



Maryland Green Registry MEMBER

The Maryland Green Registry promotes and recognizes sustainable practices at organizations of all types and sizes. Members agree to share at least five environmental practices and one measurable result while striving to continually improve their environmental performance.

Howard County, Maryland



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<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/>
Municipality
Member since April 2026

Management and Leadership

Environmental Policy Statement

Executive Order 2022-12: [EO 2022-12.pdf](#)

Environmental Team

The County Executive launched a Climate Action Subcabinet (“the Subcabinet”) in August 2023 to oversee implementation of the County’s Climate Forward: Climate Action and Resiliency Plan. The Subcabinet meets quarterly and consists of department and office leadership from almost every County department and office. There are also eight working groups that meet quarterly in between Subcabinet meetings and consist of staff-level subject matter experts and implementers of the Climate Forward Plan. The work groups tackle specific topics – Energy, Waste, Transportation, Nature based climate solutions, Emergency preparedness, Water, Ecosystem Services, and Infrastructure Resiliency.

The Subcabinet and eight work groups are consistently working on projects and next steps outlined in the Climate Forward Plan by bridging cross-departmental gaps, improving communication and teamwork. Various major projects have already begun or completed as a result of these work groups, for example, updates to the County’s Landscape Manual and Design Manuals, event waste reduction, a sustainable public procurement/purchasing policy, electrification of fleet vehicles and landscaping equipment, tree plantings, expanding pollinator habitat, sustainable building design and construction, advancing clean energy deployment, improving energy efficiency in County buildings, and efforts to advance stormwater resiliency in vulnerable watersheds.

Annual Environmental Goals

Executive order 2022-12 established Howard County's goals to reach a 60% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and to become net-zero by 2045 (2005 baseline). The Climate Forward Plan outlines specific incremental goals and metrics to reach these reductions. For example, to meet GHG reduction goals, Howard County needs to have 400 public EV charging stations by 2030, and 2,600 public EV charging stations by 2045.

The County also works to meet, or exceed, as was done previously, the requirements of our state issued water quality requirements (MS4 permit).

Environmental Restoration or Community Environmental Projects

Howard County has a robust list of environmental restoration projects and programs. The Department of Public Works – Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) and The Office of Community Sustainability (OCS) manage various grant assistance programs for County residents, businesses, and nonprofits/HOAs to install stormwater best management practices (BMPs) on their properties. OCS hosts a 20-minute litter cleanup challenge every April. OCS, the Department of Recreation and Parks (DRP), and the Department of Public Works – Bureau of Highways (BOH) manage tree planting programs for public, private, and right-of-way properties. OCS also hosts an annual Trees For Bees giveaway in spring to provide residents and nonprofits with over 1,500 native trees to enhance habitat on their properties. OCS also manages a Plastic Reduction and Environmental Protection (PREP) grant program which distributes grants to non-profit agencies in the County who complete various environmental restoration projects. Project examples include community gardening, litter cleanups, environmental education, and composting.

Howard County surpassed our goal for acres of pollinator habitat, reaching 144 registered acres across 587 individual habitat registrations in 2025. The County continues to promote native plantings and tools to aid residents in converting landscaping and turf, such as the cul-de-sac and native garden templates available for free download. Howard County's Bee City program also promotes habitat awareness through campaigns such as "leave the leaves" and a spring native violet contest.

Aspirational or Long-Term Environmental Goals

In addition to the climate goals set forth in our June 2023 Climate Forward plan, County Executive Calvin Ball also announced in October 2023 our goal to expand the county's overall tree canopy cover to 50% by 2030, prompting the County to accelerate tree plantings significantly over the past two years.

Waste

Solid Waste Reduction and Reuse

Howard County's Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) has many programs focused on waste reduction and reuse. The Alpha Ridge Landfill has a bicycle donation drop off shed, which received over 3,000 bicycles this year to be given away to children in need by nonprofit "Free Bikes 4 Kidz." Another 2,000 bicycles collected at Alpha Ridge were given away overseas through the organization "Bikes for the World." BES also coordinates with the Howard County Library system to organize and promote seed swap events.

Recycling

Howard County's Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) operates a curbside recycling program for County residents and County office buildings. In 2024, the following items were collected for recycling:

- *1,627 mattresses and/or box springs*
- *168.96 tons of tires*
- *295.49 tons of single stream recycling*
- *245.13 tons of rigid plastics*
- *407.03 tons of cardboard*
- *56.90 tons of textiles*
- *39.34 tons of books*

Hazardous Waste/Toxic Use Reduction

The County's Alpha Ridge Landfill collects household hazardous waste above and beyond requirements. Every Saturday from April through November, residents can drop off items at the landfill. Items include, but are not limited to, cleaners, batteries, CFL bulbs, insecticides/pesticides/herbicides, paint, and solvents/strippers. In 2024, the landfill collected 54.08 tons of car batteries and 13.59 tons of cooking oil.

Compost/Organics Recovery

Howard County's Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) operates a curbside composting program, "Feed the Green Bin," for residents in Howard County. In 2024, the program composted 425 tons of food waste and handed out 600 compost bins.

Energy



Energy Efficiency

Howard County has converted all the county-owned streetlights and traffic lights to LED lights, resulting in a reduction of electricity use by over 225,000 kWh per year.

In 2009, Howard County's EPC energy upgrades in seven County facilities resulted in \$238,000 of annual energy savings. In 2015, Howard County's follow-on EPC efforts included energy audits at all 200-plus County-owned facilities and proposed energy conservation measures in 67 buildings. The installation of the measures in all buildings was completed in 2018, and the energy performance contract guarantees \$900,000 in annual cost savings.

On top of the EPC, Howard County received grants and rebates to "retro commission" buildings. Retro-commissioning involves building tune-ups that maximize energy efficiency and cost savings. The building tune-ups include making sure heating and cooling systems are working and are calibrated and programmed properly. Additional tune-ups include repairing and replacing other sensors, coils, and systems. As of 2025, retro commissioning has been completed at the East Columbia Library, Ellicott City Senior Center, North Laurel Community Center, Gateway Building, Glenwood Public Library, Scaggsville Public Safety Complex, George Howard Building, Warfield Building, Carroll/Ligon Buildings, and the Charles E. Miller Library.

Howard County also continually pursues Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) funding every year to complete various energy-savings projects across the County's building portfolio. Efficiency measures funded through these grants include new windows and window film, weatherization, insulation, upgrades to more efficient HVAC equipment, and LED lighting upgrades.



Renewable Energy

Howard County's landmark 2020 solar Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) is the largest in the state and includes rooftop, ground mount, and parking canopies on public and private lands that now provide more than 50 percent of the electricity needed for County government operations. As of 2025, [18 solar projects](#) had been completed under the PPA, generating more than 32 million kWh of electricity annually, enough energy to power more than 3,000 homes for a year. Over the 25-year term of the PPA, the Howard County government is expected to save well over \$90 million in energy costs. As of Spring 2026, a second solar PPA in partnership with the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) and Howard Community College (HCC) has been approved by the

Howard County Council, HCPSS Board of Education, and HCC Board of Trustees. This new PPA will produce seven MW of clean electricity, yielding approximately \$12 to \$14 million in savings across all three institutions.

In Spring 2026, the County announced that it will become the first jurisdiction in Maryland to become a community solar developer, bringing free and discounted solar electricity to low- and moderate-income households.

Building Electrification

Howard County has installed ground source heat pumps at four of its facilities (Elkridge Fire Station, Waterloo Fire Station, Gary J. Arthur Community Center, and Schooley Mill Park Multipurpose Building), resulting in highly efficient electric HVAC systems at these sites. The County has secured grant support to install geothermal heat pumps at two more facilities: the High Ridge Building in Ellicott City, which houses a Head Start daycare and office space for nonprofit organizations, where the new system will replace oil heating, and the Elkridge Community Center that is currently in design) and has applied for grant support for two further systems (a large office building, and a public safety training facility that is currently heating with natural gas).

Howard County is committed to constructing new facilities fully electric, and to replacing oil and natural gas heating wherever feasible. Many of its facilities already operate on air source heat pumps, but due to high costs and necessary electric heavy ups, conversion of existing nonelectric buildings must happen gradually.

Transportation

Employee Commute/Customer Travel

Howard County has added more than 76 public charging stations since 2019. Howard County participates in several programs and partnerships to add capacity. Howard County government also partnered with BGE's EV Smart Program, which installed several chargers on County properties at no cost to the County.

Efficient Fleet Vehicles

Howard County passed an internal Green Fleet Policy, which requires all vehicles purchased by the County to be the most fuel-efficient within their vehicle class. It also requires hybrid, plug-in hybrid, or fully electric vehicles when viable. Finally, the policy requires petroleum fuel powered vehicles purchased by the County to have idle reduction technology.

Water



Water Conservation

The Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) encourages residents to utilize rain barrels to collect and reuse rainwater for nonpotable uses such as watering vegetation. This includes a public education page, which outlines how to use a rain barrel, how to install and maintain a rain barrel, and information about County-led rain barrel giveaways. BES gives away 80 free rain barrels to residents each year through two giveaway events.



Stormwater Management

Howard County has several stormwater programs through its Clean Water Howard initiative. There are three main voluntary programs focusing on different property owner types: residents, non-profits/HOAs, and businesses.

- The CleanScapes program reimburses selected residential homeowners for installing stormwater best management practices (BMPs) on their property, with a 100% reimbursement rate for homeowners meeting income requirements. Homeowners who install projects that treat impervious runoff are also eligible for a credit towards their annual Watershed Protection Fee. Since 2019 the CleanScapes program has awarded more than a million dollars in reimbursements to homeowners for projects.*
- The Commercial Stormwater Partnership Program allows commercial properties to partner with the County to install new or retrofit existing stormwater treatment practices in order to reduce their Watershed Protection Fee. To date we have successfully partnered with 8 commercial properties to retrofit existing stormwater facilities for increased water quantity and quality treatment, while providing these partners with a credit to their Fee.*
- The Nonprofit Watershed Protection Partnership is another stormwater program which incentivizes stormwater BMPs by alleviating stormwater fees for participants. Once the nonprofit completes a partnership agreement with the County, the County can conduct site assessments to provide on-site stormwater treatment opportunities to the Maximum Extent Practicable (MEP). The property owner agrees to implement identified practices and then 100% of the Watershed Protection Fee is credited to the owner. Nonprofits and HOAs are also eligible to apply for the Office of Community Sustainability's Community Stormwater Partnership Grant Program, which offers funds to implement on-the-ground stormwater practices on nonprofit and HOA properties.*

Howard County also takes action to reduce the amount of water pollution from the over application of winter salt. Bureau of Highways, Recreation and Parks, and Facilities staff have participated in Smart Winter Salt Trainings, as well as utilized brine applications and other strategies to reduce salt use where possible.

OCS has done several community outreach tabling events where salt mugs are given away as an educational resource. Salt mugs have text on them which outlines how much salt to use to maintain safety while not polluting waterways.

Green Building

- LEED/Green Globes/Living Building Challenge/International Green Construction Code**

Howard County owns or leases 25 LEED buildings.

Project_Name	Rating_System_Combined	CertLevel
3430 Courthouse Drive, HC Gov't. Complex	LEED-NC 2.2	Silver
NORTH LAUREL COMMUNITY CENTER	LEED-NC 2.2	Silver
Robinson Nature Center	LEED-NC 2.2	Platinum
Northfield Elementary School	LEED for Schools	Silver
Stevens Forest Elementary School	LEED FOR SCHOOLS v2009	Silver
Thunder Hill Elementary School	LEED FOR SCHOOLS v2009	Silver
Bollman Bridge Elementary School	LEED FOR SCHOOLS v2009	Silver
Phelps Luck	LEED FOR SCHOOLS v2009	Silver
Roger Carter Community Center	LEED-NC v2009	Silver
Ducketts Lane Elementary School	LEED FOR SCHOOLS v2009	Gold
Atholton High School	LEED FOR SCHOOLS v2009	Gold
Elkridge Fire Station	LEED-NC v2009	Silver
Longfellow Elementary School	LEED FOR SCHOOLS v2009	Silver
Jessup Elementary School Replacement	LEED FOR SCHOOLS v2009	Silver
Deep Run Elementary School	LEED FOR SCHOOLS v2009	Silver
Wilde Lake Middle School	LEED FOR SCHOOLS v2009	Platinum
Patuxent Valley Middle School	LEED FOR SCHOOLS v2009	Certified
Swansfield Elementary School	LEED FOR SCHOOLS v2009	Silver
Waverly Elementary School	LEED FOR SCHOOLS v2009	Certified
HCLS Elkridge Branch	LEED-NC v2009	Gold
Talbott Springs Elementary School	LEED v4 BD+C: SC	Gold
East Columbia 50+ Center	LEED v4 BD+C: NC	Gold
Hammond High School	LEED v4 BD+C: SC	Certified
HCPSS High School-13	LEED v4 BD+C: SC	Gold
Waterloo Fire Station	LEED v4 BD+C: NC	Gold

Environmental Certification Programs, Awards, and Other Activities

Howard County has a LEED Platinum for Cities and Communities designation and a SoSmart Platinum designation. Howard County was designated a Bee City, USA by the Xerxes Society in 2019 for utilizing integrated pest management, increasing pollinator habitat, and supporting pollinators through native landscapes. Howard County received the Water Environment

Federation's 2025 National Municipal Stormwater and Green Infrastructure Award for Innovation in Financing and Partnerships in a MS4 Phase I jurisdiction. Howard County's Savage Park received the American Green Zone Alliance's Certified Green Zone designation in 2025 for training staff and transitioning from gas powered equipment to electric landscaping equipment for routine maintenance.



Help build a greener, more sustainable Maryland through voluntary practices that reduce environmental impacts and save money.

Learn more at green.maryland.gov

