



City of Bowie

Memorandum

Thursday, August 29, 2024
Alfred D. Lott, ICMA-CM, CPM,
City Manager

STATUS REPORT

1. FY24 State of the Environment Report

This report is completed annually by the Department of Planning and Sustainability as a review of the previous Fiscal Year's City-wide environmental progress. The FY24 iteration also serves as a closeout for both the Climate Action and Sustainability Plan, as we look forward to the creation of a new plan in FY25.



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY



STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

ANNUAL REPORT
FISCAL YEAR 2024



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Introduction

The 2024 City of Bowie *State of the Environment Report* provides a comprehensive overview of the City's environmental activities and sustainability initiatives for Fiscal Year 2023 (July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024). The report provides performance measurements and metrics for all Green Bowie programs and environmental initiatives, including actions related to the Green Team, the Environmental Advisory Committee, and the Council-approved Sustainability and Climate Action Plans.

This report is organized into four sections:

1. **City Accomplishments.** This section highlights the City's achievements in various categories, drawing inspiration from the Sustainable Maryland Certified program, of which the City has been a member since 2013.
2. **City Environmental Indicators.** This section encompasses the work of multiple departments and divisions including Public Works, Community Services, Parks and Grounds, The Bowie Police, and Planning and Sustainability, and showcases the City's dedication to its sustainability goals.
3. **Climate Action Plan Progress.** In this section, the report provides a status update on the Climate Action Plan and the associated Implementation Plan, outlining the progress made towards our climate-related goals.
4. **Sustainability Plan Annual Update.** The final section offers an annual update on the City's Sustainability Plan, detailing ongoing efforts and closing out our work on this plan.

The Department of Planning and Sustainability (DPS) is responsible for tracking and updating this information annually. The Sustainability Manager oversees the process, with valuable input from many City staff.

Thank you to the Green Team, the Environmental Advisory Committee, and all departments for your input, especially to Marjorie Reid, Corporal Janet Dollard, Carissa Sullivan, Mati Bazurto, Rick Kellner, George Jones, and Denise Haworth.

Accomplishments

In this section, we present the achievements of the Green Team Executive Committee, along with its associated subgroups, the Environmental Advisory Committee, dedicated staff, and enthusiastic resident-volunteers. The accomplishments are structured around, and thoughtfully aligned with, the major components of the Sustainable Maryland Certified Program.

Community Action

- Subscriptions to the monthly Green Bowie e-newsletter are up to 1,378.
- Seven of the 13 certified Green Schools received recertification by Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Educators (MAEOE). All schools are certified and must recertify every four years.
- (FY24 Budget Objective) A food waste drop-off site launched at the Kenhill Center, as a partnership between the City of Bowie and Compost Crew. As of this report, 5 tons of food waste have been diverted from the landfill and were instead brought to the Prince George's County Organics Compost Facility (OCF) to be turned into compost. The City of Bowie was awarded a Climate Leadership Award for small governments by the Metropolitan-Washington Council of Governments (COG) for the food waste drop-off site.
- The food waste curbside pickup program continued with 272 homes included in the program, meaning about 25% of the program area is actively participating. The program now has a waitlist of 121 homes looking for expansion into their neighborhoods.
- (FY24 Budget Objective) A virtual Environmental Town Hall was held on June 30, 2024. There were 25 residents in attendance with 10 questions answered.



Community Based Food Systems

- The City began a Friday Food Truck Frenzy program, which launched in November of 2023 at City Hall. There were five food trucks present, and hundreds of residents attended. Also on site was live music, games, marshmallow roasting, pinatas for the kids,

and information tables. The City continued this event at Allen Pond Park in Spring of 2024.

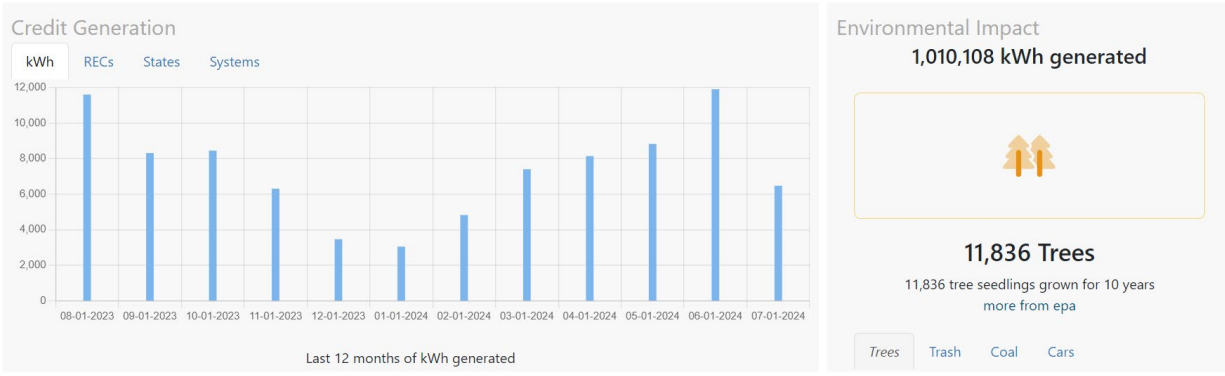
- The annual Farmers Market was held on Sundays from May through October and hosted over 10 local vendors. Staff has plans to expand the farmers market into Old Town Bowie on Wednesday evenings, as of Fiscal Year 25.
- The Community Gardens program continued at Kenhill Center with all 52 available plots being currently rented by residents.
- The Bowie Crofton Garden Club, with assistance from the Green Team, Environmental Advisory Committee, other volunteers, and some staff, hosted their annual Spring Plant Sale at the Belair Mansion. This event highlights native plants, pollinator-friendly plants, and local vendors.
- The Interfaith food pantry continued its work serving residents in need and harvesting an estimated \$9,300 worth of produce (for CY 2023).

Energy

- The City issued 131 lawn mower rebates, 44 leaf blower rebates, 63 hedge trimmer rebates, 19 weed whacker rebates, and an additional 42 rebates for “suites” or sets purchases which includes a lawn mower and at least two other tools through our Electric Lawn Care Rebate Program for 299 rebates given.
- The Energy Audit Program continued with 23 participants receiving a no-cost comprehensive energy audit through BGE’s Home Performance with ENERGY STAR® program.
- Solar panels were installed at an additional 96 additional buildings within the City, both residential and commercial.
- The Department of Community Services partnered with BGE to have lighting audits done for key City facilities and was able to upgrade lighting to LED’s at both the Gymnasium and the Senior Center in FY24. The program will continue into FY25 and beyond at no cost to the City.
- The Grants Office funded 20 participants in the Single-Family Rehab Program, focused on weatherization of LMI or senior homes.
- The City continued its participation in the Demand Response program, where we curtail energy use on high usage days at three facilities- City Hall, the Ice Arena, and the Water Treatment Plant. In FY25, the City hopes to expand this to more facilities.
- The City contracted with a consultant to perform an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy (EECS) through a grant provided by the Department of the Environment. Phase 1 will begin in FY25, with Phase II to follow.

FY24 State of the Environment

- The Solar Farm, a 2.5-megawatt solar farm on City-owned property that provides energy to the grid through a power purchase agreement (PPA), off puts energy to nine different City accounts. Another 2.5-megawatt array is slated for breaking ground during FY25.



- As shown above, the City-owned solar panels generated over one million Kilowatt hours in FY24.

Health and Wellness

- The 5th annual Green Bowie Veterans Day 5k hosted upwards of 300 people.
- The staff Wellness Committee, led by Human Resources, hosted its 4th annual Walk This Way employee walking challenge with 28 teams, and hosted a series of yoga workshops to promote mindfulness for City staff.
- The Green Team's Wellness subgroup hosted a Zumba and Movie night in the fall at Allen Pond. This is now an annual event the subgroup likes to host, in conjunction with other Green Bowie efforts such as general sustainability and Outdoor Recreation (a new Green Team subgroup).
- The City participated in Bike-To-Work Day and partnered with a local Bike repair shop to provide music and snacks to bikers. The event had about 30 riders.
- The Transportation Specialist partnered with the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) to host an adult Learn-To-Ride event at Allen Pond in September of 2023. Over 25 adults attended.
- The Transportation Specialist began a multi-year outreach campaign working with the local schools on bicycle safety for students.

Natural Resources

- The City was recognized by the Arbor Day Foundation for the 32 consecutive year as a Tree City USA community. The City has been a part of the foundation since 1992.

- The Plant One Tree on Us program continued with 82 trees planted on private, residential lots. Going into FY25, the program will be revamped and has been allotted almost double the amount of funding.
- Backyard compost bin sales continued, allowing us to come to the end of our backyard compost bin sale program as the City shifts focus to curbside and drop off site composting, we will no longer supply backyard compost bins in FY25.
- The Green Team's Natural Resources subgroup hosted 15 garden cleanup days for their 4 monarch waystations with upwards of 30 volunteers. They also hosted an "After the Storm" seminar at the Kenhill Center, a Christmas Cactus planting workshop at the Senior Center for Christmas and participated in the Stormwater Pond planting in September of 2023.
- The City was again recertified as a Community Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. We recertify in December of each calendar year.
- Five habitats were added to the certified habitat list of schools, businesses, & homes.
- The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC), along with Planning staff and volunteers, planted a native species garden for stormwater management at the Midwood Stormwater Pond in September of 2023. Upwards of 1000 native species were planted, with volunteers from Belair Swim and Raquet, Bowie High School, the Girl Scouts, and more. This project will serve as a template for others around the City.

Miscellaneous

- Public Works held special two Styrofoam and Paper Shredding events. In October of 2023 they collected 30 lbs. of Styrofoam and 10 tons of paper and in June of 2024 they collected 38 lbs. of Styrofoam and 9.83 tons of paper.
- In February of 2024 Public Works hosted an electronic waste (e-waste) event that collected about 32,000 lbs. of electronic waste consisting of things like batteries, monitors, laptops, smart phones, and docking stations.
- The IT department recycled 1,462 lbs. of City-owned electronics.
- The Police Department participated in National Prescription Drug Take Back Day in April 2024, collecting over 346 pounds of unused prescription and over-the-counter medications used by humans and pets alike.
- Council passed resolutions recognizing several significant initiatives, including Earth Month (April), Earth Day (April 22), National Bike Month (May), Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week (June 1-9, 2024), Pollinator Week (June 17-23, 2024), and Energy Efficiency Month (October).

City Environmental Performance Indicators

Indicator	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24
Batteries recycled with the Big Green Box (lbs.)	11	0	87	80	80
Buildings that installed solar panels	80	59	79	105	96
Certified NWF habitats	6	1	5	7	5
Energy audit rebates issued by City	15	4	48	26	23
City-owned electronics recycled (lbs.)	1,216	2,452	2,828	1,530	1,462
Food waste program participants	20	6	10	9	6
Lawn mower rebates issued	72	78	144	129	131
Medications collected at National Prescription Drug Takeback events (lbs., all types)	545	1,013	896	773	346
Park trees planted	15	19	15	18	45
Street trees planted	200	200	185	202	160
Rain barrels registered (self-reported)	4	7	2	-	40
Single-use plastic bottles saved by using City-owned bottle filler stations	-	-	5,364	10,081	8,192
Storm drains with “No Dumping” markers added	176	No events			140
Stream cleanup participants	No event		211	251	199
Trees planted with Plant One Tree on Us	54	77	91	84	82
Trash/Recycling collected at all cleanups (lbs.)	No event		3,930	3,295	2,250
Weed Warrior Volunteers	36	No events	10	53	25
Green (EV or Hybrid) vehicles in City fleet (new FY24 indicator)	-	-	-	-	13
Total tons refuse collected	29,556	32,642	29,885	29,740	29,136
Tons land filled	20,267	22,189	20,310	21,032	19,452
Tons recycled	9,289	10,452	9,576	8,704	9,864
Tons composted (new FY24 indicator)	-	-	-	-	2,340
Percent of solid waste stream recycled	31	32	32	32	33

Climate Action Plan Closeout and Progress

The City's Climate Action Plan (CAP), adopted in 2020, set an ambitious goal of 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2015 levels by 2030. To advance this objective, the Council approved the Climate Action Plan Implementation Plan in 2022, as a guiding document for tactical actions. The Implementation Plan, therefore, outlined specific strategies and actions to be undertaken from 2022 to 2025, aligning with the expiration of the current CAP. Both reports are separated into the following sectors: City Government, Residential, Commercial, and Intergovernmental. The Implementation Plans 'City Government' sector progress will be summarized in the images below.

As we look to the creation of a new Environmental Action Plan in FY25, it's imperative to reflect on our progress thus far in terms of Climate Action. According to the most recent update from the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWWCOG or COG), who provides bi-annual greenhouse gas community analyses, the City has made significant strides towards reducing our emissions. Since COG's 2005 baseline inventory, we have achieved an impressive 27% reduction in emissions. Our efforts to decrease single-occupant vehicle rides have shown positive results, while concurrently focusing on electrification of the grid and use of renewables. The next round of data will be available to municipalities in mid 2025 and the City will start doing in-house analyses in FY25.

<u>ACTION ITEM 1: Energy Efficiency, Energy Usage, Renewables</u>				
OBJECTIVE	METRIC(S)	STATUS	DEADLINE/ONGOING?	STAFF
Prioritize solar and renewable projects in CIP	# of CIP projects	Complete	Ongoing	Business Ops, DCS
Budget for & purchase software for emissions benchmarking of City facilities	Budgeted line item/ purchased	Complete	FY 24	Business Ops
	Input data	Complete		
	Annual results	Complete		
Annually evaluate feasibility of LED replacements in City facilities and Parks.	Annual completion	Complete	Ongoing	DCS
	# of replacements	5		
Annually evaluate feasibility of generator replacement with renewable sources.	Annual completion	Complete	Ongoing	Business Ops, DCS
	# of replacements	No progress		

Department of Community Services=DCS

ACTION ITEM 2: Transportation				
OBJECTIVE	METRIC(S)	STATUS	DEADLINE/ ONGOING?	STAFF
Update budget guidance language for vehicle acquisition to reflect efficiency goals & cost reduction over vehicle lifetime	Completion	Complete	FY24 budget season	DCS
	Completion	Baseline data created		
Adopt a Fuel Reduction Plan by reviewing baseline data, MPG of vehicles, and VMT.	# charging stations	6	Ongoing	DPS
	# EVs / hybrids	13		
Promote telework for City employees where possible	Policy adoption	Complete	Ongoing	HR
	% of workforce teleworking	In progress		
Complete comprehensive audit of City & commercial property bike racks	Completion	Complete	Dec 2022	DPS

Department of Planning and Sustainability= DPS

ACTION ITEM 3: Operations, Green Purchasing, Zero Waste				
OBJECTIVE	METRIC(S)	STATUS	DEADLINE/ ONGOING?	STAFF
Expand current green purchasing policy & track items purchased via database	Create database/resource list	No progress	Ongoing	DPS
	# green items procured	No progress		
	Creation of Finance code	No progress		
Implement food waste program at City Hall for staff	Implementation	Complete	FY 25	DPS
Move away from plastic or single-use giveaways	Implementation	In progress	Ongoing	ALL
Expand upon healthful vending options	# of items sustainably packaged	No progress	Ongoing	CMO
	# of items swapped for healthy choices	About 4		

City Manager's Office= CMO

ACTION ITEM 4: Carbon Sequestration: Expand Urban Tree Canopy				
OBJECTIVE	METRIC(S)	STATUS	DEADLINE/ ONGOING?	STAFF
Update No Net Loss Policy to combine 2013 Street Trees Policy w/ Development Review Guidelines	Completion	Complete	2023	JMM
Regularly measure tree canopy	Completion	Complete	Bi-annual	TW
	45% canopy	44.1%		
Expand tree planting program	Implementation	Complete	Ongoing	TW
	# of trees planted	FY 24-82		

JMM and TW denote staff person assigned this task specifically

ACTION ITEM 4: Carbon Sequestration (Continued)				
OBJECTIVE	METRIC(S)	STATUS	DEADLINE/ ONGOING?	STAFF
Convert turf to ecological landscaping where feasible -incorporating trees and native species	Create maps w/ potential areas	Complete	Ongoing	P&G, DPS
	# projects completed	No progress		
	# park trees lost & replanted	45		
Develop Native Species Promotion Policy for internal operations	Completion	In progress	FY 24 budget cycle	DPS, P&G
Update specs to address native species policy for SWM projects	Update DPW specifications	In progress	FY 24 budget cycle	DPS, DPW

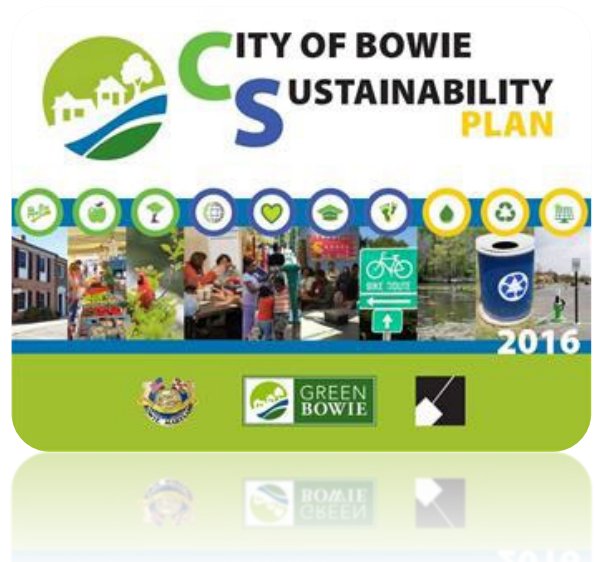
Parks and Grounds= P&G, Department of Public Works= DPW

Action Item 5: Operations and Resilience				
OBJECTIVE	METRIC(S)	STATUS	DEADLINE/ ONGOING?	STAFF
Assess the need for a Smart Cities task force	Assessment	Complete	FY24	Business Ops
	Compilation of data	In progress		
	Data distribution to relevant staff	No progress		
Incorporate Emergency Response Plan into overall Resiliency planning	Creation of resilience plan (if necessary)	No progress	-	CMO
Incorporate a climate change policy into resilience planning to equitably provide emergency services	Creation of Resilience Plan	No progress	-	CMO

Sustainability Plan Close Out

What is sustainability? It is defined typically as “development and/or growth that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Comprised of three main pillars, sustainability seeks to balance economic, social, and environmental factors.

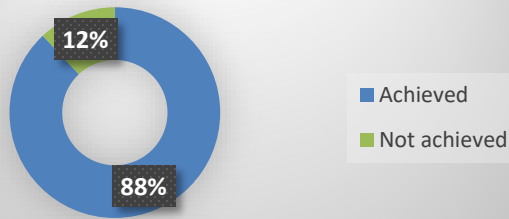
The Sustainability Plan (the Plan), initiated in 2016 as a comprehensive 10-year roadmap for City-wide growth, has allowed Bowie to make significant strides towards our sustainability-related goals. The Plan was brought to life by a partnership with M-NCPPC, the City Planning Department (then known as the Department of Planning and Economic Development), and the chosen consultants and has served us well as a blueprint for Sustainability during the prior decade. During the Sustainability Plan’s creation, public input was heavily sought out and facilitated through outreach and interactive sessions deemed “Imagine Bowie”; having resident involvement helped to ensure resident and staff appreciation for the plan. The overall vision was that the Plan would help emphasize nature and preserve the environment, create a safe environment for all that is united yet culturally diverse, is economically vibrant, and has high quality services and infrastructure. The Plan is also divided into three large sections based on the City motto of “growth, unity, and progress.”



As we enter the sunset period, with the plan officially closing out as early as the end of 2024 and being replaced by a new plan, it is essential to take a moment to reflect on the progress achieved regarding the 25 overarching goals that span critical topics of interest and the associated 57 strategies and 103 actions for the City to pursue. The actions were broken up into short, mid-term, and long-term, for staff to adequately plan and budget for implementation. Many of the 103 actions were no longer applicable after some time, and staff chose instead to turn their focus to completing strategies.

To date, only three of 25 goals were not achieved in some capacity, giving the City an 88% success rate of reaching our goals. Some goals were not met entirely but were attempted via the strategies and actions put into place. Nearly 74% of strategies listed in the Plan are complete or were worked on (42 of 57) with other 26% not started or in progress. For the actions, 65 of 103 were completed or at least started, giving us a 63% success rate on actions.

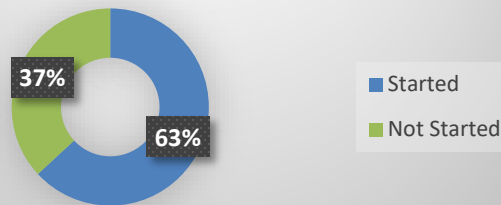
Sustainability Plan Goals



Sustainability Plan Strategies



Sustainability Plan Actions



Please see the table below for a comprehensive list of Sustainability Plan Goals, followed by a highlight of the strategies taken to achieve them. A * denotes a link to the Climate Action Plan. Goals not met are denoted by a strikethrough.

Category	Subcategory	Goal ID	Goal
Growth	Jobs and Business	JB1	Achieve 100 percent occupancy of retail space and under 10 percent vacancy of office space
Growth	Jobs and Business	JB2	Increase the number of businesses participating in the Bowie Small and Independent Business Programs from 46 to 100
Growth	Jobs and Business	JB2	Increase the number of participants in the Green Bowie Business Certification Program from 2 to 150
Growth	Food and Wellness	FW1	Achieve 20 percent resident participation in programs that promote the production, distribution, purchase, and consumption of food that is sourced within 200 miles
Growth	Food and Wellness	FW2	Increase participation in physical fitness and wellness programs and events by 20 percent
Growth	Nature and Wildlife	NW1	Protect, preserve, and enhance existing forest and tree canopy coverage to reach a 45 percent tree

			canopy goal
Growth	Nature and Wildlife	NW2	Create native landscaping on 300 additional public and private properties to help improve water quality and create new habitats for wildlife
Growth	Nature and Wildlife	NW3	Remove invasive plants from at least 300 acres of land
Growth	Nature and Wildlife	NW4	Increase participation in City cleanup and litter educational program by 30 percent
Unity	Communication	CC1	Increase City alert system subscriptions to 10,000
Unity	Communication	CC2	Increase the reach of the City's social media to 16,000 people
Unity	Communication	CC3	Increase Green Bowie e-newsletter subscribers to 1,500
Unity	Community	CT1	Create or enhance 10 public gathering spaces
Unity	Community	CT2	Increase resident participation in emergency services programs from 100 to 300
Unity	Community	CT3	Increase the number of public art pieces from 7 to 20
Unity	Community	CT4	Involve 500 residents in a City-led sustainability certification program
Unity	Community	CT5	Involve 6000 residents in events and programs that strengthen neighborhood connections
Unity	Education	ED1	Achieve Green Schools Certification at all schools within City limits.
Unity	Education	ED2	Increase Green Bowie program awareness to 90% for residents over the age of 18
Unity	Education	ED3	Provide a way for all community members in the City to report sustainability actions and have at least 2000 participate
Unity	Mobility	MC1	Increase the City Walk Score from 25 to 50 and encourage more walking and biking trips*
Progress	Water	WA1	Implement practices and programs to save and clean water on 2000 properties in the City
Progress	Recycling and Composting	RC1	Decrease the tonnage of residential waste sent to the landfill by 30 percent*
Progress	Energy and Climate	EC1	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent*
Progress	Energy and Climate	EC2	Increase renewable energy generation from 9 to 40 megawatts*

Major strategy highlights include:

- **Strategy FW1.1:** Create and maintain a community garden with plots on City property.
 - The community gardens are maintained by the Department of Community Services. They have expanded to 52 plots, all of which are occupied residents currently.
- **Strategy FW1.2:** Expand the Farmers Market.
 - Community Services has revamped the Farmers Market, working through a worldwide pandemic, and even begun a new location in Old Town Bowie on Wednesday evenings.
- **Strategy FW2.1:** Create a City-sponsored wellness initiative by partnering with local organizations.
 - The City began a Green Bowie Veterans Day 5k which is hosted every year and is a great success.
- **Strategy NW1.1:** Use social marketing to develop a tree planting campaign.
 - The Department of Planning and Sustainability runs a very successful residential tree planting program.
- **Strategy NW4.2:** Create an educational and public awareness campaign to sensitize residents to the negative impacts of litter on our environment.
 - The Department of Planning and Sustainability launched an Adopt-A-Road program and adopted out all 15 eligible roads to City civic groups and businesses.
- **Strategy CT5.1:** Hold quarterly roundtables hosted by the City to discuss community issues.
 - The City held a series of town halls which were very well received and well attended by residents.
 - The Department of Planning and Sustainability hosted an Environmental Town Hall in 2024.
- **Strategy ED2.1:** Develop an outreach campaign to reach audiences that are underrepresented or not represented in current program activities.
 - The City hosted several town halls and interactive workshops with residents including discussions with the Diversity Committee and the Police Department.
 - Green Bowie and other staff hosted many events geared towards younger crowds and families including events at the dog park, yoga events, and lightbulb exchanges at local businesses.
 - Green Bowie began an Instagram account in 2023.
- **Strategy MC1.2:** Expand existing trails for biking, hiking, and family walks into a safe and interconnected network.
 - The Department of Planning and Sustainability obtained consulting services for the creation of a Trails Master Plan, which they continue to work with other key staff on to implement the overall vision of a Bowie Byway.
- **Strategy WA1.3:** Increase participation in the mulching mower rebate program for residents.

- The Department of Planning and Sustainability enhanced this program into an Electric Lawn Care rebate program which has been extremely successful. Mulching and manual mowers are still rebated, but electric lawn care including mowers, string trimmers, hedge trimmers, and leaf blowers are also rebated.
- **Strategy RC1.2:** Increase the number of households that are composting to 2000.
 - Since this plan was adopted, upwards of 1500 backyard compost bins have been sold, there are almost 300 residents utilizing our curbside food waste program, and we launched a Food Waste Drop-off Site at the Kenhill Center which has diverted over 5 tons of food waste from the landfill. We have been awarded multiple times for our leadership in food waste diversion.
- **Strategy EC1.2:** Evaluate and update the City's Climate Action Plan in 2020.
 - This was completed in-house in 2020 and will expire in 2025 to be replaced by a new plan.