

City Operations Sustainability Plan

Executive Summary

Pursuant to Council direction in May 2014, the City staff formed a City Operations Task Force to draft this framework for a City Operations Sustainability Plan. The purpose of the plan is to reduce the environmental impact of City operations, create a healthier work environment and improve the quality of life in the community, and position College Park as an innovative regional leader in sustainability. This plan will help coordinate sustainable practices across all City operations, conserve resources over the long-term, and reduce the carbon footprint and other negative impacts on the environment by City operations.

Representatives from each City department participated in the Task Force. The members created four committees focusing on Solid Waste and Recycling; Buildings and Public Areas; City-wide Policies and Events; and Fleet and Transportation. The committees' charge was to identify current practices, develop goals, and recommend strategies that would reduce the impact on the environment caused by municipal operations. The summary below highlights some of the goals and recommendations in the report.

1. Solid Waste and Recycling Highlights

Goal: Reduce solid waste per household by 25 percent and increase the recycling rate to 60 percent (approximately double the current rate) by July 1, 2018 (2015 baseline).

Recommended Strategies:

- Examine changes to the City Code which might provide the best impact on reducing tonnage and increasing recycling, such as prohibiting recyclable material in waste carts; providing larger or additional recycling carts; examining the fee for trash collection at rental properties; and charging for bulk collection after a certain number of pick-ups per year.
- Develop a marketing/educational campaign that provides information to residents on the environmental and financial savings of reducing solid waste.
- Reduce or remove food waste from the solid waste stream by promoting home food composting and explore the possibility of a pilot food waste collection program.

2. Buildings and Public Areas Highlights

Goal: Reduce electricity and natural gas use in City facilities by 15 percent per square foot by 2018 and by 25 percent by 2022 (2014 baseline year).

Recommended Strategies:

- Examine cost-benefit of efficiency improvement recommendations and prioritize highest energy savings with best payback.
- Develop a building operations and maintenance plan; emphasize low cost and no cost measures such as those recommendations in the Pepco Commercial & Industrial Energy Savings Program
- Prominently post monthly energy usage at each City facility, and hold competition for greatest reduction in usage and reward employees for savings.
- Create Green Office standard that includes practices regarding lighting and computer shut-down after working hours.

Goal: Generate 20 percent of electricity for City facilities using renewable sources by 2018 per Council Resolution 13-R-27 (See Appendix 3).

Recommended Strategy:

- Evaluate DPW buildings, YFS building, and Parking Garage for best locations to install solar power and explore funding via a Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) grant or long-term lease arrangement.

3. City-wide Policies and Events Highlights

Goal: The FY17 budget will include funding for a consultant to lead the City's process to update or acquire software that improves workflow and works across relevant departments.

Recommended Strategy:

- Create a Workflow Task Force (an inter-departmental group) to conduct a needs assessment for workflow improvements. Based on the results, develop an RFP for a consultant who will develop strategies to improve and integrate workflow. This strategy is also included in the proposed 2015–2020 Strategic Plan.

Goal: Track all sustainability goals and outcomes on an annual basis, and track City operations greenhouse gas emissions on a triennial basis.

Recommended Strategies:

- Establish a Sustainability Committee that will provide an annual report on all sustainability metrics and a triennial report on greenhouse gas emissions to Council. These reports should also be posted on the City's website.
- Provide all employees the status of sustainability-related goals on a regular basis.
- Work with the University of Maryland to complete the greenhouse gas inventory using ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability) software.

4. Fleet and Transportation Highlights

Goal: By FY17 the City will achieve a 10 percent increase in the average vehicle miles per gallon for all on-road vehicles in the City's fleet (FY15 baseline).

Recommended Strategies:

- Develop and adopt policies and practices regarding efficient vehicle operations (idling, route optimization, using the correct vehicle for the task, etc.).
- Ensure all vehicles receive regular maintenance and fuel MPG is monitored.
- Develop a green fleet purchasing policy that considers efficiency and lifetime vehicle costs.

This report includes an Implementation Plan that identifies the responsible departments, timeline, and resources required to implement the actions. Members of the City Task Force believe that the success of the plan will require continued leadership and full commitment from Council and staff. Additional resources or the re-allocation of resources will be required to carry out many of the Recommended Strategies, and it will be critical to communicate the reasons for proposed changes to residents, Council, and staff. Some staff will require additional training in order to implement or monitor the strategies, and all staff must support the goals and practices recommended in the plan. The City Operations Sustainability Task Force (or a similar committee with membership from each department) should continue, but serve a monitoring and data collection function.

Reducing the impact of City operations on the environment will be challenging and require changes in how the City carries out many of its functions and services. With support from Council, commitment by staff, and excellent communications with residents, College Park will become a regional leader in sustainability.