



Annual Report on the Status of Maryland Department of Planning **Programs that Address Climate Change**

November 2025

In accordance with Governor Wes Moore's [Executive Order 01.01.2024.19](#), "Leadership by State Government: Implementing Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan," the Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) affirms its commitment to:

- Work to address climate change and ensure a just transition to a clean economy;
- Advance environmental justice by working to address the disproportionate impacts of climate change for underserved and overburdened communities;
- Equitably implement all existing laws, regulations, and policies related to climate change, incorporating robust community and stakeholder engagement and;
- Continue to maximize federal funding opportunities on climate.

This year's report provides an update on MDP's responsibilities under Maryland's Climate Pollution Reduction Plan and MDP's implementation of its CY25 Climate Implementation Plan.

MDP Actions and Progress Under the Maryland Climate Pollution Reduction Plan



Maryland's [Climate Pollution Reduction Plan](#) (p. 61) calls on MDP to continue to serve as the state's lead in supporting and accelerating Sustainable Growth in Maryland. Sustainable Growth efforts involve the private sector and various agencies, and commissions at all levels of government within the state.

Sustainable Growth is a strategic approach to land use policy and development practices that equitably consider economic, social, and environmental implications on the well-being of existing and future generations.

A Sustainable Growth approach advances plans and policies that are:

- **Balanced:** equally assesses the benefits and impacts of all three pillars (economic, social, and environmental)
- **Resilient:** adaptable to shocks, stresses, and ever-changing conditions
- **Innovative:** embraces new best practices, methods, and technologies
- **Regenerative:** ensures continual renewal and improvement
- **Place-based:** understands how built systems influence community vitality

Sustainable Growth also minimizes greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from land development by optimizing land productivity within population centers, minimizing the loss of forest and farmland, fostering shorter travel distances for daily mobility needs, and shifting to non-single-occupancy-vehicle travel modes such as transit, walking, biking, and rolling. Sustainable Growth is characterized by compact land use, with neighborhood schools, compatible transit options, walkable streets, mixed-use development, and a wide range of housing choices.

To support and accelerate Sustainable Growth, MDP:

- Provides data analysis and forecasting as part of its technical assistance to local and state governments to promote sustainable growth and land use efficiency. This assistance uses a variety of data sets and analytical tools, such as MDP's parcel database, U.S. Census information, land use/land cover data, and development capacity analysis.
- Assists local planning departments and commissions as they prepare their comprehensive plans for orderly and compact growth of their communities, protection of their environmental, historical, and cultural resources, and addressing impacts of climate change.
- Supports local governments with infill and redevelopment projects in existing communities, using various planning best practices to help revitalize and attract new development to these areas.
- Encourages local governments to integrate housing development, especially affordable housing projects, with enhanced transit, pedestrian, and bicycle connectivity to jobs and amenities.
- Contributes to various state, regional, and local transportation planning processes through plan and program development to promote integration of land use and transportation and multimodal transportation systems to help reduce GHG emissions.
- Coordinates with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to support transportation and community investments (i.e., complete streets programs, transit, [transit-oriented development \(TOD\)](#), and the Sustainable Communities Program) in placemaking and sustainable growth that foster transit and active transportation use and shorter vehicle miles traveled for daily travel needs.
- Develops and maintains online tools, such as the [Transit Station Area Profile Tool](#) (TSAPT), created in partnership with MDOT, to facilitate local and business access to data and information needed to succeed with TOD activities.
- Participates in the State's TOD Designation process and supports the implementation of HB12 (2023) – Equitable and Inclusive Transit-Oriented Development Enhancement Act – and HB538 (2024) – Housing Expansion and Affordability Act of 2024 - to help achieve successful TOD around transit stations.

MDP manages or administers policies and programs to support the Sustainable Growth effort, including:

Maryland Sustainable Growth Subcabinet

- Makes periodic recommendations to the Governor regarding changes in state law, regulations, and procedures needed to create, enhance, support, and revitalize sustainable communities across Maryland.
- Facilitates interagency coordination to ensure successful statewide community reinvestment and compact development initiatives are integrated and balanced to achieve multiple benefits that advance equity, economic growth, and environmental regeneration.

Maryland Sustainable Growth Coordinating Committee

- Identifies regional growth and development issues for the Maryland Sustainable Growth Subcabinet and advises on the local impacts of state policies and laws.
- Recommends ways to collaborate on planning between state agencies and local governments and coordinate growth and development among jurisdictions.
- Reviews statewide efforts to implement state plans for transportation and housing.

Maryland Coordinated Permitting Review Council

- Facilitates interagency coordination and efficient processing of approvals required to advance priority infrastructure and place-based projects within the State to bolster transparency, ensure predictability, and foster interagency coordination to grow Maryland's economy while safeguarding the health and safety of residents. MDP serves as Chair and staff to the Council, which was established by Executive Order 01.01.2024.39, Section D.
- Supports sustainable development projects in Maryland, including projects that support climate pollution reduction. Such projects could involve renewable and other clean energy infrastructure, promotion of job growth and/or career training in disadvantaged communities, retention and growth of the agricultural sector, and support for the reduction of vehicle miles travelled.

Sustainable Communities Act of 2010

- Established the Sustainable Communities designation to strengthen reinvestment and revitalization across the state
- Simplified the framework for designated revitalization target areas in the Community Legacy and Neighborhood BusinessWorks programs
- Required MDOT to consider Sustainable Communities as it annually prepares the annual Consolidated Transportation Program

2009 Legislative Suite (HB294/SB273, HB297/SB280 and HB295/SB276)

- Incorporation of the 12 planning visions in local comprehensive plans
- Development of local land use goals
- Consistency of local land use ordinances with comprehensive plans
- Submittal of local annual reports

Priority Funding Areas

- Maryland law directs the use of state funding for major transportation projects, water and sewer plants, economic development, and other growth-related needs toward Priority Funding Areas (PFAs), recognizing that these investments are the most important tool the state has available to influence more sustainable growth and development.

Growth Tier Map Law

- The Sustainable Growth & Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012 (the Septics Law) limits the disproportionate impacts of large subdivisions on septic systems on Maryland's farm and forest land, streams, rivers, and Chesapeake and Coastal bays. It also provides a moderate and reasonable approach for planned development using on-site sewage disposal systems.

Maryland Brownfield Redevelopment Assistance Program

- To support redevelopment within population centers, MDP connects local planning jurisdictions and other interested parties throughout the state with brownfield assessment, cleanup, planning, and redevelopment opportunities and identifies technical and financial resources to help navigate the brownfield process.

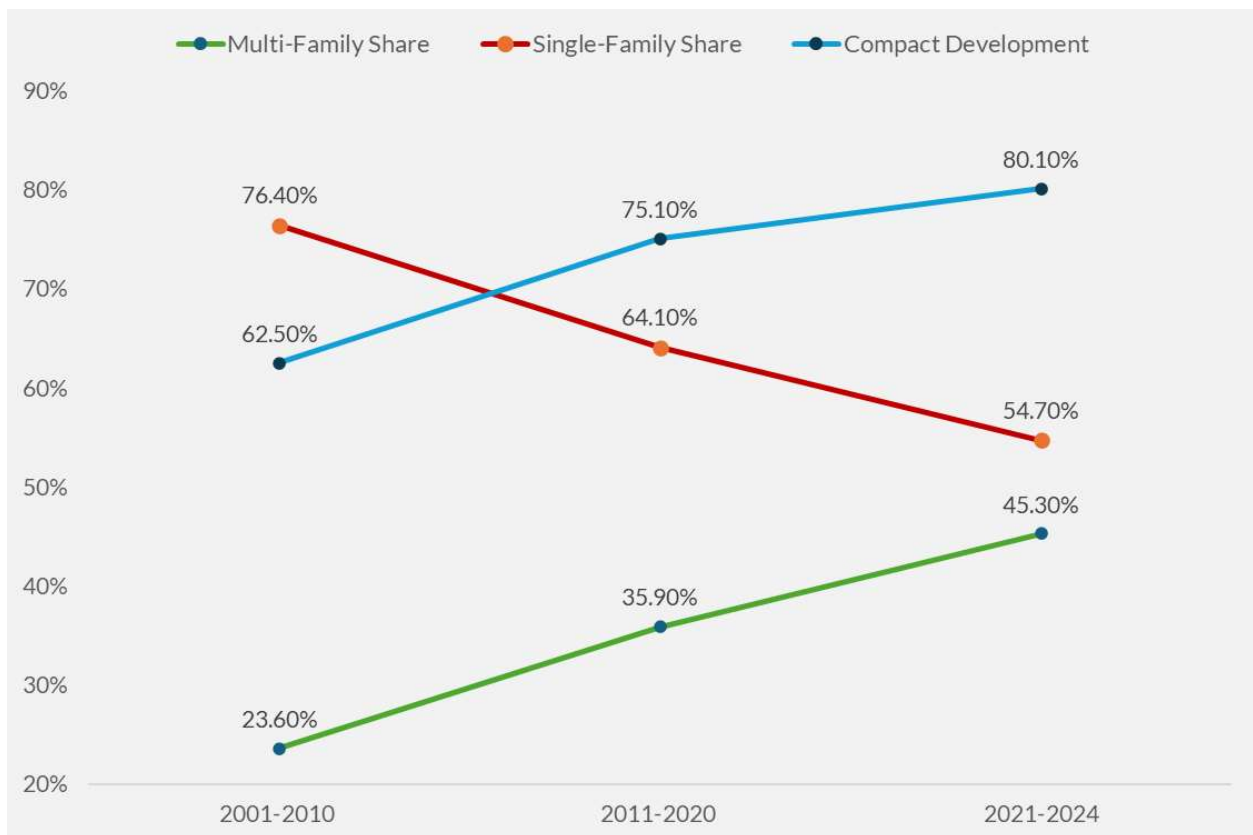
Compact Development

- To support Sustainable Growth planning, MDP gathers, analyzes, and annually reports on the status of compact development in Maryland.
- MDP is working to improve the data quality of sources used to inform the compact development statistics, specifically, by ensuring that more local governments update their PFAs to reflect all locally designated growth areas that meet the PFA criteria and by working to obtain multi-family development data that reflects actual versus proposed construction.
- The compact development statistics are derived through the following calculation:
 $A + (B \times C \times D)$, where A, B, C and D are defined as:
 - A - Share of year's multi-family housing in Maryland
 - B - Share of year's single-family housing
 - C - Percent of year's single-family housing on parcels within the Priority Funding Area (PFA)
 - D - Percent of year's single-family housing on parcels within the PFA that are 0.25 acres or less

Table 1: Compact Development in Maryland.

	2001-2010	2011-2020	2021-2024
Multi-Family Share	23.6%	35.9%	45.3%
Single-Family Share	76.4%	64.1%	54.7%
Percent Residential Development Inside of PFA	77.8%	82.9%	86.3%
Percent <u>Single-Family</u> Residential Development Inside of PFA	70.9%	73.4%	74.9%
Percent Residential Development on <=.25 acres in PFA	80.3%	89.7%	92.8%
Percent <u>Single-Family</u> Residential Development on <=.25 acres in PFA	71.8%	83.1%	84.8%
Compact Development	62.5%	75.1%	80.1%

Figure 1: Compact Development in Maryland has Increased Over Time as the Share of Single-Family Homes has Decreased



Status Update: MDP Climate Implementation Plan

State law (MD Code, Environment, § 2-1305) requires each state agency to review its planning, regulatory, and fiscal programs to identify and recommend actions to more fully integrate the consideration of Maryland's GHG reduction goal and the impacts of climate change. The review shall include the consideration of (1) sea level rise; (2) storm surges and flooding; (3) increased precipitation and temperature; and (4) extreme weather events. Furthermore, each state agency shall identify and recommend specific policy, planning, regulatory, and fiscal changes to existing programs that do not currently support the state's GHG reduction efforts or address climate change.

In compliance with the law, MDP is making progress implementing actions, as described in MDP's [CY25 Climate Implementation Plan](#), to more fully integrate the consideration of Maryland's greenhouse gas reduction goal and the impacts of climate change.



- Sustainable Growth Implementation:
 - In 2024, MDP supported the passage of legislation that changed the name of the Maryland Smart Growth Subcabinet to the Maryland Sustainable Growth Subcabinet (SGSC), updated the leadership and membership structure of the Subcabinet, and integrated equity and resiliency into the Subcabinet's mission.
 - On April 8, 2025, Governor Wes Moore signed new legislation into law creating the Sustainable Growth Planning Principles. These eight principles

modernize and replace the former 12 Planning Visions, codifying Maryland's shift from Smart Growth to Sustainable Growth. This framework encourages policies that fairly address economic, social, and environmental factors for both current and future generations. The eight Planning Principles aim to make sustainable growth policies simpler, clearer, and easier for everyone involved in planning and development to use effectively.

- MDP will be releasing an Implementation Guide in Fall, 2025, to support application of the codified Sustainable Growth Principles. This Guide will evolve with the land use and planning field, reflecting contemporary solutions and best practices. In the Guide, achievement of each principle will be measured by three performance indicators organized by three core themes: human well-being, climate mitigation and economic opportunity. The Guide also connects each of the principles with related resources and case examples of the principles in action. The new Planning Principles, supported by the Implementation Guide, will facilitate more sustainable growth patterns across Maryland by creating a shared framework that fosters more collaborative and synchronous efforts across the land use field.
- In 2026, MDP will seek to simplify the local comprehensive planning process and align local plan structures with a re-envisioned Maryland Sustainable Growth Policy.
- MDP is investigating how to best integrate green and sustainable building practices throughout all its work.
- Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) financial and technical assistance
 - MHT has updated its criteria for [Certified Local Government Program](#) grants (approximately \$100,000 annually) and the [Historic Preservation Non-Capital Grant Program](#) (approximately \$300,000 annually) to include points for projects related to climate resilience and/or in climate-vulnerable areas.
 - MHT will hold two virtual roundtables per year to discuss issues of importance to preservation planners and provide technical assistance, including clean energy and climate resilience.
 - MHT will update and increase outreach for its technical resources for integrating historic preservation planning with hazard mitigation, disaster response and recovery, and climate adaptation. This includes MDP and MHT working with the Adaptation and Resiliency Working Group of the Maryland

Commission on Climate Change to ensure that historic and cultural resource considerations are included in the state's overall planning efforts.

- [Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum](#) (JPPM) operations and maintenance
 - JPPM is managed by MHT (an affiliation within MDP) and includes more than 500 acres of land and 43 buildings.
 - JPPM will further reduce energy use, use green energy, and carry out other operations and maintenance that reduce or prevent GHG emissions, including:
 - Replace old lighting with new light emitting diodes (LEDs). JPPM has replaced almost all of its lighting with LEDs, including exterior streetlights and many interior office lights. JPPM's [Maryland Archaeological Conservation Laboratory](#) (MAC Lab) and a few other locations need to be converted to LEDs. JPPM's operating procedure has been that as capital projects occur, or when an old fixture dies, lighting is replaced with LEDs. The MAC Lab will be the biggest challenge because the current capital project does not include monies for that conversion. In 2025, JPPM reached out to local electricians and lighting experts to better understand the potential costs and necessary steps to implement this action for the remaining locations at JPPM without LED lighting. As of September 2025, JPPM is waiting until the MAC Lab expansion and renovation project is complete so that local electricians can include it in their LED lighting cost estimates.
 - Electrify JPPM vehicles. At the end of December 2024, JPPM acquired a hybrid fleet vehicle. In 2026, JPPM expects to acquire an electric low speed vehicle to use onsite to help move visitors around, and JPPM expects to acquire another electric low speed vehicle with a small cargo bed for horticulture and facilities to use onsite. As various small onsite vehicles reach the end of their lifespan, JPPM will prioritize obtaining electric versions to replace them. Note, JPPM cannot yet make use of a full electric fleet vehicle because of the lack of accessible infrastructure to easily charge electric vehicles (see below).
 - Electrify JPPM power tools. JPPM has a large number of gas-powered chainsaws, blowers, mowers, and similar power tools. As the gas-powered tools reach the end of their lifespan, JPPM will prioritize electric versions of them; however, there is an infrastructure concern about the space needed to store them (see

below). In 2025, JPPM facilities staff created a list of electric-powered tools and analyzed the options. JPPM has started to acquire electric tools as gas-powered tools need replacing. For example, all new tools associated with the JPPM Patterson House and Gardens are electric now, replaced gas-powered tools, and were acquired between November 2024 and April 2025.

- Adding motion sensitive lights. JPPM will strive to finish integrating motion sensors into all light switches onsite. As of September 2025, JPPM is awaiting completion of other capital projects onsite before facilities staff will have the capacity to undertake this project.
- JPPM will consider any changes to site and building operations and maintenance that could lower energy costs. As of September 2025, JPPM is awaiting completion of other capital projects onsite before facilities staff will have the capacity to undertake this project.

- MDP 120 East Baltimore Street office building
 - MDP's Baltimore Office moved to a [LEED Certified Platinum green building](#) in mid-2024 and completed the fit-out to minimize energy use in coordination with the DGS Office of Real Estate. MDP also diverted a significant amount of material from landfill disposal through the collection and distribution of reusable materials to local organizations, including more than 40 boxes of materials to 12 local schools.
 - The MDP Baltimore Office has established a green team to investigate opportunities to further reduce MDP's GHG emissions. As of October 2025, the MDP Baltimore Office is considering the development of an office-wide Green Operations Policy. This new policy would establish sustainability practices across the agency.
 - MDP will coordinate with DGS Office of Real Estate to obtain project justification support for further Baltimore Office decarbonization efforts.

Considering Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions and Impacts on Disproportionately Affected Communities

State law (MD Code, Environment, § 2-1305) requires that each State agency, when conducting long-term planning, developing policy, and drafting regulations, shall take into consideration: (1) the likely climate impact of the agency's decisions relative to Maryland's greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals; and (2) the likely impact of the agency's decisions on disproportionately affected communities identified according to the methodology adopted under § 1-702 of the Environment article. Furthermore, Governor Moore's Executive Order 01.01.2024.19 requires each agency to report on how the agency will advance environmental justice by working to address the disproportionate impacts of climate change for underserved and overburdened communities.

In compliance with the law and Executive Order 01.01.2024.19, MDP is taking the following steps to meet these requirements:

- In 2024, MDP supported the passage of legislation that integrated equity into the Maryland SGSC's mission.
- In 2025, MDP supported new legislation creating the Sustainable Growth Planning Principles, including for the first time, an equity planning principle. Under existing Maryland law, major public investments and local comprehensive plans must be consistent with Maryland's Sustainable Growth Policy.
- MDP's December 2024 update to *Maryland's Plan to Adapt to Saltwater Intrusion and Salinization* highlights land and resources impacted or threatened by saltwater intrusion and salinization caused by climate change. The plan will help further necessary adaptation and research measures in support of communities disproportionately impacted by climate change.
- Overall, MDP and the SGSC will consider potential greenhouse gas emissions and climate change impacts to disproportionately affected communities that could result from proposed policies and plans.

Maryland Department of Planning

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