-NCPPC-Parks with support from the Montgomery County Public School System (MCPS) to develop programs and lessons tied to sustainability features. The nearby Black Hill Community Garden was fully booked for 2024 and has a waitlist of interested residents.

All the nature centers in the County hosted 26,441 participants in FY24.

M-NCPPC-Parks launched several public education campaigns in FY24, including:

- **Prescribed Burns:** how controlled burns help manage forest health and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires, ultimately lowering carbon emissions.
- **Car-Free Parkways:** the benefits of car-free zones in parks, highlighting how reducing vehicle traffic can decrease emissions and create safer, cleaner recreational spaces.
- **Expansion of Trails:** expanded walking and biking trails, encouraging alternative transportation and promoting a healthier, low-emission lifestyle.
- **Reduced Mowing:** the environmental advantages of reduced mowing practices, such as increased carbon sequestration, improved biodiversity, and lower fuel consumption.



In addition to launching public education campaigns, M-NCPPC-Parks engaged with local communities on improvements to the Maplewood-Alta Vista Local Park, Dalewood Drive Neighborhood Park and the Flower Avenue Park.

M-NCPPC-Parks also supports MCPS with implementation of MCPS's Green Infrastructure projects by providing plants, tool sharing, and staff support.

During FY24, MCPS added 4 schools as Maryland Green Schools and recertified 20 schools, bringing the total to 101 schools (48%). MCPS held several outreach events to engage student and staff to increase the awareness and to implement sustainable actions at their schools.

The third annual Youth Climate Summit was held on April 13, 2024 at Tilden Middle School. Hundreds of secondary students gathered to learn about climate change, how they could grow as environmental activists, and how they could create projects in their communities. Speakers from a variety of environmental programs spoke to the students and the day ended with students planting trees.

In December 2023, MCPS partnered with Covanta and held a sustainability symposium. At the event, students learned how the trash that is collected in Montgomery is transported by railcars to the waste to energy facility within the county and how electricity is generated.

The Student Climate Action Council had a successful inaugural year providing advocacy, outreach, and grant funding for climate related topics and projects.

MCPS partnered with the County's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) on two major SSL events in FY24 - the replanting of the bioretention gardens at Gaithersburg High School and the establishment of the REACH Hub at Loiderman Middle School which provided meaningful SSL hour experiences for over 12,550 students. DEP staff also led teams of students from the Poolesville Global Ecology program at the Smith Center to install conservation landscaping, remove invasive species and vines, conduct stream monitoring, and other outdoor upkeep for the center.



A Climate Change and Environmental Justice course was held for MCPS teachers from multiple schools in June 2024. Climate change content infused into ongoing professional development for high school Biology and Chemistry teachers and Outdoor Education workshops were held for middle school teachers across all disciplines. A pilot elective course on Climate Change was developed for implementation at selected schools.

RACIAL EQUITY + SOCIAL JUSTICE

Gaithersburg High School and Loiderman Middle School are both located in low-equity regions; activities engaged and will continue to support greening efforts in these low-equity communities. The REACH demonstration hub at Loiderman MS will support food production, climate resiliency, as well as serve as an accessible resource for over 17,000 students from 20 school locations within two miles, including four schools within walking distance.

MCPS took its first steps to identify climate change content in its current Science curriculum and developed its Climate Change elective course for students.

For its teachers, MCPS offered a Climate Change and Environmental Justice course at multiple schools in June 2024 and infused Climate Change content into the ongoing professional development for high school Biology and Chemistry teachers as well as Outdoor Education workshops for middle school teachers in all disciplines.

During FY24, MCPS partnered with Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education and Nature Forward to offer several professional learning opportunities for MCPS staff. Nature Forward offered two virtual 45-minute teacher trainings during the winter to help teachers and staff to meet Maryland Green School (MDGS) certification requirements. These trainings shared ideas for simple in-school activities and projects staff and students can start to help "green" their schools. This training also met the professional development requirement of the MDGS application. Currently 48% of MCPS schools are certified Maryland Green Schools.

During the 2023–24 school year, 87% of the schools submitted Sustainability Action Plans. School-based Sustainability Team Leaders received a stipend to lead sustainability programs in their schools. Also, over 80 schools implemented food recovery program at their schools and received a stipend for their leadership.

MCPS continued to collaborate with the Parent Teacher Associations (PTA's) and community on seeking MD Green

Schools Certification and other student engagement actions; with the goal to take learnings on climate from the school classroom into the home.

Montgomery College continues to participate with other County Agencies and supports the Climate Action Goals of Montgomery County Government and the State of Maryland. Montgomery College offers climate related credit and non-credit courses, and certificate programs or integrates the subject matter into existing academic coursework. Through its Homer S. Gudelsky Institute for Technical Education, Montgomery College provides climate related skilled trades training to Carpenters, Electricians, Auto Mechanics, and HVAC Technicians. Montgomery College, through its Office of Workforce Development and Continuing Education (WDCE) works with other County Agencies to develop climate related educational programs. Montgomery College's MC Green Team, consisting of representatives from Academic, Administrative and Students, meets monthly to discuss sustainability and climate change issues and provides outreach to the College and Community to inform and engage stakeholders.

DEP initiated The Community Justice Academy, now called the Climate Justice Co-Creation Initiative (CJCI) and developed a comprehensive implementation plan. The CJCI, is a response to the June 2021 Montgomery County Racial Equity Network letter criticizing the County for not centering frontline community members at the intersections of identities such as BIPOC, low wealth, and immigrant. The CJCI seeks to initiate a paradigm shift in community engagement related to climate justice issues by involving communities most impacted by climate and racial injustice as collaborators and co-creators, deeply integrated into the planning and development of climate justice policy and program solutions.

DEP's Montgomery Energy Connection is a program to link residents to resources and information to help them lower their utility bills. As part of this program DEP conducted 180

in person and virtual events in FY24 reaching 16,009 residents. DEP also referred 532 to the Quick Home Energy Checkup Program and collected 2,281 incandescent light bulbs. More importantly DEP ensured that over 1,432 compact fluorescent bulbs were recycled properly at the transfer station so that the mercury did not enter our trash stream.

DEP collaborated with the County's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to award the artist Dinah Myers Schroeder a grant by the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHCMC) for a Resilience through Art project at the County's Crisis Center in Rockville. The project involved both Crisis Center clients and staff who contributed individual pieces of art during a series of workshops that were then integrated by the artist into a larger work. The artwork, installed in the Crisis Center waiting room, focuses on building resilience in the face of increasing climate hazards and engendering healing, respect and peace during challenging times, particularly for the County's most vulnerable residents.

In FY24 the County's DHHS Latino Health Initiative (part of DHHS) provided five different classes for the community that combined elements of health and climate to a total of 254 County residents.

The same team organized 2 community park cleanup events this year at Glenmont Local Park, the first in July 2023 to commemorate Latino Conservation week and the second in April 2024 in celebration of Earth Month. This year, 103 total participants joined us at community park cleanup events.

DHHS's Office of Community Affairs has a Climate Action Team that hosted 2 virtual Lunch and Learn workshops for County staff: "Taking Climate Action at Home: Easy Ways to be Energy Efficient" attended by 37 employees and "Inclusive Emergency Preparedness" attended by 28 employees.

LOOKING FORWARD TO FY25

MCPS plans to expand implementation of its Climate Change and Environmental Justice courses at selected high schools and evaluate their effectiveness.

MCPS and DEP will continue to work with Poolesville Global Ecology Students at the Smith Center continue to cultivate new opportunities throughout the year. The Student Climate Action Council will expand its role in all areas-advocacy, outreach and education, and support for climate-related action. In addition, grant funding has been identified for the SY24-25 Youth Climate Summit.

MCPS plans to phase in programming at the Loiederman REACH Hub to include after school enrichment, curriculum integration, and internship opportunities.

MCPS plans to convene a multi-disciplinary workgroup to identify climate change topics in current curriculum and create talking points for teachers and principals that address current and planned climate change education. In addition, MCPS will Provide professional development to all staff at schools with newly installed outdoor learning spaces on their use for instruction with a focus on climate change education.

MCPS is targeting 100% of the schools to submit Sustainability Action Plans during 2024-25 school year. The Sustainability Action Plans provide a significant opportunity for the central office staff to learn of the progress that schools are making and the areas in which they are seeking support. In addition, MCPS plans to expand its food recovery program to all schools.

Montgomery College will continue to participate with other County Agencies. Discussions are underway to assist the County in developing specific Climate Action Plan training programs for skilled trades and other climate related practitioners.

For FY25 DEP will communicate with residents with a more targeted approach through door-to-door outreach through Project Porchlight and advertisements in strategic places to reach residents that speak different languages

DEP, in partnership with CASA, Everyday Canvassing and other collaborators will deliver targeted training for frontline, under-resourced community members, providing them with skills in Popular Education, Climate Justice, Participatory Action Research, and Leadership Development to facilitate their participation in collaborative governance processes with government representatives and policymakers.

DEP will implement a training program for selected County staff focusing on Equitable Community Engagement, with a climate justice focus, including approaches to sharing power and creating authentic partnerships with under-resourced communities to facilitate equitable climate justice policy and program development

For FY25 DHHS is planning 18 classes and 2 more Community Park Cleanups for residents and 4 new Lunch & Learns for its employees.



Zero Waste

Reducing waste is an important area for continued improvement in both emissions reduction and environmental stewardship.

The County's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is taking steps to evaluate measures and develop a systematic process to close the Resource Recovery Facility (RRF) and change how the County manages its solid waste and recycling materials. The County's goals are to:

- Manage solid waste materials in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.
- Continue to provide exceptional, reliable, and cost-effective solid waste materials management services to the County now and in the future.
- Modernize our solid waste materials management system through a process that is robust, independent, data-driven, and transparent.
- Work with the County's Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) which has for many years supported the county in its Aiming for Zero Waste initiatives, and recommended a major public campaign to communicate the zero waste vision and explain how the recommended actions will make significant contributions to county goals of greenhouse gas (GHG) mitigation, resource conservation and pollution prevention.

During FY24, DEP advanced the Zero Waste Initiative through the following key programs and projects:

- 1. Food Waste Reduction Education Campaign:** DEP created this educational initiative to raise awareness throughout the community and to provide useful tips to reduce the creation of food waste to begin with. This program was initiated in FY19 and has continued through FY24. The County's "Food Is Too Good to Waste" educational awareness campaign provides residents, schools, businesses, and organizations with recommendations and tips on ways to reduce wasted

food. The campaign also promotes "Food Waste Prevention Week" (April 1–7, 2024).

- 2. Edible Food Recovery Program:** DEP created this program to increase the donation of edible food that exceeds the needs of generators, to food assistance provider organizations, which can then distribute it to community members living with food insecurity. In creating this program, DEP established its Edible Food Recovery Working Group, comprised of several public and private partners, including Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Montgomery County Office of Food Systems Resilience, the Montgomery County Food Council, Manna Food Center, and Community Food Rescue. These collaboration efforts aim to develop recommendations and implementation measures to increase edible food donations to benefit those in need.
- 3. Commercial Food Scraps Recycling Partnership Program:** DEP's nationally-recognized program was initiated in FY19 and has continued through FY24. The program focuses on businesses, organizations



and government facilities that generate larger quantities of pre-consumer food scraps, and that have never implemented a program to separate their food scraps for recycling. The County provides intensive and tailored technical assistance, training, education, and support to commercial partners, to assist them in establishing food scraps recycling programs on-site. The County collects and transports the food scraps and acceptable organic materials, to the Prince George's County Organics Composting Facility, where the materials are recycled into compost. The County continues to add new commercial partners to the program and all of the graduates who have completed the program continue to recycle their food scraps on their own.

4. Single-Family Residential Curbside Food Scraps Recycling Program (Pilot): DEP initiated this pilot program in FY20 and currently serves volunteer single-family households within designated areas in Bethesda/Rockville, Potomac, and Silver Spring. Food scraps and acceptable organic materials are source separated by the resident, and a private-sector hauler under contract to the County collects the material curbside with final transport to the Prince George's County Organics Composting Facility. This pilot program was developed and implemented to assess and demonstrate the feasibility of adding curbside food scraps recycling collection service to single-family homes county-wide, and to collect and evaluate data, information and feedback that will inform the future planning process.

5. Food Scraps Recycling Drop-Off Locations: In FY24 DEP initiated this program to establish multiple locations where County residents may bring their food scraps for recycling. There are four strategically located food scraps recycling drop-off locations throughout the County, in Bethesda, Silver Spring, Derwood and Olney, at existing farmers markets that have weekend hours of operation. By establishing this program, we are providing residents

with convenient access to additional food scraps recycling options, to reduce the amount of food scraps disposed in the trash and increase recycling of food scraps in the County while making progress toward zero waste. Montgomery County residents can participate in the County operated food scraps recycling drop-off locations at no additional cost.

6. Save-As-You-Throw (SAYT) Program, Phase I: During FY23, the County initiated a feasibility assessment regarding SAYT, which was completed in early FY24. The intent of the SAYT program is to increase source reduction, waste diversion, and enhanced recycling through providing incentives to single-family households that receive County curbside collection and disposal services. This program would target reductions in trash generation, increased diversion and recycling of dual-stream recyclables, and co-collection of food scraps and yard trim for recycling. During FY24, the County further evaluated implementation scenarios for SAYT including phased or county-wide rollout as well as various route locations to initiate the program under a phased approach.

7. Organics Management Facility Development: The County currently owns and contracts the operation for the Yard Trim Composting Facility, which can accept Tier 1 feedstocks such as organic plant matter derived from gardening, landscaping, and tree trimming activities. A County-owned Organics Management Facility that can accept Tier 1 feedstocks and Tier 2 feedstocks such as food scraps and non-recyclable/compostable paper would support the SAYT Program and reduce the amount of waste requiring disposal. In FY24, the County completed an Organics Management Plan with siting, processing technology, and capacity planning analyses. The County also obtained an approved Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget and initiated CIP project activities.



Leafgro is a soil amendment used in gardens and lawns by homeowners, landscaping professionals and farmers. Yard trimming materials such as grass, leaves and garden cuttings are diverted from landfills (in your paper lawn brown bags or reusable containers) and brought to the Montgomery County Yard Trim Composting Facility in Dickerson by rail. The materials are composted and Leafgro is the end product that can be purchased at local retailers. It's an outstanding example of recycling at its best.

- 8. Enhanced Recycling and Reuse Programs:** The County continually researches and evaluates opportunities to increase waste diversion, develops programs for the recycling of hard to manage materials, and identifies mechanisms to foster material reuse. In FY24, the County developed recycling drop-off areas at the Shady Grove Processing Facility and Transfer Station to include mattresses, textiles, and film plastics. In FY24, the County also developed a new reuse opportunity for durable medical equipment, and enhanced reuse drop-off areas for books, bicycles, and used building materials.

- 9. Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) Upgrades:** The County currently owns and contracts the operation for their existing dual-stream Materials Recovery Facility (MRF), which was constructed in 1991 and received a processing line update in 2002. In FY24, the County completed preliminary engineering analyses, a facility condition assessment, and a pre-design evaluation report for the existing MRF under approved CIP budget. These activities will be used to directly inform the basis of design and permitting for the full upgrade of the commingled container recycling system as well as improvements to the existing MRF building and building systems. The MRF Upgrades project goals include increased processing capacity, reliability, and recyclables capture and quality to maximize revenue for the sale of recyclable commodities to offset operations costs.

10. Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Management

Systems Analysis: The County initiated this project in FY24, which includes the evaluation of alternative MSW Management Systems with waste diversion and waste processing technologies that, in combination, will provide for source reduction, increased recycling, enhanced energy production potential, and decreased residual waste that requires final disposal in landfills. The alternative MSW Management Systems will be compared against the County's existing waste processing and disposal operations, in an effort to analyze scenarios for closing the existing MRF and modernize the existing solid waste management system to meet the County's needs over the next 20-30 years. The project was ongoing throughout FY24 with anticipated completion in FY25.

MCPS also actively participates in Zero Waste activities. In FY24 82 schools participated in the food recovery program, with an average of 52 items at each participating school. This food is offered back to our students in several different ways and is a better alternative to composting. In FY24 MCPS obtain a

State Grant for postconsumer composting; programs at 19 schools. MCPS plans to expand its food recovery programs to as many schools as possible in FY25.

RACIAL EQUITY + SOCIAL JUSTICE

As the County strives for Zero Waste, the amount of material in recycling streams has increased dramatically. To handle increased volumes while keeping user costs low, DEP's Recycling and Resource Management Division (RRM) continued progressing a CIP project to update the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) located at the Shady Grove Transfer Station and Recycling Center in Derwood. The site is located in a census tract with a disadvantaged community that is overburdened by environmental hazards. The upgrades to the MRF will reduce exposure to pollutants and hazardous materials.

Planning for the CIP project also uncovered emerging equity issues, as changes in consumer behavior have resulted in increasing numbers of lithium batteries entering

the recycling stream. Batteries cause fires in the MRF, causing a disproportionate safety burden on a primarily minority workforce. DEP's RRM submitted a proposal to the US EPA to use cutting edge AI technology to remove batteries and other hazards, reducing the likelihood of fires and reducing exposure of the workforce to hazardous materials.

LOOKING FORWARD TO FY25

Into FY25 DEP will continue to its Zero Waste education campaigns and collaborations with food rescue organizations, seek partnerships with commercial businesses, focus on rolling out its SAYT pilot program, identify a suitable site for Organics Management, move forward a new commingled container recycling system (and building modifications), and seek to improve the County's Construction and Demolition Debris (CDD) management program.



Other Climate Activities

In FY24 all nine Montgomery County public golf courses achieved “Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary” status through the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP), placing them among an exclusive group of only 750 golf courses worldwide. The most recent courses to be certified were Falls Road in Potomac, Hampshire Greens in Ashton, Rattlewood in Mount Airy and Sligo Creek in Silver Spring.

Montgomery County Golf (MCG) courses are a division of the Montgomery County Revenue Authority.

The other courses operated by Montgomery County Golf are Needwood in Derwood, Laytonsville, Little Bennett in Clarksburg, Northwest in Silver Spring and The Crossvines in Poolesville.

To receive certification, a course must demonstrate that it maintains a high degree of environmental quality in several areas, including environmental planning, wildlife and habitat management, outreach and education, chemical use reduction and safety, water conservation and water quality management.



Legislative and Regulatory Policy Agenda

FY24 LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MAY 2021

Public Engagement + Education

Bill: Montgomery County, Community Choice Energy Pilot Program, MC 17-21, HB 768

Status: Passed

Description: Beginning December 31, 2023, Montgomery County may form a community choice aggregator.

Details: MC 17-21

NOVEMBER 2023

Transportation

Bill: Rustic Roads Program, Rustic Roads Advisory Committee, Bill 30-23

Status: Passed

Description: The County Executive must appoint, subject to confirmation by the County Council, a Rustic Roads Advisory Committee. The Committee must promote public awareness and knowledge of the County rustic roads program.

Details: Montgomery County Council, Legislative Information Management System

JANUARY 2024

Public Engagement + Education

Bill: Taxation Paper Carryout Bags and Prohibition on Plastic Carryout Bags ("Bring Your Own Bag") Bill 24-24

Status: Introduced

Description: Would require a tax on paper carryout bags provided by a retail establishment at the point of sale, with certain exceptions.

Details: Montgomery County Council, Legislative Information Management System

JULY 2023

Clean Energy

Bill: Environmental Sustainability Montgomery County Green Bank, Bill 3-23

Status: Passed

Description: Make climate change mitigation and adaptation a prominent focus of the Montgomery County Green Bank's mission.

Details: Montgomery County Council, Legislative Information Management System

JANUARY 2024

Public Engagement + Education

Bill: Building Energy Performance Standards Executive Regulation 17-23 Extension Resolution

Status: Approved

Description: Would create new definitions of cost effectiveness, economic infeasibility, and simple payback to address the economic feasibility of a package of energy improvement measures.

Details: Memorandum

2025



STATE + FEDERAL CLIMATE ACTION PRIORITIES

Montgomery County has established nation-leading ambitious and important goals to reduce energy use and climate pollution and enhance climate resilience, joining with hundreds of jurisdictions across the country with goals to combat climate change. Through local policy, investment, and community partnerships, the County is taking many significant steps toward the goal of eliminating greenhouse gas emissions.

However, the County has limited authority in several key areas including power generation, regional infrastructure investments, and standards for new buildings, vehicles, and equipment. State and federal leadership and partnership is critical to enable Montgomery County and communities across the nation to achieve our climate goals.

STATE CLIMATE ACTION PRIORITIES

Montgomery County calls on the State to support bold and equitable efforts to reduce climate pollution through clean and renewable energy use, solar development, building decarbonization, data center and electricity grid management, transportation, and other solutions while seeking to minimize costs to ratepayers. The County also encourages the State to support initiatives to strengthen resilience to climate change, including through flood mitigation and extreme heat preparedness.

In the 2024 General Assembly session, the County successfully advocated for state policy change aligned with the County's climate and other priorities, including bills that will:

- Improve the EmPOWER Maryland statewide energy savings program to prioritize GHG reductions and offer incentives to help building owners switch from gas furnaces to efficient electric heating equipment;
- Require natural gas utilities to develop pilot projects to help decarbonize neighborhoods;
- Make it easier for residents of common ownership communities to install EV equipment to charge where they live;
- Enhance incentives for solar energy development on rooftops, parking lot canopies, and brownfields;
- Provide grants to help low-to-moderate households deploy solar projects;
- Help to maximize the amount of offshore wind capacity that will be built in already approved lease areas;
- Tighten regulations on retail energy suppliers to counter often predatory business practices; and,
- Ensure that at least 40% of funding provided through the State's Comprehensive Flood Management Grant Program be used for projects located in or directly benefiting underserved or overburdened communities.

Looking ahead to 2025, ongoing State climate policy priorities include:

- Strengthening the State's Building Energy Performance Standards;
- Supporting solar development with consideration of other land use priorities;
- Accelerating clean energy use including by improving the State's Renewable Portfolio Standard;
- Enhancing understanding of and mitigating potential impacts of data center development on local land, air and water resources and the electric grid;

- Continuing investment in public transportation infrastructure; and,
- Identifying new forms of revenue to support climate action in Maryland.

FEDERAL POLICY PRIORITIES

We encourage the federal government to preserve and enact more robust:

- Power plant emissions standards;
- Vehicle fuel efficiency and emissions standards;
- Energy-using equipment efficiency standards (e.g., furnaces, water heaters);
- Investment in federal resilience programs (e.g., National Flood Insurance Program);
- Successful and full implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Inflation Reduction Act and the CHIPS and Science Act; and,
- Federal investment and reforms to accelerate the just and equitable development of interstate electricity transmission infrastructure and utility-scale energy storage development.

FEDERAL POLICY PRIORITIES

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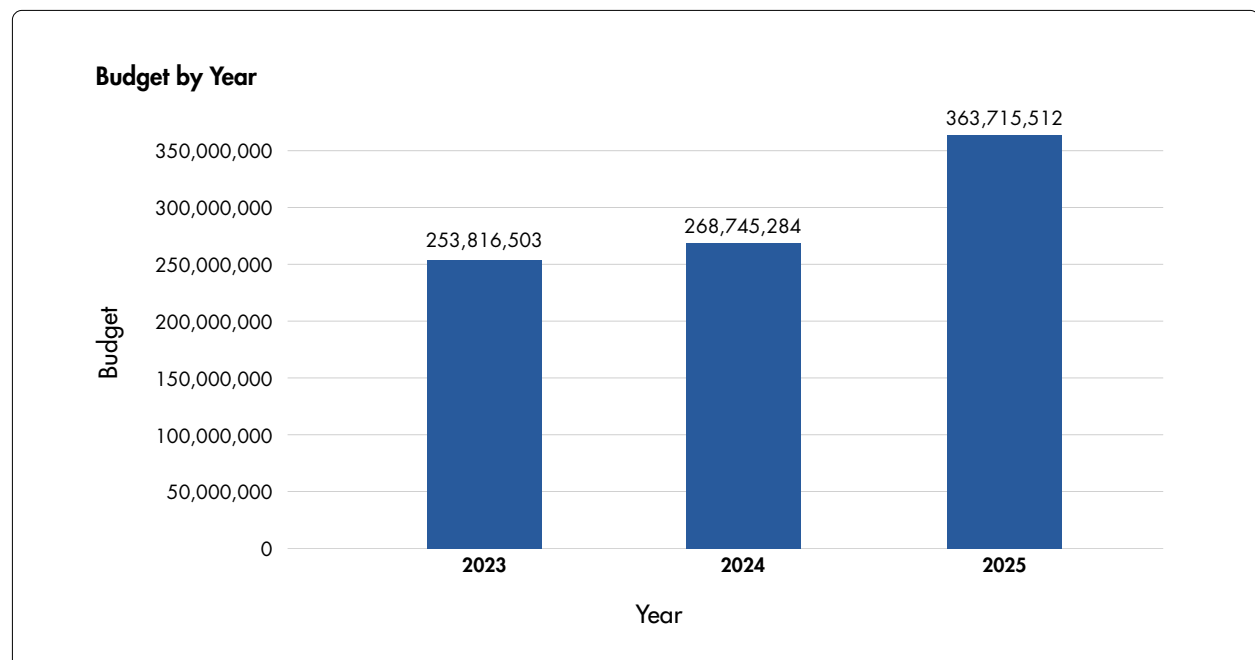
- Vehicle fuel efficiency and emissions standards;
- Energy-using equipment efficiency standards (e.g., furnaces, water heaters);
- Investment in federal resilience programs (e.g., National Flood Insurance Program);
- Successful and full implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Inflation Reduction Act and the CHIPS and Science Act; and,
- Federal investment and reforms to accelerate the just and equitable development of interstate electricity transmission infrastructure and utility-scale energy storage development.



FY25 Budget and Staffing

The FY25 approved budget includes \$363.7 million for Climate Actions. This is a \$95 million (or 35.36%) increase over the FY24 and a \$109.8 million (or 43.30%) increase over the FY23 approved budget. The increased funding is spread throughout the operating and capital improvement budgets of the County, and funds the following efforts:

- Support Greenhouse Gas Reduction from Buildings
- Support Climate Change Solutions in the Transportation Sector
- Accelerate Nature-based Carbon Sequestration
- Support Zero Waste Efforts
- Increase the County's Resilience to Weather Events
- Accelerating Implementation of the Climate Action Plan
- Implementing countywide flood management
- Increasing renewable energy and clean energy support
- Implementing energy efficiency Program
- Supporting Greenhouse Gas Reduction and Adaptation Measures in Low Income Housing
- Undertaking building decarbonization and outreach program
- Constructing Solar resiliency Hub
- Enhancing the County's Climate Governance Capacity
- Conducting equitable resilience and inclusive engagement
- Increased stakeholder engagement and a vigorous public outreach campaign
- New climate staff:
 - Three new climate staff positions within the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to enhance governance capacity and zero waste planning.



- Two new climate staff positions within the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) to address changes to the energy conservation code and implementation of the Climate Action Plan.

The Approved FY25 Capital Budget, which looks forward to FY30, includes substantial investments for climate-related infrastructure development and construction projects over the five-year period. This includes:

- Provides \$19.1 million for the Montgomery County Green Bank — an increase of almost \$500,000 over the FY24 budget.
- Adds \$8 million in new spending to further the County's efforts to fight climate change.
- Adds funds to support climate change solutions in the transportation sector, clean energy efforts and zero waste efforts.
- Adds \$40 million in new capital funding to enhance energy conservation in County-owned facilities and to support the implementation of the new Building Energy Performance Standards.
- Invests \$153 million to begin implementation of a comprehensive flood management plan which will construct flood mitigation improvements in watersheds most prone to flooding or that are particularly vulnerable to future flooding.

OTHER FUNDING SOURCES

Sectors in the CAP that saw successful grant funding included clean energy, building emissions reduction, transportation emissions reduction, and carbon sequestration. FY24 saw significant growth in grant funding among County departments, with awards coming from a variety of federal, state, and private sources.

- County departments brought in nearly \$5 million in grants funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

- IIJA and IRA funds supported diverse initiatives such as the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) and expansion of the charging network, clean energy, zero-emission buses, building efficiency standards and improvements, micro-mobility and street safety, and storm-water management.
- The county received over \$7 million via Federal Earmarks in the annual appropriations bill in FY24, providing key support for infrastructure improvements, public transportation, and EVs.
- State grants were critical to the County's clean energy transition. The County received nearly \$4 million in competitive state grants to support County-owned and public-facing facility upgrades, EV installation, purchased of clean fuel vehicles, public transportation, and nature-based solutions.
- The County was awarded over \$800,000 to support nature-based solutions from the Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund in FY24, continuing a multi-year relationship that supports almost \$1 million per year.

The types of projects or initiatives contributing to the achievement of each sector's goals, as outlined in the CAP, and successfully securing grants in FY24, primarily include efforts such as tree planting, electric vehicles (EVs), public transit buses, and building performance standards.

Grant award estimates represent a snapshot of current data and are continuously being updated. It is based primarily on information from MCG departments, including DEP, DOT, DHCA, DPS, and DGS. Other County entities, such as MCPS, are also actively pursuing and securing grants.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF SPECIFIC GRANTS AWARDED IN FY 2024 TO THE FOLLOWING DEPARTMENTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

DEP

- DEP has received approximately \$ 290,000 in funding through the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (EPA funds/DNR pass through) to the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund program for the Germantown Park Stormwater Management Pond Retrofit and Stream Restoration project.
- Awarded approximately \$ 813,710 in funding through the Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund for the Urban Trees Award Program of Montgomery County Public School Urban Tree Planting project.
- Secured approximately \$ 500,000 from the Federal Earmark for the Community Grants (Congressionally Directed Spending) program of Montgomery County Watershed Green Infrastructure and Tree Planting project.

DOT

- DOT has obtained approximately \$ 2,520,000 in funding through the Federal Grants for the Safe Streets and Roads for All (Round 2) program to the Montgomery County 2024 Safe Streets and Roads for All Proposal- Action Plan Update and Safe Turns Demonstration project and to the Regional Infrastructure Accelerators Program of the Accelerate MC project.
- On top of that DOT received \$ 5,500,000 in funding through the Federal Earmark Grants for the Congressionally Directed Spending program of Goshen Road Pedestrian and Safety Improvements and North Bethesda Metro Station Northern Entrance projects.
- Additionally, the DOT has received \$373,070 in funding through the State Grants for the Ridesharing/ Commuter Assistance Program.

DGS

- DGS has obtained approximately \$ 2,940,000 in funding through the State of Maryland Energy Administration for the Medium heavy Zero Emissions vehicle FY24 and for the Resilient Maryland Capital Support programs.

The County brings in both tangible and intangible resources through partnerships, which can be challenging to quantify. For example, tangible resources may include EV chargers along I-95 corridor equipment and Solar + Storage for low-income homes while intangible resources could involve technical assistance for building codes, and EVs installed by a third party.

LOOKING FORWARD TO FY25

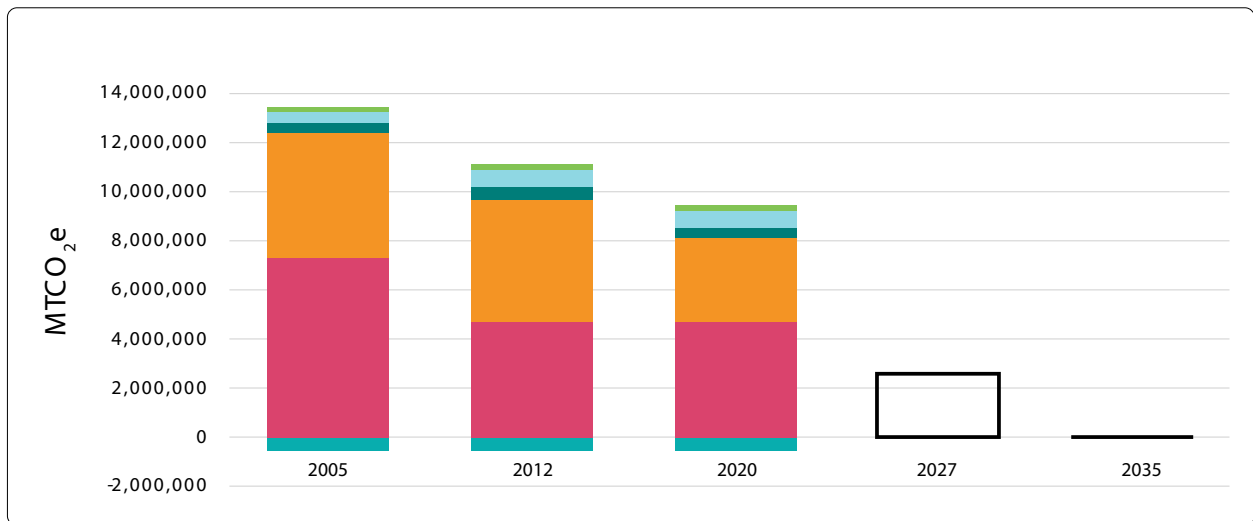
In FY25, the County will explore grant funding opportunities being made available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Key FY25 applications those are outstanding:

- A multi-jurisdiction coalition application to the US Department of Transportation's (DOT) RAISE competition to fund improvements to the Bethesda Metro Station;
- An application to the US Department of Energy's (DOE) WASTE application to support conversion of organic waste to biofuel and/or green hydrogen for Zero Emission Buses; and
- An application to the US DOE's Latest and Zero Building Energy Codes Program to support equitable implementation of the County's Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS).
- The County continues to apply for diverse State grants from the Maryland Energy Administration and Maryland Department of Natural Resources to support watershed programs, flood management, clean energy, and conversion to clean fuels, among others.
- The County also continues to apply for foundation funding, such as the Chesapeake Bay Trust, to support nature-based resilience solutions.
- Upcoming applications include two to the US EPA, with one focused on composting and workforce development in the County's correctional system, and one to finance safety upgrades at the County's recycling facility, complementing an existing CIP support package earlier approved by Council.
- In the first half of FY25, the County had prepared approximately \$50 million in grant applications.
- From the grants applied for the FY25, the County had already been awarded an estimated \$9 million in IIJ A funds, including through State pass-through partnerships, and \$10 million in IRA funds, plus additional partnership awards bringing technical assistance to the county.
- Approximately \$2 million had already been awarded in competitive state grants to support County-owned and public-facing facility upgrades, EV installation, purchased of clean fuel vehicles, public transportation, and nature-based solutions in FY25.
- The County is paying close attention to the federal granting landscape and is ready to pivot projects and messaging to remain competitive.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Inventories

Montgomery County's greenhouse gas (GHG) Emissions Inventories are conducted by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) every 2 to 3 years. These inventories have been completed for the years 2005, 2012, 2015, 2018, and 2020. The GHG emissions inventory for calendar year 2023 is currently underway. They analyze emissions from the Montgomery County community, which includes both the County government and its residents.

Between 2005 and 2020, Montgomery County's community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions decreased by 30%, despite a 13% increase in population. In 2020, forests and trees sequestered more than 419,000 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent (MTCO₂e) or 5% of total emissions. In 2020, residential and commercial energy consumption accounted for 49% of measured emissions and transportation-related emissions accounted for 40%.



Forest + Tree Removals

Forest + Tree Emissions

Other

Waste

Buildings

Transportation

Anticipated: Goal to Cut Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions 80% by 2027

Anticipated: Goal to Cut Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions 100% by 2035

COMMUNITY-WIDE GREENHOUSE GAS INVENTORY SUMMARY

Data provided by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments for Montgomery County

Note: Other refers to emissions associated with the release of Hydrofluorocarbons, emissions resulting from local natural gas system losses within the community, as well as emissions from Agriculture.

INVENTORY BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and local governments established regional greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets: 10% below projected levels by 2012, 20% below 2005 levels by 2020, 50% by 2030, and 80% by 2050. These goals were achieved in 2012 and 2020. COG conducts community-scale inventories for all 24 member local

governments, northern Virginia, and metropolitan Washington, following the U.S. Communities Protocol for Accounting and Reporting Greenhouse Gas Emissions (USCP) and Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Inventories (GPC) standards to track emissions from residents, businesses, industry, and visitors.

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) will conduct its next greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions inventory for the 2023 calendar year, with the results expected by the end of 2025.
















For more detailed information on Montgomery County GHG emissions are available at:

- [GHG Summary Fact Sheet](#)
- [GHG Inventory Data](#)
- [GHG Contribution Analysis Tool](#)



















FY24 Progress At A Glance

PROGRESS LEGEND	Not Started   	Initial Steps Taken   	Significant Progress   	Completed or Institutionalized   
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




































CLEAN ENERGY

E-1	Community Choice Energy Program	  	E-4	Public Facility Solar Photovoltaic Installations and Groundwork	  
E-2	Private Building Solar Photovoltaic Code Requirements	  	E-5	Advocate for a 100% Renewable Portfolio Standard by 2030	  
E-3	Promote Private Solar Photovoltaic Systems	  			





























































CARBON SEQUESTRATION

S-1	Retain and Increase Forests	  	S-4	Regenerative Agriculture	  
S-2	Retain and Increase Tree Canopy	  	S-5	Restore Soil Fertility, Microbial Activity, and Moisture Holding Capacity	  
S-3	Restore and Enhance Meadows and Wetlands	  	S-6	Whole-System Carbon Management and Planning	  

TRANSPORTATION

T-1	Expand Public Transit	  	T-8	Transportation Demand Management and Telework Strategies	  
T-2	Expand Active Transportation and Shared Micromobility Network	  	T-9	Traffic Management Systems	  
T-3	Private Vehicle Electrification Incentives and Disincentives	  	T-10	Electric Vehicle Car Share Program for Low-Income Communities	  
T-4	Constrain Cars in Urban Areas, Limit New Road Construction	  	T-11	Off-Road Vehicle and Equipment Electrification	  
T-5	Zero Emission Public Buses and School Buses	  	T-12	Advocate for a Vehicle Carbon Gas Tax or VMT Tax	  
T-6	Electrify County and Public Agencies Fleet	  	T-13	Advocate for Rail Alternative Fuels	  
T-7	Expand the Electric Vehicle Charging Network	  			

CLIMATE ADAPTION

A-1	Water Infrastructure Resilience	  	A-11	Climate Adapted Development Standards	  
A-2	Repair and Enhancement of Stormwater Conveyance Systems	  	A-12	Storm Water Retention Credit Training	  
A-3	Temperature Monitoring and Alerts	  	A-13	Ban Stormwater Management Requirement Waivers	  
A-4	Extreme Weather Energy Efficiency Building Code	  	A-14	Update Floodplain Maps	  
A-5	Climate-Adapted Housing Incentives/Subsidies	  	A-15	Water Supply Protection	  
A-6	Green/Cool/PV Roof and Pavement Code	  	A-16	Flood Rescue Resources	  
A-7	Green Public Spaces	  	A-17	On-Site Water Reuse	  
A-8	Harden Emergency Shelters and Install Resilience Hubs	  	A-18	Expanded Community Gardens	  
A-9	Mold Protection and Remediation	  	A-19	Advocacy for Off-River Water Storage	  
A-10	Green Infrastructure	  	A-20	Study Potential for Buildings in the County to Flood and Possible Remedies	  

PROGRESS LEGEND

Not Started ●●●●

Initial Steps Taken ●●●●

Significant Progress ●●●●

Completed or Institutionalized ●●●●

GOVERNANCE

G-1	Build awareness among all Montgomery County Government staff about climate change	●●●●
G-2	Establish a Climate Change Academy to integrate Climate Change Training into the Professional Development of MCG staff	●●●●
G-3	Incorporate climate competencies into Montgomery County Government job descriptions and Performance Plans	●●●●
G-4	Identify and create new positions that are needed for the County government to prepare for and respond to climate hazards, implement climate adaptation measures, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions	●●●●
G-5	Establish a cross departmental Climate Innovation Lab to develop, fund and implement climate and resiliency initiatives	●●●●
G-6	Designate Climate Ambassadors within each County department	●●●●
G-7	Evaluate and update County planning, policy, and operations activities to account for the risks of climate change impacts and prioritize the needs of vulnerable residents	●●●●
G-8	Evaluate and update County planning, policy, and operations activities to reduce GHG	●●●●
G-9	Incorporate climate considerations into the County's budgeting processes	●●●●
G-10	Develop financing strategies for implementing climate actions and incorporate climate considerations into County finance practices	●●●●
G-11	Develop climate, energy, health and racial equity metrics and a data driven assessment and reporting process	●●●●
G-12	Formalize the Climate Leadership Team to guide the implementation of climate plan actions	●●●●
G-13	Update the County's teleworking and transit benefit policies to encourage MCG staff to reduce vehicle miles traveled	●●●●
G-14	Establish Montgomery County Government Carbon Fund for Air Travel	●●●●
G-15	Consolidate County climate data	●●●●
G-16	Conduct climate vulnerability detailed assessments	●●●●

BUILDINGS

B-1	Electrification Requirements for Existing Commercial and Public Buildings	●●●●
B-2	Electrification Requirements for Existing Residential	●●●●
B-3	Energy Performance Standard for Existing Commercial and Multifamily Buildings	●●●●
B-4	Electrification Incentives for Existing Buildings	●●●●
B-5	All-Electric Building Code for New Construction	●●●●
B-6	Disincentivize and/or Eliminate Natural Gas in New Construction	●●●●
B-7	Net Zero Energy Building Code for New Construction	●●●●

PROGRESS LEGEND

Not Started ●●●

Initial Steps Taken ●●●

Significant Progress ●●●

Completed or Institutionalized ●●●

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, PARTNERSHIPS, AND EDUCATION

P-1	Undertake vigorous public outreach campaign aimed at empowering the public with information on how to reduce emissions and adapt to the impacts from climate change	●●●
P-2	Conduct an outreach campaign that uses evidence-based communications strategies	●●●
P-3	Form a Climate Change Communication Coalition	●●●
P-4	Enhance County websites to focus more sharply on climate change	●●●
P-5	Establish a Community Justice Academy in which Graduating Community Ambassadors Representing their Neighbors Conceive and Co-create Integrated Health, Equity and Quality of Life Solutions Directly Applicable to their Communities.	●●●
P-6	Use Climate Energy and Air Quality Advisory Committee as a resource to advise the County	●●●
P-7	Facilitate ongoing input from community members on the CAP's implementation	●●●
P-8	Engage County artists through public art installations to raise awareness, discussion, and action on climate change	●●●
P-9	Support the efforts of community organizations, businesses, and associations that promote and operationalize equitable climate action	●●●
P-10	Establish a statewide coalition of local governments and youth groups focused on advancing ambitious state climate policy by collectively advocating their positions before the state legislature, Public Services Commission, and the utility companies	●●●
P-11	Establish partnerships with federal agencies located within the County's boundaries on GHG mitigation and climate resiliency efforts	●●●
P-12	Advocate for the continued integration of climate change education into the existing school curriculum	●●●
P-13	Develop a standardized climate change curriculum across public schools and recommend the same for private schools and home schools	●●●
P-14	Provide professional development for educators on climate change topics	●●●
P-15	Use school gardens or other outdoor learning facilities as a jumping off point to address a multitude of climate related topics	●●●
P-16	Develop increased opportunities for students to participate in climate change learning experiences outside of the classroom	●●●
P-17	Develop sustainability goals for schools to reach and provide incentives to do so	●●●
P-18	Encourage climate change action at home	●●●
P-19	Establish cross departmental partnership to facilitate implementation of climate goals at County schools	●●●

Letter of Appreciation

Thank you to the many contributors to the Fiscal Year 24 Climate Action Plan Report. Most importantly, thank you to the leadership and many staff of Montgomery County Government, the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Montgomery County Public Schools, Washington Suburban Sanitation Commission and the Montgomery County Green Bank for their continued support and dedication to not only taking inspiring climate action, but reporting on it. My sincere appreciation goes out to the following individuals.

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Public Schools](#)
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[WSSC Water](#)
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[M-NCPPC Parks](#)
Justin Cantwell
[M-NCPPC Planning](#)
Mia Rothberg

In addition, I am grateful to the numerous residents, neighborhood groups, non-profit organizations, local businesses, and partners that support and enact climate solutions here in Montgomery County. We do not act alone – our local elected officials, cities, and state and federal delegations collaborate with us. We could not make the progress we’ve made and the progress we’re planning without broad and consistent support.

Sincerely,

Sarah Kogel-Smucker, Montgomery County Climate Change Officer

Acronyms

AAHP: African American Health Program

AHFP: Agricultural History Farm Park

BDS: Business development specialist

BEPS: Building Energy Performance Standards

BIL: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, also known as IIJA (see below)

BOE: Board of Education

CAA: Community Action Agency

CAI: Community Advocacy Institute

CAP: Climate Action Plan

CBT: Chesapeake Bay Trust

CCE: Community Choice Energy

CEAQAC: Climate, Energy, and Air Quality Advisory Committee

CE: County Executive

CEX: County Executive Office

CIP: Capital Improvements Program

C-PACE: Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy

DEP: Department of Environment Protection

DGS: Department of General Services

DPS: Department of Permitting Services

EV: Electric Vehicle

FEMA: Federal Emergency Management Agency

FIN: Department of Finance

FTA: Federal Transit Administration

FY: Fiscal Year

GHG: Greenhouse Gas

HAWK: High-Intensity Activated crosswalk

HHS: Department of Health and Human Services

HOA: Homeowners Association

HOC: Housing Opportunities Commission

IECC: International Energy Conservation Code

IIJA: Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, also known as BIL (see above)

ILSR: Institute for Local-Self Resilience

IGCC: International Green Construction Code

IRA: Inflation Reduction Act

KW: kilowatt(s)

KWH: kilowatt hour(s)

LHI: Latino Health Initiative

LLC: Limited Liability Company

MCCPTA: Montgomery County Council of Parent-Teacher Association

MCDOT: Montgomery County Department of Transportation

MCG: Montgomery County Government

MCPD: Montgomery County Police Department

MCPS: Montgomery County Public Schools

MDOT: Maryland Department of Transportation

M-NCPPC: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

MCRA: Montgomery County Revenue Authority

MORE: Montgomery County Racial Equity Network

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding

MSDE: Maryland State Department of Education

MTA: Maryland Transportation Authority

MW: Megawatt(s)

NOAA: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NREL: National Renewable Energy Laboratory

NSA: Naval Support Facility

OAG: Office of Agriculture

OEMHS: Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security

OHR: Office of Human Resources

OIR: Office of Intergovernmental Relations

OMB: Office of Management and Budget

OPI: Office of Public Information

PEPCO: Potomac Electric Power Company

PSC: Public Service Commission

PV: Photovoltaic

RAISE: Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity

RFP: request for proposal

SHA: State Highway Administration

SSL: Student Service Learning

TPB: Transportation Planning Board

UMD: University of Maryland

UME: University of Maryland Extension

USDOT: United States Department of Transportation

WMATA: Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

WSSC: Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission



Climate action plans, appendices, work plans, press releases, and factsheets are available on the Montgomery County Climate Portal at montgomerycountymd.gov/climate.

For questions or comments about this report, reach us at: climate@montgomerycountymd.gov.