

annual report 2023



**Baltimore Office
of Sustainability**
People • Planet • Prosperity

About Us

The Baltimore Office of Sustainability acts as a resource, catalyst, and an advocate in creating an equitable and resilient Baltimore. We integrate environmental integrity, social equity, and economic prosperity into plans, practices, and policies. Our aim is to provide innovative solutions to our city's challenges while engaging, inspiring and collaborating with all sectors of Baltimore.

We define sustainability as “meeting the current environmental, social, and economic needs of our community without compromising the ability of future generations to meet these needs”.

The Baltimore Sustainability Commission was created by the City Council in 2007 to oversee the implementation of the Baltimore Sustainability Plan. The Commission is comprised of 20 members appointed by the Mayor and one City Council member appointed by the City Council President. The Commission is made up of members representing environmental groups, community organizations, labor unions, public health and environmental justice interests, and private industry.

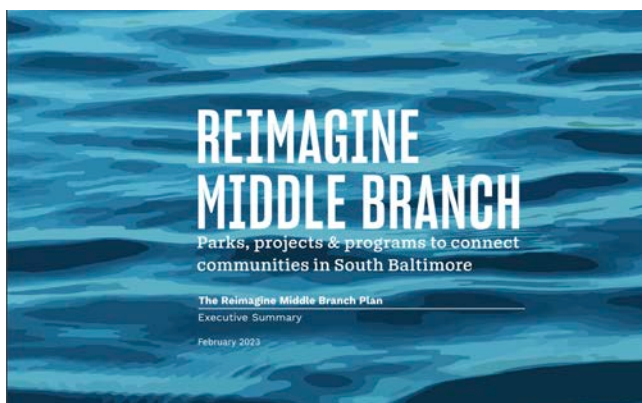
As we implement the 2019 Sustainability Plan, we will expand our expertise and collaborate deeply with government, community, non-profit and institutional partners and make sure that implementation is inclusive, equitable and innovative.



Executive Summary

Last year was a critical one for climate action planning in Baltimore City, the State of Maryland, and the entire country. Historic levels of federal funding combined with new ambitious climate targets under Maryland's Climate Solutions Now Act complimented our citywide climate planning. Climate change and resilience are top of mind, for the realities of climate threats are inescapable. Globally, 2023 was the hottest year on record, an unfortunate trend that is likely to continue for decades. Extreme weather continues to be more common and results in challenges that threaten the health and well-being of people in the City, especially the most vulnerable.

Despite these realities - and perhaps because of them - we lean into climate optimism, into hope for a sustainable, resilient, and equitable future where we meet climate challenges with the creativity and tenacity Baltimore is known for. In Baltimore City's 2023 Annual Sustainability report – it's clear we are making progress, but we know so much more needs to be done. Our 2024 Climate Action Plan was developed in tandem with the 2023 FEMA-regulated Disaster Preparedness and Planning Project or DP3, and two critical state-mandated city plans: the Solid Waste Management Plan, and Our Baltimore, a comprehensive land use plan. These plans will inform funding proposals, shape future policies and legislation, and lead to impact on the ground. Most of all, citywide plans were informed by you, your communities and neighbors. As we move towards implementing the hundreds of strategies, actions, and goals in 2024 – we aim to be your partners and collaborators. Before we embark on that future together – let's reflect on the accomplishments from 2023.



LEED Gold Certification Secured: Baltimore – we are golden! The City achieved LEED Gold certification, recognizing the City's accomplishments in implementing practical and measurable strategies and solutions aimed at improving sustainability. We celebrated the accomplishment during the annual Sustainability Open House which was hosted at Morgan State University with Mayor Scott and hundreds of residents.

\$7.3 million FEMA Grant Awarded: In 2023, FEMA awarded Baltimore City and the Maryland Department of Emergency Management a grant to install solar arrays and battery backup at 16 Community Resiliency Hubs across the city. We will begin installation of the first systems in 2024.

Reimagine Middle Branch Initiative (RMBI): The Reimagine Middle Branch Plan was officially approved by the Planning Commission in 2023 – allowing millions of dollars in support to a number of environmental projects in South Baltimore.

Above - Hilari Varadore of the US Green Building Council (second from left) presented a plaque to Mayor Brandon Scott in recognition of Baltimore's LEED Gold Certification. They were joined by Director of the Baltimore Office of Sustainability, Ava Richardson, and Turtle, Baltimore's sustainability mascot.

Photo by J.J. McQueen

Left - The Reimagine Middle Branch Plan, which was adopted by the Planning Commission in 2023.

Image by James Corner Field Operations



Electric Vehicle Adoption: A goal to transition to purchase only zero emission vehicles by 2030 was established in 2023. This means all procurements for the City’s administrative fleet – comprised of light-duty and standard-occupancy vehicles, including sedans, small pickups, and SUVs – will be required to be zero emission vehicles, mostly likely all electric.

Made in Baltimore (MIB): We continue to see local makers, curators and innovators supported by Made in Baltimore. Over 300 product-based businesses have been supported through retail, business development programs, and media campaigns, plus MIB’s annual retail concepts have generated over \$200,000 in sales revenue for local makers. MIB partnerships have led to the Urban Manufacturing Alliance’s Design Jam hosting their event in Baltimore and locally-made goods being sold at the Aquarium gift shop.

Connecting, Engaging and Uplifting: In Fiscal Year 2023, we tracked over 76,000 engagements across the city, from those registered for our monthly newsletters, to the plan-related engagements, the annual Sustainability Open House, and social media account engagement.

The Office of Sustainability continues to play a critical role in gathering and connecting stakeholders across broad interests with meaningful ways to improve our environment. We are also educating residents and city employees, with new goals to enhance climate literacy among the city’s workforce.

Progress by the numbers shows promise for Baltimore’s climate work. As of the end of 2023, 139 Sustainability Plan actions (57%) have reached mid-, advanced-, or implemented/ongoing status and a total of 21 actions, or 9% of the actions from the 2019 Sustainability Plan have reached implemented/ongoing status. As we reflect on 2019 Sustainability Plan progress, we understand the way we measure progress, collect, track, and share data is critical to our shared future in a changing climate. Moving into 2024, we will standardize a process to measure plan-progress across different climate plans, services and goals. Equally, if not more important than the numbers are the stories, the people, and the experiences. In this year’s report you will learn of progress through both lenses – stories and data.

Above - The 2023 Sustainability Open House, held at Morgan State University. - Photo by J.J. McQueen

Message from the Sustainability Commission

The Baltimore Commission on Sustainability is honored to serve as dedicated partners during another year of climate progress across our city by connecting, convening and collaborating around climate issues. In 2023, we hosted monthly Commission on Sustainability meetings that facilitated engagement for the 2024 Climate Action (CAP), Disaster Preparedness (DP3), and Solid Waste Management Plans, and Our-Baltimore – a citywide land use plan. Sustainability Commissioners served a vital role as technical advisors and commentators for the CAP and DP3, informed reporting structures for the annual sustainability report and continued policy and advocacy work.

We hosted meetings on coastal risks and resilience, reporting for the 2019 Sustainability Plan and hosted the annual Sustainability Open House which took place at Morgan State University. We were honored to have Mayor Brandon M. Scott join the Commission and the Office of Sustainability during the city's annual Sustainability Open House to announce our city's LEED Gold Certification – a major milestone for the city.

We also saw a major transition, with long-time, multi-term Co-chair for the Commission, Miriam Avins, stepping down from her role. Miriam has served as a Sustainability Commissioner for more than a decade as the very first co-chair and worked closely with the Office prior to becoming a commissioner. Her work to protect and enhance green spaces across the city at Baltimore Green Space has been invaluable. As a Commission, we have been fortunate for her leadership in the environmental space and keen facilitation skills that helped build the 21-member Commission into what it is today. We thank, honor and celebrate Miriam for her contributions!

During 2023, we planned for 2024 – Jared Lyles was appointed as a new co-chair and has taken on the role with zeal, bringing knowledge and skills gained from his long-standing career in the energy field. The Commission prioritized the release of proposed meeting topics and themes for our meeting schedule to best align with citywide urban sustainability goals, while complimenting the work of the Office of Sustainability.



Above - The Sustainability Commission joined Mayor Brandon Scott, Office of Sustainability staff, and Turtle in celebrating Baltimore's recognition as a LEED Gold city. - Photo by J.J. McQueen

Community

Urban Agriculture Funding & Partnerships



The Department of Planning's Food Policy and Planning Division continues to lead food system improvements throughout the city. Community and urban growing received a boost in 2023 with \$1.5 million awarded to the Farm Alliance of Baltimore (FAB) to build out the infrastructure of the Black Butterfly Teaching Farm in Farring-Baybrook Park. A contract growing partnership between FAB and The Common Market, a produce box vendor, was also forged.

Digital Equity Accomplishments



Above - Mayor Scott launches FreeBmoreWiFi at Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center. - Photo by J.J. McQueen
Left - Flowers and produce are in abundance at the Black Butterfly Teaching Farm. - Photo by DOP Staff

FreeBmoreWiFi, Baltimore City's free public Wi-Fi network – launched in 2023 by offering free indoor and outdoor wi-fi service at select recreation and/or senior centers. The City's Office of Broadband and Digital Equity (BDE), is advancing this network to close the digital divide keeping essential services out of reach for many who lack reliable internet access. Participating sites include the new Middle Branch Fitness and Wellness Center and the Solo Gibbs Recreations Center. FreeBmoreWiFi is accessible 24/7 for those in range of a network signal. Expanding free wi-fi is one piece of a broader Digital Inclusion Strategy, seeking to close the digital divide in Baltimore.

Waste Diversion Plans & Funding

The City's Department of Public Works (DPW) Office of Waste Diversion made strides towards reducing waste citywide, with the release of the 10-year 2023 Solid Waste Management Plan or SWMP, which maps operational needs, constraints, and improvements for waste management within the City. The plan consolidates goals for managing the City's solid waste stream and assesses the existing solid waste collection systems, current and future disposal capacity needs, and how zero waste strategies like reuse, recycling, and composting are to be implemented.

In 2023, EPA announced a \$4 million grant awarded to DPW in 2023 to fund a solar-powered, scalable composting facility co-located with the new East Side Transfer Station at Bowley's Lane. The proposed facility can divert up to 12,000 tons of organic materials from landfill and incineration; reducing 6,000 tons of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions annually.



Additional Accomplishments

Neighbors:

- The Department of Planning (DOP) is working to make the zoning code more easily digestible to non-practitioners.
- A new Equity Coordinator position has been created within DOP to establish equity measures and assist with improving equitable community engagement with residents.

Environmental Literacy & Healthy School Environments:

- In SY 2023-24, the Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS) Curriculum Management Plan identified environmental literacy content as part of the Integrated Curriculum.
- The Department of Public Works (DPW) launched the EcoWarriors competition to encourage school communities to take sustainable actions.
- BCPSS began offering assistance to small, Black-run nonprofits and companies navigating BCPSS procurement system.
- The Baltimore Tree Trust lead tree care workshops for 30 BCPSS grounds staff.

Healthy School Environments:

- HVAC projects were completed at 12 schools.
- A BCPSS environmental compliance manager participated as an Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Fellow with the US Green Building Council's Center for Green Schools. Staff attended an IAQ training and are developing an IAQ plan.
- All 155 BCPSS schools have a Community Site Coordinator/Site Specialist.

Urban Agriculture:

- The DOP Food Policy Division partnered with Morgan State University and the Aspen Institute to launch Open Access Baltimore, a free online portal for food entrepreneurs to utilize resources for capital, permitting, licensing, and training.

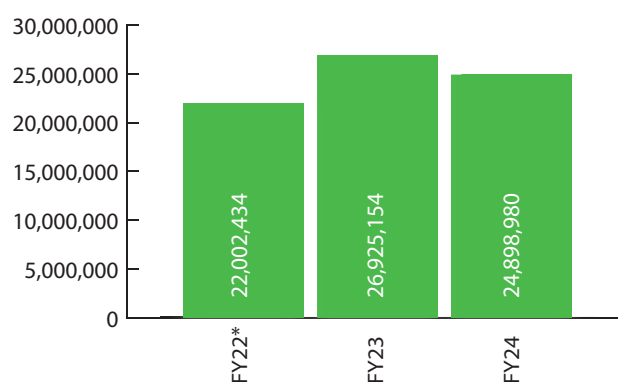
Waste & Recycling:

- City Council Bill # 23-0466 Recyclable Materials and Yard Waste – Disposal was introduced: "For the purpose of prohibiting the disposal of recyclable materials and yard waste in a landfill or an incinerator".



Data Snapshot: Number of Alternative Bags Distributed by Retailers

Source: BCIT



* Plastic Bag Reduction Act went into effect on October 1, 2021.



Data Snapshot: Plastic Bag Reduction Act 311 Complaints and Citations Issued

Source: Open Baltimore

Year	311 Complaints	Citations Issued**
FY22*	31	25
FY23	23	12
FY24	20	--

* Plastic Bag Reduction Act went into effect on October 1, 2021.

** Environmental Citations reported through March 2023.

Human-Made Systems

Pledge to Invest in Renovating Vacant Properties in Disinvested Neighborhoods

Mayor Scott signed an agreement that will redevelop a minimum of 37,500 vacant and abandoned properties over the next 15 years. The Scott administration pledged city investment of \$300 million to spark the project. Two novel strategies will be used for this investment: Tax Increment Financing (TIFs) bonds and the City's Industrial Development Authority. Notably, the TIFs, which have historically been primarily utilized in Baltimore to generate development of waterfront neighborhoods and large-scale downtown commercial projects, will now to be applied to the redevelopment of vacant properties in historically disinvested neighborhoods.

The new plan sets key goals, including: "community-led development without displacement, building equity, and addressing the wealth gap through homeownership" – which will help create thriving mixed-income neighborhoods and housing that is safe and affordable. The plan also calls for a "whole-block" approach that invests in an entire neighborhood, with a focus on building on existing neighborhood assets.



Above - Dozens gathered for Mayor Brandon Scott's announcement of the 15-year redevelopment investment strategy. Photo by J.J. McQueen

INSPIRE Plans Enhance Connections Between Schools and Neighborhoods

INSPIRE is a program that was created to leverage a \$1 billion investment by 21st Century Schools Initiative, Baltimore City Public School System, State of Maryland, and Baltimore City. INSPIRE plans enhance the connection between schools and the surrounding neighborhood. Three INSPIRE Plans were adopted in 2023 along with seven investment implementation strategies. These include the REACH! Partnership School and Harford Heights Building, Govans Elementary, and John Rurah Elementary/Middle School plans. The plans share the same key goals: invest in housing and market-strengthening opportunities; improve public safety; create connection and access; create opportunities for health and wellness; and improve sanitation and create environmentally sustainable neighborhoods.

Strategies based on community-identified needs and priorities are aligned with each goal and vary depending on the neighborhood. Stemming from the Govans Elementary Plan, Lortz Lane is being made into a primarily pedestrian walkway to safely connect the school to the Govans Branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. Several improvements were made along the designated 'Primary Walking Routes' including bringing sidewalks up to a standard condition, updating crosswalks at 8 intersections, assessing need for repairs of ADA ramps at intersections, and pruning and planting street trees.

Neighborhoods

Housing Affordability

Buildings

Transportation

Noise



Additional Accomplishments

Neighborhoods:

- City Council Bill #22-0204, passed in 2023 - establishes a fee structure for repeated substantiated 311 service requests to fine the owner of a vacant structure for repeated service requests.
- The Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation (CHAP) is pursuing the creation of a Historic Conservation District program in response to communities that are interested in historic designation that is less stringent in design review requirements than the current local historic district designation. Once a draft of the program is approved by CHAP, staff will work with the Mayor and City Council to introduce enabling legislation.

Housing Affordability:

- The Maryland Historic Trust awarded 10 projects worth more than \$20 million in historic revitalization tax credits, leveraging more than \$84 million in additional investment.
- Baker's View, a new affordable housing development in the Druid Heights Community in West Baltimore, was completed.



Above - Baker's View affordable housing development.
Above left - One of many new bus shelters installed by MTA.
Photos by DOP staff.



Transportation:

- The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) re-started planning for the Red Line.
- MTA installed 41 new bus shelters throughout the city
- The U.S. Department of Transportation awarded Baltimore City a \$9.9 million Safe Streets for All grant, slated for the City's implementation of Complete Streets.

Buildings:

- Baltimore City and the State of Maryland were selected as members of the White House Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS) coalition. The City will work with the Maryland Department of Energy to support more engagement, education and compliance with building owners and operators of all types across the city.
- Baltimore Shines, a collaborative program between the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development and Civic Works completed 98.55 kW of solar installs for 17 Baltimore residents.
- The Green and Healthy Homes Initiative was selected to serve as one of 11 regional Grantmakers under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Grantmaking Program, created by the Inflation Reduction Act.

Climate & Resilience

Climate Action Plan Update

With robust input from communities, the Baltimore Office of Sustainability (BOS) undertook a vigorous, process to update the City’s Climate Action Plan (CAP), initially developed in 2012. This ten-year plan is a roadmap to reaching a 60% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 over 2007 levels. It will also play a vital role in helping us reach our goal of carbon neutrality by 2045.

Baltimore’s carbon neutrality goal aligns with goals set in the Paris Agreement, a promise made by nearly 200 countries around the world to work together to fight climate change and limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels. Each country or jurisdiction decides what they can do to help reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. It is a global effort to keep our planet and people safe. Similarly, under the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022, the State of Maryland aims to reduce emissions 60% below 2006 level by 2031 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2045.

Baltimore’s CAP Update contains five focus areas: Electricity, Buildings, Transportation, Waste, and Nature-based solutions that remove carbon.

Every three years, BOS commissions a study of GHG emissions to identify the greatest sources of pollution in Baltimore. Buildings, including the energy used to power, heat and cool them are the greatest source of pollution, followed by transportation and waste that goes to landfills or incinerators. The CAP Update prioritizes actions that address the greatest sources of GHG emissions and nature-based climate solutions that help alleviate the impact of emissions while providing community benefits for the public like increasing public health and economic prosperity, creating jobs, and providing more opportunities for the people who live, work, play, learn, grow and age in Baltimore to connect as they play their parts in making the City more climate resilient, equitable and sustainable.

Greening the City Fleet

This year, Mayor Scott signed City Council Bill 21-0159 into law, which will help facilitate a transition to zero emissions vehicles for the City’s administrative fleet. By 2030, all procurements for the City’s administrative fleet – comprised of light-duty, standard-occupancy vehicles, including sedans, small pickups, and SUVs – will be required to be zero emission vehicles, mostly likely all electric (EVs). Reports by peer municipalities indicate there are significant long-term cost savings in having an all-electric administrative fleet due to lower fuel and operations costs.

City agencies have already begun piloting EVs as part of their fleet operations, including some funded as part of the Maryland Energy Administration’s Smart Energy Communities Program. Recently, a Ford Mach-E was delivered for the Comptroller’s Office, an all-electric cargo van has been purchased as the vehicle for the GROW Center program, and 19 more EV purchases were made by the Department of General Services Fleet Division.



Above - Bill signing event establishing an EV goal for the City’s administrative fleet. Photo by J.J. McQueen.



Additional Accomplishments



Above - During Code Red Extreme Heat Alerts, the City offers extended pool hours as part of a coordinated effort to expand cooling options. Photo by J.J. McQueen.

Clean Air:

- Baltimore City's Code Red Extreme Heat program has established a coordinated approach to providing Code Red alerts and cooling relief to vulnerable populations during periods of severe heat in the summer months.
- The US Department of Energy awarded Baltimore City Public Schools the highly selective Energy Champions Leading the Advancement of Sustainable Schools (CLASS) Prize which provides \$100K and 140 hours of technical assistance.

Community Preparedness:

- The Disaster Preparedness and Planning Project (DP3) Update was completed and adopted.
- A \$7.3 million FEMA grant was awarded to support solar + battery storage for up to 16 Resilience Hubs.

Energy:

- In 2023, an ordinance was enacted that requires newly constructed buildings and additions partly financed using City funds to adhere to specified cool roofing requirements.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions:

- USDOT has awarded more than \$11.5 million toward first-ever zero-exhaust-emissions locomotives at the Port of Baltimore. In total, three older, higher-emission locomotives will be replaced with new battery electric locomotives and a battery charger. CSX will use the battery electric locomotives in its Curtis Bay terminal.

Food Systems:

- The Department of Planning (DOP) Food Policy & Planning Division executed a \$450,000 grant agreement with MedStar Harbor Hospital to implement their Food Rx program, which provides patients with produce to improve diet-related health outcomes.
- Baltimore City signed the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration, a commitment to tackle the climate emergency through integrated food policies.
- Food Resilience was incorporated into the 2023 DP3 update.



Above - Food box distribution. Photo by DOP Staff.

Nature in the City

Reimagine Middle Branch



In February 2023, the Reimagine Middle Branch Plan was adopted by Baltimore’s Planning Commission, a huge step in the further commitment of city funding and other resources to the revitalization of the Middle Branch waterfront. The Reimagine Middle Branch Plan aims to reconnect South Baltimore communities with the 11+ miles of Middle Branch waterfront through parks, trails, and programs. The Plan has a strong equity focus, integrating anti-displacement practices into equitable development goals. Throughout the year, the Reimagine Middle Branch team continued their public outreach and community engagement efforts for several projects, including the Black Sox Memorial Park project in Westport.

The Middle Branch Resiliency Initiative, a coastal resilience initiative under the Reimagine Middle Branch project umbrella, also experienced big wins in 2023. South Baltimore Gateway Partnership received two grants totaling \$2.8 million for resiliency projects along the Middle Branch waterfront. The two funded projects are a 7-acre riparian buffer and wetland restoration project in Smith Cove and a wetland and shoreline restoration project near Medstar Harbor Hospital.

Above - Middle Branch Resiliency Initiative wetland restoration illustration. Image provided by South Baltimore Gateway Partnership
Right - Civic Works staff and volunteers engaged in a tree planting event. - Photo by Father Time Photography

Community Forestry Grants

The United States Forest Service (USFS) awarded \$12 million in grants to three Baltimore organizations working to plant and maintain trees and forests across the city. The Urban and Community Forestry Grants were awarded to Baltimore Tree Trust, Civic Works, and Stillmeadow. Baltimore Tree Trust’s grant will fund the planting and maintenance of street trees, urban forestry career development, and a city-wide urban forestry awareness campaign. Civic Works plans to use their grant funding to plant and maintain trees and provide residents with a year-long paid Arborist Training, preparing them for career pathways in the local urban forestation and landscaping industries.

Stillmeadow will use the grant to expand its nature education curriculum and scale its innovative Urban Silviculture Forest Training Program. In the summer of 2023, Stillmeadow’s Urban Silviculture Forest Training Program trained 5 young adults in silviculture skills - including plant ID, tree planting and maintenance, and invasive species removal. For this program, Stillmeadow partnered with the USFS, Turnaround Tuesday, the Yale Urban Resources Initiative, the Yale School of the Environment, and various local organizations.





Additional Accomplishments (and some Setbacks)

Nature for Nature's Sake:

- In 2023, Baltimore City Recreation and Parks (BCRP) experienced both gains and losses in protected park land. While parcels in Port Covington will be dedicated as public parks, a portion of Clifton Park was sold to Morgan State University.

Trees & Forests:

- BCRP-Forestry is updating their recommended street tree species list, adjusted for climate change considerations, and is also working with researchers to develop a metric to help increase street tree diversity.
- BCRP-Forestry is in the final stages of developing Forest Management Plans for the 4 largest parks in Baltimore. Forest Management Plans will guide the long-term maintenance of some of our most prized natural areas.
- In December 2023, Councilman Mark Conway introduced a series of tree health and mitigation bills to strengthen our local protections of trees.

People & Nature/Green Infrastructure

- In 2023, BCRP's TreeBaltimore team engaged 228 people through their Nature Therapy Program, designed to get citizens out in our parks with the goal of cultivating heart-centered connections between people and the more-than-human-world. Of the 228 total engaged citizens, 50 were youth, and 135 included citizens with special needs and their chaperones.
- Temple X Schools is working with the US Forest Service to map forests and worship centers in Baltimore and identify opportunities for stewardship.

Water in the Environment:

- E. coli bacteria and cryptosporidium (parasite) contamination experienced in parts of Baltimore in 2023.
- Two multi-year projects to move Baltimore's open-air drinking water reservoirs underground were both completed in 2023.
- Ghost Rivers project in Remington tells the story of underground/buried streams through art and signage installations.
- Healthy Harbor Initiative and Waterfront Partnership published the Baltimore Blueway Master Plan in August 2023. The Blueway connects sites along Baltimore's waterfront via a network of water trails and public access points.



Above - Baltimore Blueway press event paddlers.
Photo by J.J. McQueen.

Economy

New and Returning Cultural Offerings



Above - Made In Baltimore market at Artscape.
Photo by J.J. McQueen

In 2023, Baltimore saw the addition of new arts and cultural offerings, and the return of some favorites. Artscape returned in September after a three-year hiatus. Although Saturday's activities were cancelled due to a tropical storm, the event was well attended.

As part of the reopening of the renovated Lexington Market, the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) reopened their Lexington Market branch location in a new, larger space. Visitors can come to make art, participate in public programming, read from the non-circulating library, or find community with others – all at no cost.

In 2023, the #ArtOfBaltimore digital campaign was launched by downtown Partnership of Baltimore (DPOB), in partnership with Maryland Art Place and BROMO Arts & Entertainment District. The campaign featured artwork and graphic design by local artists, displayed at 16 Interactive Kiosks throughout Baltimore, and on DPOB's social channels and website.

The Creative Alliance opened the Creativity Center, a \$5 million building on Eastern Avenue across from its headquarters at Patterson Theater. The new 10,000-square-foot facility offers classrooms, a dance studio, and a test kitchen, allowing the Creative Alliance to expand arts and cultural offerings for all ages, including cooking classes and demonstrations representing the diverse traditions of the area's residents.

Made In Baltimore Continues to Grow

2023 was a year of expansion for the Made In Baltimore (MIB) program. MIB's membership includes over 300 product-based businesses located in Baltimore. The program supports members through retail, business development programs, and media campaigns. In 2023, MIB continued several of their popular programs and retail opportunities and expanded the reach of their member businesses through new events and partnerships.

MIB offered several business development and training programs. MIB's 2023 Home-Run Accelerator (HRA) supported 12 businesses through a five-month development program, which provided home-based makers with peer mentorship to help them scale into commercial production spaces. This year's cohort included 90% women-owned, 90% minority-owned, and 80% Black-owned businesses. Working with Open Works and SewLab, MIB ran the 3rd and 4th cohorts of the Baltimore Sewn Trades Training Program. MIB continued to serve as a technical assistance partner with the Baltimore BASE Network, helping small businesses apply for and receive grant assistance provided through the American Rescue Plan Act.

MIB expanded vendor market and retail opportunities for their members. They continued to offer member products for sale at the National Aquarium gift shop and worked with several member businesses to create custom products as well. MIB organized eight vendor markets at outdoor festivals throughout the year. These included the Maker Markets at WTMD's First Thursday concerts, the Charles Street Promenade, and Artscape, as well as a holiday market in partnership with Highlandtown Main Streets. MIB finished 2023 strong by offering not one, but TWO holiday pop-up stores, one at Rash Field as a showcase for participants in the HRA program, and the other at Harborplace Light Street Pavilion, which offered products from 90 MIB member businesses.



Additional Accomplishments

Local Economy:

- The 2023 City of Baltimore Procurement Conference was hosted by the Mayor's Office and City agencies. Attendees heard directly from procurement officials about contracting opportunities for small, minority and women-owned businesses and attended workshops.
- In 2023, the redevelopment of Lexington Market was completed and the market reopened with a mix of new and long-term vendors. The number of black-owned businesses increased from 5% to 50%.

Workforce Development:

- The Department of Public Works (DPW) launched the Bmore WISE program, which provides technical training to individuals interested in a water and wastewater industry career. Participants include high school students, recent high school graduates, previously incarcerated citizens of Baltimore, and those who experienced job loss.
- In partnership with the National Recreation Foundation and Tom's of Maine, Baltimore Basecamp launched Weeds 2 Woods, a paid workforce development program for older BIPOC youth ages 16-24 to learn about Maryland ecology, build naturalist skills, and deepen their connection to the outdoors.
- For the 2023-24 school year, City Schools invested in state-of-the-art learning environments for HVAC and nursing career and technology programs. This investment was \$1.6 million.
- The BGE Green Grants program awarded funding to Green Street Academy (GSA) to support the GSA Farms Summer Internship Program and Career Skills Training.



Above - A segment of the Ghost Rivers public art project. Photo by Public Mechanics.

Arts & Culture:

- Ghost Rivers, and multi-site public art installation was created by artist Bruce Willen, to share the history of Sumwalt Run, a former stream that flows through storm drains below Remington and Charles Village.
- Mayor Scott issued an executive order to establish the Mayor's Arts & Culture Advisory Committee. The 23-member body serves in an advisory capacity, providing guidance, recommendations, and support to the Mayor, City Council, and Senior Advisor of Arts & Culture in Baltimore City on matters involving and pertaining to arts and culture.
- As part of the Solo Gibbs Park renovation, there was an archeological dig to document historic use of the site. Items recovered from the dig will eventually be used to create public interpretation materials and possibly displays at the park.

Where Do We Go From Here?

In 2023, we saw tremendous progress on our climate action planning with the updated Climate Action, Disaster Preparedness, and Solid Waste Management plans all while continuing strategies and actions the 2019 Sustainability Plan advanced. This year we have a keen focus on implementation – which requires aligning staff capacities with the necessary investments, resources, policies or programs. The 2024 urban sustainability agenda for Baltimore focuses on these necessities:

Staffing

Our team in the Office of Sustainability will be fully staffed in 2024, as we have filled three climate critical roles – a Youth & Engagement Coordinator, Climate & Resilience Planner, and a Reimagine Middle Branch Coordinator. We will also foster career pipelines for budding climate professions through career partnership with the Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps and the State of Maryland's Department of Service and Civic Innovation – Climate Corps Fellowship. Additionally, departments in city government are hiring for exciting climate positions from an Energy Program Manager in the Department of General Services to new planner in the Office of Emergency Management. People power will fuel the climate action we want to see – we hope to welcome our new team members into the ever-growing community of those helping to sustain Baltimore.

Implementation

Our Office is excited to begin installing solar systems at 16 Community Resiliency Hubs in the city with \$7.3 million in funding from FEMA. Expect to see notice of the first installation later this year. We'll continue working with the city's Department of Public Works as they make progress on the goal to build a solar-powered composting facility, one aspect of food waste reduction and diversion. Across city government, we will continue to integrate sustainability goals into citywide plans scheduled to be released in 2024 - including the 2024 Comprehensive Plan – Our Baltimore and the Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks Playbook. Reaching our climate goals requires coordination across city government, state and federal agencies to connect investment opportunities with climate priorities. We will continue to work with a diverse set of stakeholders to facilitate climate actions.

Funding

The city has secured hundreds of millions of federal funding under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs and Inflation Reduction Acts, with millions more in grant funds pending reviews. We have supported countless federal grant proposals serving as advisors, connectors or facilitators in partnership with many organizations in the region. Grants we are tracking throughout the year include a \$60 million regional proposal submitted by the city to EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant, EPA's Community Change Grant providing up to \$20 million to community-based organizations and Elective or Direct Pay incentives allowing nontaxable entities to benefit from tax savings on clean energy purchases. State funding opportunities from the Maryland Energy Administration's Emissions Reduction Program, Revolving Loan Fund and recently announced \$62 million grant awarded to the Maryland Clean Energy Center from the Solar for All program present new funding opportunities the city is well-primed to compete for.

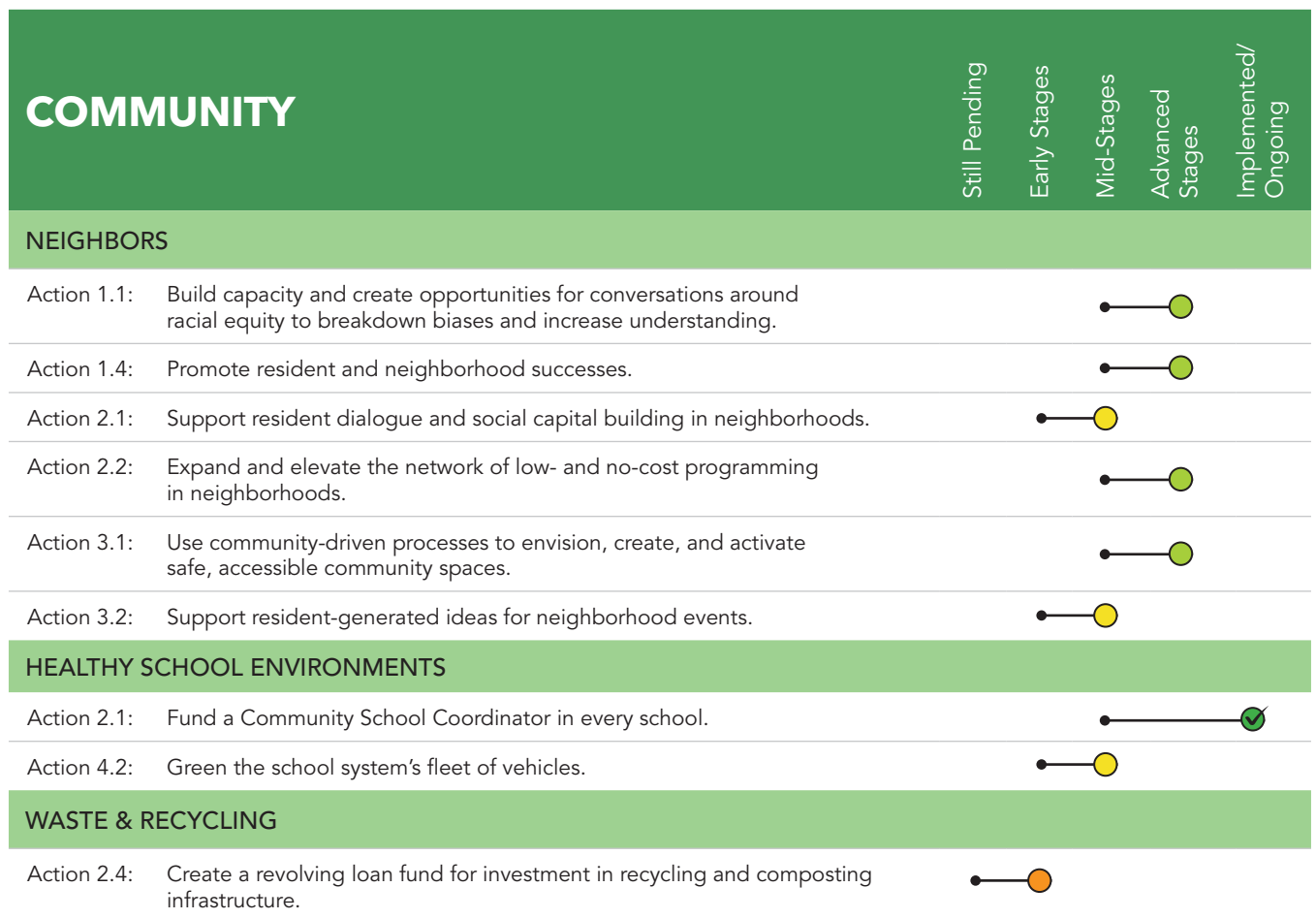
Engagement

One of our most critical roles is connecting with you, Baltimore City residents and stakeholders. In both 2022 and 2023, we achieved more than 70,000 engagement interactions across several functions and bodies of work. In 2024 – we plan to meet or surpass at least 75,000 engagements across the city through our routine efforts to educate, engage and connect. Primary engagements led by our team include monthly Commission on Sustainability meetings, the annual Sustainability Open House, monthly newsletters, social media posts and various city events. Our new Youth and Engagement Coordinator will help enhance our work to connect children to nature, support green schools grants for public schools all while weaving in appreciations for the role environmental justice plays in urban sustainability. This year we will also plan to continue enhancing climate literacy among the Baltimore City workforce through various training opportunities.

Sustainable Strategies and Actions Implementation

The Baltimore Sustainability Plan addresses all three legs of the sustainability stool – social equity (people), environmental stewardship (planet), and economic health (prosperity). The Plan was designed to lay out a broad, inclusive, and community responsive sustainability agenda. The Plan articulates strategies, actions, and measures of success across 5 core themes and 23 topic areas. Each topic area includes two to four strategies, and each strategy includes a list of recommended actions to support implementation of the strategy. There are 243 actions listed in the Plan, and we report on the implementation status of each action on an annual basis.

The charts that follow will allow you the opportunity to review the strategies and actions, and easily get an idea of where each action stands in implementation. Actions that advanced in status during 2023 are indicated with a black line that shows how the action advanced in status from 2022 to the end of 2023. A gray circle indicates that a strategy is “still pending,” and the green check mark indicates that the strategy has been “implemented and/or is ongoing.” A strategy may fall somewhere in between, and will be noted by orange, yellow, or light green. We update these charts every year to demonstrate our progress.



		Still Pending	Early Stages	Mid-Stages	Advanced Stages	Implemented/ Ongoing
URBAN AGRICULTURE						
Action 2.1:	Connect growers to educational resources and training.				●	●
Action 3.2:	Support aggregation among small farms.	●	●			
Action 3.3:	Increase demand for locally grown products.	●	●			

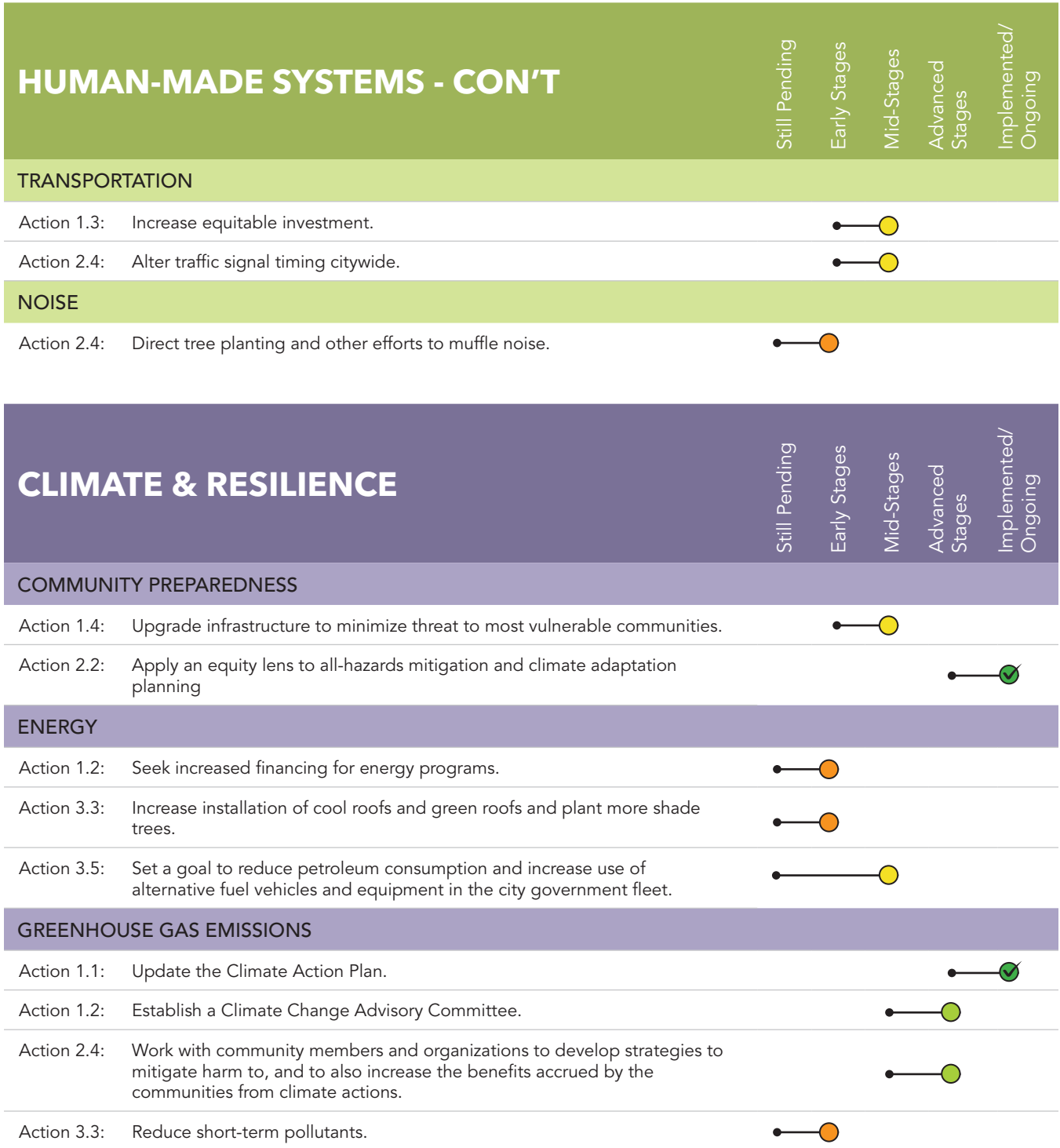
		Still Pending	Early Stages	Mid-Stages	Advanced Stages	Implemented/ Ongoing
HUMAN-MADE SYSTEMS						
NEIGHBORHOODS						
Action 1.2:	Support residents in developing neighborhood plans, baselines, and maps.				●	●
Action 1.3:	Continue to increase resident-led and city-supported improvements with a focus in under-served neighborhoods.				●	●
Action 2.1:	Seek to increase investment in small businesses in neighborhoods.		●	●		
Action 2.3:	Review historic preservation and other renovation tax credit programs.				●	● ✓
Action 2.4:	Increase funding for affordable housing.				●	● ✓
Action 2.5:	Continue to provide operating support for capacity-building programs such as the city-funded Community Catalyst Grant.				●	●
Action 3.2:	Increase Code Enforcement to ensure that vacant buildings and blighted, occupied homes do not remain in neighborhoods for long periods.				●	●

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Action 1.1:	Use City resources to leverage funds to preserve housing and create affordable housing.		●	●		
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BUILDINGS

Action 1.2:	Develop a financing toolkit to assist building owners to understand available energy and water efficiency financing options.	●	●			
Action 3.2:	Develop and pass benchmarking legislation.		●	●		
Action 4.1:	Review the City's existing green building code and amend.		●	●		



CLIMATE & RESILIENCE - CON'T		Still Pending	Early Stages	Mid-Stages	Advanced Stages	Implemented/Ongoing
CLEAN AIR						
Action 1.1:	Encourage state-of-the-art pollution controls.		●	●		
Action 1.3:	Work with the Port of Baltimore.	●	●			
Action 2.4:	Develop an alert system for Code Red days.			●		●
Action 3.1:	Implement an Indoor Air Quality management program for the school system.	●		●		
FOOD SYSTEMS						
Action 2.2:	Increase overall resilience.		●	●		

NATURE IN THE CITY		Still Pending	Early Stages	Mid-Stages	Advanced Stages	Implemented/Ongoing
TREES AND FORESTS						
Action 2.1:	Assess forests in all large parks and utilize the street tree inventory and tree canopy change data as a management tool.			●		●
WATER IN THE ENVIRONMENT						
Action 1.1:	Connect more people to water in safe ways.		●	●		
Action 1.2:	Increase education and pursue progressive actions to reduce pollutants entering our waterways.			●	●	
Action 1.3:	Develop a combination of incentives and deterrents.		●	●		
Action 2.3:	Identify, prioritize, and remediate sources of human fecal bacteria.			●	●	
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE						
Action 1.1:	Evaluate an Off-site Mitigation Credit or Pay for Performance program.		●			●
Action 1.2:	Create standard design specifications.	●			●	
Action 1.3:	Support and expand programs to establish and maintain green infrastructure.		●		●	

		Still Pending	Early Stages	Mid-Stages	Advanced Stages	Implemented/ Ongoing
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE - CONTINUED						
Action 1.4:	Create a coordinating committee.	●	●			
Action 2.1:	Create a green infrastructure workforce development program.		●	●		
Action 2.3:	Create a database of green infrastructure sites.		●	●		
Action 2.4:	Create a standard agreement.	●	●			
Action 2.5:	Analyze displacement pressures that new investments may have.		●	●		
Action 3.1:	Ensure projects are appropriate within the neighborhood context.		●	●	●	●
Action 3.2:	Create demonstration projects on public land.		●	●	●	
Action 3.3:	Create, maintain, and promote the use of educational mapping tools.		●	●		

ECONOMY		Still Pending	Early Stages	Mid-Stages	Advanced Stages	Implemented/ Ongoing
LOCAL ECONOMY						
Action 2:	Build the capacity of Made in Baltimore.				●	●
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT						
Action 5:	Increase the number of nonprofits and industry partners involved in green and sustainable jobs.		●	●		
ARTS & CULTURE						
Action 2:	Increase artist-led decision making.		●	●		
Action 3:	Create and support spaces for discourse and engaging people through art-making.		●	●		



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