

City of Rockville

City Hall
111 Maryland Ave
Rockville, MD 20850

Approved: 
Attest: 
Approved Meeting No. 14-25
May 19, 2025



Meeting Minutes

Monday, April 28, 2025

6:30 PM

Meeting No. 11-25

WebEx

Mayor and Council

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Monique Ashton	Mayor	Present
Kate Fulton	Councilmember	Present
Barry Jackson	Councilmember	Present
David Myles	Councilmember	Present
Izola Shaw	Councilmember	Present
Marissa Valeri	Councilmember	Present
Adam Van Grack	Councilmember	Present

1. Convene

Mayor and Council convened in a Hybrid Open Meeting at 6:36 p.m. on Monday, April 28, 2025, in the Mayor and Council Chambers, City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland, and via Webex.

Staff Present: City Manager Jeff Mihelich, City Attorney Robert E. Dawson, and City Clerk/Director of Council Operations Sara Taylor-Ferrell.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Jonathan Cole from Troop 1450 led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Proclamation and Recognition – NONE

4. Agenda Review

City Clerk/Director of Council Operations Sara Taylor-Ferrell reported the removal of a consent agenda item and the addition of the Mayor and Council questions and answers attachment to the Climate action Plan.

5. City Manager's Report

City Manager, Jeff Mihelich reported the free Rockville Skate Jam was rescheduled to Saturday, May 3, 2025, from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm at the Rockville Skate Park, 355 Martins Lane, Rockville, MD 20850. The City will partner with CSX Railroad to paint over the graffiti on the railroad bridge.

6. Boards and Commissions Appointments and Reappointments

A. Board and Commission Appointment and Reappointment

Councilmember Marissa Valeri Councilmember Marissa Valeri moved the appointment of Eddie Friedman to the Community Policing Advisory Board to serve an expiring term until December 1, 2027, and the appointment of Steve Bennett to the Community Policing Advisory Board to serve an expiring term until February 1, 2026.

	RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Marissa Valeri, Councilmember
SECONDER:	Barry Jackson, Councilmember
IN FAVOR:	Mayor Ashton, Councilmember Fulton, Councilmember Jackson, Councilmember Myles, Councilmember Shaw, Councilmember Valeri, Councilmember Van Grack

Councilmember David Myles moved the appointment of Lisa Kehayias-Farhi to the Education Board to serve a full term until May 1, 2028, and the reappointment of Michael Berman to the Education Board to serve a full term until April 1, 2028.

	RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	David Myles, Councilmember
SECONDER:	Adam Van Grack, Councilmember
IN FAVOR:	Mayor Ashton, Councilmember Fulton, Councilmember Jackson, Councilmember Myles, Councilmember Shaw, Councilmember Valeri, Councilmember Van Grack

Councilmember Izola Shaw moved the appointment of Dominic Russoli to the Human Rights Commission to serve a full three-year term until April 1, 2028.

	RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Izola Shaw, Councilmember
SECONDER:	Barry Jackson, Councilmember
IN FAVOR:	Mayor Ashton, Councilmember Fulton, Councilmember Jackson, Councilmember Myles, Councilmember Shaw, Councilmember Valeri, Councilmember Van Grack

Councilmember Barry Jackson moved the appointment of Mike Walsh to the Retirement Board to serve a full three-year term until May 1, 2028.

	RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Barry Jackson, Councilmember
SECONDER:	Kate Fulton, Councilmember
IN FAVOR:	Mayor Ashton, Councilmember Fulton, Councilmember Jackson, Councilmember Myles, Councilmember Shaw, Councilmember Valeri, Councilmember Van Grack

Councilmember Barry Jackson moved the reappointment of Alan Kaplan to the Senior Citizens Commission to serve a full three-year term until May 1, 2028, and the reappointment of Richard Rosano to the Senior Citizens Commission to serve a full three-year term until May 1, 2028.

	RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Barry Jackson, Councilmember
SECONDER:	Izola Shaw, Councilmember
IN FAVOR:	Mayor Ashton, Councilmember Fulton, Councilmember Jackson, Councilmember Myles, Councilmember Shaw, Councilmember Valeri, Councilmember Van Grack

7. Community Forum

**Community Forum
In-Person/Virtual Speaker List
(April 28, 2025)**

NAME	TOPIC
Marji Graf	Local businesses in City be given Priority, adopt procurement policy criteria, diversity and side costs, prioritize local bids, make for all City contracts

8. Special Presentations

A. Presentation of the Annual Climate Action Plan Update

Rockville Public Works Sustainability Coordinator, Amanda Campbell, Chief of Environmental Management Erica Shingara, provided an overview of the annual Climate Action Plan update.

Staff recommends that the Mayor and Council receive the presentation on the Climate Action Plan 2024 Annual Report.

Questions from the Mayor and Council were addressed by the staff. The Mayor and Council provided their thoughts and comments.

Summary:

This is the third annual report for the Mayor and Council following the adoption of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) on January 10, 2022. The annual report fulfills CAP Action C-26 to track and report CAP progress to foster public transparency and accountability. The 2024 annual report provides detailed action-level summaries of progress for calendar year 2024, including potential issues, next steps, equity considerations, grants, and performance metrics, when available.

Background:

The Mayor and Council adopted Rockville’s first Climate Action Plan (CAP) to chart a path to reduce greenhouse gases, build resiliency, and incorporate equity in public engagement and oversight. The CAP sets a goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50 percent (from 2005) by 2030 and approach carbon neutrality by 2050. Since the plan adoption, the Maryland General Assembly established a more ambitious goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60 percent (from 2006) by 2031 and net zero by 2045.

Rockville's CAP comprises 42 current actions and 8 actions for future monitoring in categories involving energy efficiency, renewable energy, transportation, land use management, materials and waste management, resiliency, and public engagement and oversight. There are 16 municipal actions that involve carbon emissions and resiliency associated with municipal operations and services and 26

community actions that involve community carbon emissions and resiliency.

Status of Climate Actions

In 2024, the plan has made significant progress toward completion by the goal year 2030:

- Nine actions (including one future monitoring action) are completed or institutionalized in annual practices (21 percent).
- 30 actions are in progress or ongoing actions (70 percent).
- Four actions are phased and will need future resources to meet intended goals of the plan (9 percent).

Funding and Grants

The FY 2025 budget included more than \$4.3 million for CAP initiatives, such as continued food waste composting program, facility energy audits and improvements, LED streetlight replacement, storm drain rehabilitation, stream restoration, an expanded stormwater incentive program that includes the Flood Mitigation Assistance Program, expanded RainScapes Rebates, and competitive watershed grants.

2024 Highlights

In the three years since the plan was adopted, remarkable strides have been made to direct resources towards energy efficiency, clean energy, improved resiliency, and equitable outcomes. Numerous interdepartmental working groups collaborated to implement climate-related projects and programs.

Key focus areas are:

- Energy Efficiency
- Renewable Energy
- Transportation
- Land Management
- Materials and Waste
- Resiliency
- Public Engagement and Oversight

Next Steps

As the Climate Action Plan is implemented, several CAP-related initiatives are expected to move forward. Many of these will come before the Mayor and Council for consent, award, review or discussion, and/or possible adoption over the next year. The fourth annual report covering 2025 is anticipated to be provided to the Mayor and Council in early 2026.

FURTHER DISCUSSION

April 28, 2025, Agenda item 8A.

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Timestamp 10:32

9. Consent Agenda

- A. Authorization for City Manager to Execute a Public Right-of-Way License Agreement for Use of the Gibbs Street Public Right-of-Way as a Streeterly, subject to approval as to legal form by the City Attorney
- B. Award and Authorize the City Manager to Execute a Rider Agreement with Playcore Wisconsin, Inc. dba GameTime of Maryland for an initial term through July 1, 2026, with options to renew, for an annual amount not-to-exceed \$450,000, pursuant to the OMNIA contract for Parks and Recreation and Outdoor Fitness Equipment, Site Accessories, Surfacing and Related Products and Services.
- C. Deaccessioning of “The Hatter of Rockville,” an Art in Public Places artwork
- D. Authorization for the City Manager to Release and Extinguish Four Existing Easements for Sewer, Stormwater Management, Water, and Water Meter, and to Approve Five Easements and Three License and Maintenance Agreements Associated with Private Amenities, Utilities and Stormwater Management, Public Access, Storm Drain, Water and Sewer on Block D, Tower Oaks
- E. The Mayor and Council Approval of the College Gardens Park Mural Design
- F. Authorize the City Manager to Execute Modification Number 2 Between the City of Rockville and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to Provide a No Cost Extension of Contract No. 14-23-4005 CBG 9001 to June 30, 2026
- G. Authorization for the City Manager to Execute a Right of Entry and Indemnity Agreement for Bridge Painting (Aesthetic) with CSX Transportation, Inc. for the City to Paint the CSX Park Road Overpass
- H. Authorization for the City Manager to Amend an Existing Forest Conservation Easement as recorded in the Land Records for Montgomery County at Book 33165 and Page 427 to facilitate the proposed development approved under Project Plan PJT2023-00015, Site Plan STP2024-00473, and Amendment to Forest Conservation Plan [FTP2001-00015](#).
- I. Approval of Minutes

Consent agenda item E was pulled for discussion.

Councilmember Adam Van Grack moved to approve consent agenda items A, B,C,D,F,G,H, and I.

	RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Adam Van Grack, Councilmember
SECONDER:	Kate Fulton, Councilmember
IN FAVOR:	Mayor Ashton, Councilmember Fulton, Councilmember Jackson, Councilmember Myles, Councilmember Shaw, Councilmember Valeri, Councilmember Van Grack

Councilmember Izola Shaw moved to approve consent agenda items E.

	RESULT: APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Izola Shaw, Councilmember
SECONDER:	Barry Jackson, Councilmember
IN FAVOR:	Mayor Ashton, Councilmember Fulton, Councilmember Jackson, Councilmember Myles, Councilmember Shaw, Councilmember Valeri, Councilmember Van Grack

10. Public Hearing – NONE

11. Action Items – NONE

12. Worksession

A. Work session - MFD-V and Local Preference Program

Director of Procurement, Jessica Lewis, and Deputy Director of Procurement Jonathan Pierson provided an overview of the Minority, Female, Disabled, and Veteran’s Owned Program (MFD-V)/Local Preference.

Mayor and Council provided their questions and comments.

Summary:

Staff recommends that the Mayor and Council accept the presentation, ask any questions pertaining to the work involved and share reactions to the questions:

1. Does the Mayor and Council want to conduct a Disparity Study for the City of Rockville or alternatively expand upon current City outreach practices?
2. Does the Mayor and Council want to expand or maintain its local preference policies?
3. Does the Mayor and Council want to expand or maintain its environmental and social based procurement practices?

MFD-V Outreach Program: Background

- On October 20, 2014, the Mayor and Council unanimously approved the creation of an informal Minority, Female, and Disabled-owned (MFD) outreach program.

- The goal of the program is to increase procurement opportunities for MFD owned businesses through education, communication and collaboration so that MFD owned businesses may compete effectively in the City’s bidding process.
- In FY2022, the MFD outreach program was enhanced to include Veteran-Owned Businesses.

Fiscal Impact

If the Mayor and Council would like to conduct a disparity study and pursue implementation of a formal MFD-V program, staff would submit funding requests to cover initial costs and ongoing costs associated with maintaining the program. Initial costs are estimated at \$300,000 and above for the disparity study and approximately \$37,440 for temporary personnel to assist with data gathering while the study is being conducted. Funding would also be requested for a 1.0 FTE to operate the program which includes conducting outreach, compliance monitoring, reporting, etc.

Once a program is implemented a new disparity study would need to be periodically conducted, possibly every five years which is also estimated at \$300,000 and above.

If the Mayor and Council would like to expand its local preference policies, staff would conduct an analysis to better assess the overall budget impact to implement and maintain the program to include consideration of additional resources required.

Next Steps

After a lengthy discussion, Mayor and Council requested more data and see how other jurisdictions work and learn about disparities from Montgomery County, and how to change practices; and to develop environmental procurement criteria.

FURTHER DISCUSSION

April 28, 2025, Agenda item 12A.

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B. Homeowner Programs - Community Wide and City Employee Work Session

Director of Housing and Community Development, Ryan Trout provided an overview of the Community Wide and City Employee Homeowners Programs.

Staff recommends that the Mayor and Council receive the presentation, discuss, and provide direction on their priorities related to the city’s first-time homebuyer downpayment assistance and employee homeownership programs, and on the first-generation and opportunity area downpayment bonus programs.

The following feedback is requested from the Mayor and Council to guide next steps:

1. Do you agree that the homeownership assistance program should focus on households earning up to 80% of the area median income?

2. Do you agree that the homeownership assistance program should focus on downpayment and closing cost assistance up to 10% of the household's maximum purchase capacity?
3. Do you agree with the layering of the employee downpayment assistance program, first-generation buyer, and/or opportunity area bonuses?

Summary:

Key factors driving steep Affordability challenges and limited supply:

- High Home Prices
- Rising Interest Rates
- Limited Housing Supply
- Economic and Credit Barriers
- Housing Costs and Demographics

Employee Homeownership Program (EHP)

The City of Rockville aspires to make Rockville a place to live, work, and play. Yet, buying a home in the City of Rockville can be challenging, particularly for first-time homebuyers. The City recognizes many benefits of assisting City employees to live closer to their place of employment, including improved work-life balance due to shorter commutes.

Program Overview

In 2022, the Rockville Mayor and Council approved \$250,000 for an Employee Homeownership Program (EHP) as a pilot program, providing \$25,000 in downpayment assistance to City employees.

The funds were appropriated in the fiscal year (FY) 2024 budget, and future appropriations are yet to be determined.

The EHP would offer Rockville City government employees a deferred, 0% interest loan for down payment and closing costs to purchase their first single-family home, condominium, or cooperative unit in Rockville.

The down payment assistance would be a loan for the purchase of a principal residence in Rockville. The borrowers sign a promissory note secured with a subordinate deed of trust recorded against the property. The loan has zero interest, and no payments are required until the property is: (1) is sold or transferred; (2) no longer occupied as a principal residence; or (3) refinanced with cash out.

The City of Rockville Employee Homeownership Program is also designed to:

- Provide incentives that will allow the City to recruit and retain employees. Assistance is offered to encourage occupancy near place of work;
- Encourage and sustain homeownership with employee homeownership to improve public safety, neighborhood, and economic vitality.
- Lessen barriers to homeownership by providing downpayment cost

Staff Recommendations:

Community-based Down Payment Assistance Program

- Set maximum income threshold at 80% AMI
- Allow up to 10% in DPA
- Allow assistance to be used for both downpayment and closing costs
- Deferred no-interest loans are deferred until the homeowner sells or refinances the home. These loans will be structured as a second mortgage, where repayment happens after the primary mortgage is settled.
- Recycle the repaid loans so that they can be used to help more families, multiplying the impact of limited resources.

Employee Homebuyer Assistance Program

- Provide \$25,000 in down payment and closing cost assistance to City of Rockville employees who purchase in the City.
- Provide the assistance as a soft second (zero-percent interest, repayable at sale or transfer).
- Eligible staff must work for the City for at least six months.
- The loans can be combined with the Rockville Down Payment Assistance Program.

First Generation Homebuyer Bonus

- Buyer must meet GSE-defined definition of "First-Generation Homebuyer"
- Provide a \$10,000 "First-Generation Homebuyer Bonus" to qualifying homebuyers.
- The bonus can be added to the Down Payment Assistance Program
- Ten-year forgivable loans
- All borrowers on the loan must complete and sign the GSE's First-Generation Homebuyer Certification (Form 1109) to attest to their status.

Opportunity Area Bonus

- Provide \$15,000 "Opportunity Area Bonus" to qualifying families with children who purchase homes in the city's highest opportunity areas
- Added on top of the down payment assistance to increase the buyer's maximum purchase capacity

Mayor and Council History

- In 1993, the Mayor and Council provided a total of \$520,000 to establish the Real Estate Effort for Affordable Community Housing (REACH) program.
- In 2022, the Mayor and Council approved funds to assist employees with downpayments when buying a home in Rockville.
- Housing was selected as one of the Mayor and Council's three focus areas. In June 2024, a high-level briefing was presented outlining the city's housing crisis and policy landscape. Later in 2024, there were three work sessions on the city's housing strategies: supply, subsidy, and stability.
- Homeownership assistance was approved by Mayor and Council as one of the strategies to pursue.

Fiscal Impact

Based on FY26 goals for the program, staff estimate up to:

- Ten (10) DPA loans, average of \$46,594, total of \$465,940
- Two (2) first-generation bonuses, at \$10,000 each, total \$20,000
- One (1) opportunity bonus, at \$15,000, and
- Assist five (5) employees, at \$25,000 each, totaling \$125,000.

The estimated total program cost in FY26 (Year 1) would be \$625,940. Sufficient funds will be available in the Housing Opportunity Fund, and staff anticipates recovering funds from the HCI REACH (Housing and Community Initiative, Inc.'s, Real estate Effort for Affordable Community Housing) program to fully operationalize and fund the programs as proposed.

Next Steps

- Staff will use the feedback received from Mayor and Council to finalize the program design.
- Create and establish processes, procedures, applications, and tracking documents, etc.
- Work with CCE to develop an outreach plan and communicate with lenders.
- Launch the programs – Goal launch date: October 1, 2025.

FURTHER DISCUSSION

April 28, 2025, Agenda item 12A.

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13. Mock Agenda

Mayor and Council reviewed the mock agenda.

14. Old / New Business

Mayor and Council requested staff draft a letter to be sent to Montgomery Housing Partnership (MHP) and Housing Opportunity Commission (HOC) notifying them of what is possible through the Town Center Master Plan in support of creating more affordable housing in Rockville.

15. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:24 p.m.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Marissa Valeri, Councilmember
SECONDER:	Barry Jackson, Councilmember
IN FAVOR:	Mayor Ashton, Councilmember Fulton, Councilmember Jackson, Councilmember Myles, Councilmember Shaw, Councilmember Valeri, Councilmember Van Grack