

appendix g:environmental history



Takoma Park has been a leader in advancing environmental issues. Among the City's early environmental efforts was the establishment of a recycling program in 1987. In 1992, City Council established a Committee on the Environment, made up of citizen volunteers, to advise the City Council on environmental matters. Most Committee members over the years were environmental professionals with different types of expertise. This allowed the Committee to work on a broad range of issues.

The Committee on the Environment led many efforts, including:

- Instituted and managed successful annual Arbor Day events starting in 1993, with 400 to 600 tree seedlings planted each year through "Adopt-A-Tree" program.
- Worked on design/installation of efficient lighting in Municipal Building and installation of an innovative new cooling system at Library, achieving 15-30% energy savings.
- Coordinated with City staff to rewrite and strengthen the City Tree Ordinance.
- Developed policy recommendations and public education to reduce air quality problems from garden equipment.
- Analyzed issues and made policy recommendations to Council on tree, watershed protection, open space, green building, and climate issues.
- Represented City environmental perspectives in various efforts, including developing the Takoma Park Master Plan of 1990, City Open Space Plan, and West Nile Virus Plan. Led effort to acquire several wooded properties for open space, including Glengary lots, lots near Jackson and Garland Avenues, and Sligo and Poplar Mills properties, to preserve habitat, watershed and climate change values by working with City, County, and State officials and citizen groups.
- Designed and implemented microclimate analysis to compare weather conditions in typical treed yard with those in a nearby parking lot in 1999. This study was featured on Newsnight Maryland, Maryland Public Television.
- Developed numerous educational/outreach materials, Newsletter articles, compliance assistance for local businesses, and several public workshops on natural resource and energy issues.



- Developed Sustainable Building Guidelines in 1999 to encourage appropriate siting, design, materials and equipment use, and landscaping during building and renovations. Updated guidelines in 2001 and made specific recommendations for greening the construction of the new Community Center.
- Developed Climate Change Action Plan, one of the Nation's first, and successful grant proposal to develop the Plan, with a goal to reduce CO2 emissions to 80% of 1990 levels; implementing several strategies.
- Developed successful grant application to fund solar hot water panels.
- Developed and presented Rain barrel and energy seminars at City Green Building Day in 2007.
- Organized several "make and take" rain barrel workshops for citizens.
- Wrote draft legislation and led successful effort to have Maryland General Assembly adopt a state program to require removal of toxic mercury switches from end-of-life vehicles.

The City Public Works Department has used biodiesel in City trucks for over 10 years and is now using 100% wind power through renewable energy credits for all City facilities. The City upgraded lighting systems in its facilities to T-8 fluorescents, added direct digital control systems in the Community Center and Library, and upgraded air conditioning equipment in the Community Center in the 1990s. New windows and a tracking solar day lighting system were installed at the Public Works facility. Variable frequency drives have been added to all large motors over five horse power. These improvements reduced energy use by 30%. New projects underway include a green roof project, an energy efficiency performance contract for the Community Center, installation of a small amount of solar PV at the Community Center, and construction of a new energy-efficient Public Works facility that will incorporate LEED standards.

The City Department of Housing and Community Development, together with Public Works, hosted a very successful "Green Building Day in February, 2007 with seminars and exhibits on various topics that attracted hundreds of attendees.

Citizens of Takoma Park are very environmentally aware and active. In addition to taking actions to lighten their personal environmental footprints, they advocate for local regional, and national environmental values. There have been some notable local environmental achievements outside of those led by the City or City volunteers. Takoma Park resident Barbara Beeler established and ran Green Goods, a retail store dedicated to helping people live a greener lifestyle. Resident Mike Tidwell held monthly open houses at his home to show people his low impact lifestyle. Tidwell also founded Chesapeake Climate Action Network, a regional climate advocacy group. Tidwell and others founded a corn stove cooperative, convincing the City to allow a silo for storing fuel for corn stoves on Public Works property. Sally Gagne revived the local watershed advocacy group, Friends of Sligo Creek, which has grown in reach and influence under the leadership of Takoma Park residents Ann Hoffnar, Bruce Sidwell, and Clair Garman. Takoma Park resident Bill Hutchens formed a green building listserve, where residents and professionals can share information on various aspects of green buildings.