

Bennington HOA

GREEN TEAM ACTION PLAN 2025-2030

In 2024, Bennington HOA worked with the Environmental Finance Center (EFC) at the University of Maryland and its Sustainable Maryland (SM) program to establish a Green Team and adopt the SM Residential Action Framework. Sponsored by the Chesapeake Bay Trust with support from the City of Gaithersburg, this framework guides homeowners' associations through a process that increases their awareness of natural resources and watershed protection issues, educates their residents on the importance of community-based sustainability efforts, and encourages action.

Over the course of a year, the EFC project team led community members through a process of identifying and prioritizing shared areas of need, strategies for enhancing collective action, and opportunities for developing projects culminating in this Green Team Action Plan.

The Bennington Green Team Action plan is a living document that establishes priority actions for the next three to five years and serves as a tool for Green Team members to stay organized and track progress over time.



HIGHLIGHTS

LOCATION

Intersection of Longdraft Road and Clopper Road

POPULATION

295 townhomes
Approximately 1,180 residents

GREEN TEAM MEMBERS

Stephanie Simmons
Audra Richmond
Garth Hall
Robin Harmon
Pete Atta
Vanda Gale
Marva van Williams

GREEN TEAM CONTACT

Carla Johnson
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PARTNERS

Sustainable Maryland
Environmental Finance Center
City of Gaithersburg
Chesapeake Bay Trust

COMMUNITY ACTION

Establish/Grow a Green Team

Action Leads:

Target Year: 2024

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs: Free

Potential Partners: Sustainable Maryland

Potential Resources:

- SM Framework presentation | Sustainable Maryland | <https://go.umd.edu/cyZ>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- Completed in Fall 2024.

Establish a Sustainability Resources Center

Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

Progress and Implementation Notes:

-This can be created on the community website and used for several outreach-related actions identified in this plan.

Promote/Partner with Maryland Green Schools

Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs: Free

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

- MD Green Schools Program | Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education | <https://bit.ly/4aoUEan>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- The Green Team can work with an existing MD Green School (ex. Whetstone Elementary). Alternatively, the Green Team can reach out to Brown Station or Diamond Elementary School leadership and encourage their participation in the MD Green Schools program, in collaboration with other HOA Green Teams.

Install a Little Free Library

Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

- Little Free Library | <https://bit.ly/3wqGeo7>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- Identify a location in the common areas to install a little free library.

Track Diversity and Equity on Boards

Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs: Free

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

Progress and Implementation Notes:

Partner with Nonprofits or Higher Education Institutions to Help Build Capacity and Provide Technical Assistance

Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

- Community Engagement and Restoration Mentorship Program | Chesapeake Bay Trust | <https://bit.ly/346360J>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- Aim is to help build capacity and provide technical assistance (e.g., grant writing, research, etc.) For future opportunities to partner with UMD, Muddy Branch Alliance, Chesapeake Bay Trust, etc.

Coordinate with Neighboring HOAs on Green Initiatives

Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

- Creating Sustainable, Resilient, and Healthy HOAs | CAP Management Denver, CO | <https://bit.ly/3uV6mHd>

- Greening Your HOA | Piedmont Environmental Council | <https://bit.ly/33t1IVw>

- Green Condo and Homeowners Associations: Ideas on Green Initiatives from Across the Country | HOA Leader | <https://bit.ly/3sMCFoN>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- Relda Square and Diamond Farm HOAs have Green Teams and are nearby. Dorsey Estates townhomes abuts the community. Refer to the HOA Green Teams in Gaithersburg Map in the appendices of this report and the points of contact on the [Sustainable Maryland Resources for Homeowners Associations Website](#).

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Promote Stormwater Best Management Practices

Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners: City of Gaithersburg, Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (they have educational material that can be used)

Potential Resources:

- Stormwater 101 | Gaithersburg | <https://bit.ly/3gHCo14>
- Stormwater Pollution Prevention | Gaithersburg | <https://bit.ly/3Bft51z>
- Types of Stormwater Management Facilities | Montgomery County | <https://bit.ly/3JIHNqF>
- Rainscapes Reward Program | Gaithersburg | <https://bit.ly/3Hp6Okp>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- This can be promoted on website and listserv.

Promote Stormwater Rebate Program Education and Outreach

Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners: City of Gaithersburg, Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (they have educational material that can be used)

Potential Resources:

- Rainscapes Reward Program | Gaithersburg | <https://bit.ly/3Hp6Okp>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- This can be promoted on website and listserv.

Schedule Regular Community Clean Up Days

Action Leads:

Target Year: Existing

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners: City of Gaithersburg

Potential Resources:

- How to Organize & Lead Your Clean Up | Alice Ferguson Foundation | <https://bit.ly/3HkJiEY>
- Community Clean Up Event Support | Gaithersburg | <https://bit.ly/3rIWMus>
- City Cleanup Liability Release Form | <https://bit.ly/3rjhZ8m>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- The community currently has an annual Spring cleanup. This can be promoted on website and listserv (if not already doing so). This can be conducted with local volunteers and materials provided by City and non-profits. Consider offering interested students with receive student service learning (SSL) hours.

Install Pet Waste Stations



Action Leads:

Target Year: Existing

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

- Montgomery County's Pet Waste Management Program for HOAs | Montgomery County | <https://bit.ly/3AUyMIE>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- Mutt Mitt stations. Homeowner volunteers monitor the ones near their homes and keep them stocked with bags. They let Carla know when they need additional bags.

Adopt a Salt Reduction Plan

Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

- Winter Salt Watch | Izaak Walton League of America | <https://bit.ly/3ANKxu1>

- Road Salt Best Management Practices Fact Sheet | NH Department of Environmental Services | <https://bit.ly/3GmFQbw>

- Winter Maintenance Salt Application Guidelines and Calculator | Saltwise Wisconsin | <https://bit.ly/34Q83dQ>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- Landscaping company does common area sidewalks, homeowners do their own sidewalks and parking spaces, City does streets.

Install and Maintain Green Infrastructure



Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

- City Support | Gaithersburg | Environmental Services |

<https://bit.ly/4hgDAp8>

- Outreach and Restoration Grant | Chesapeake Bay Trust |

<https://bit.ly/3HwaZek>

- Community Engagement Mini Grant | Chesapeake Bay Trust |

<https://bit.ly/3ojLvJe>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- Includes Bioswales, Rain Gardens, Pervious Pavement, Green Streets, Rain Barrels, etc. Several opportunities exist for small-scale stormwater infrastructure on the community's common property, as well as rain barrels for residential properties. Possible areas for rain gardens include near pet waste station and meadow. Areas of concern include hot spot/trouble area in the common area of Honeybrook Circle/Honeybrook Lane is where a manhole cover blew. The HOA is repaving parking lots in the next five years, this may present an opportunity for pervious paving/asphalt. Funding and technical assistance for projects can come from non-profits.

ECO-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING

Establish and Promote No-Mow Zones

Action Leads:**Target Year:****Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:****Potential Partners:****Potential Resources:**

- Outreach and Restoration Grant | Chesapeake Bay Trust | <https://bit.ly/3HwaZek>
- Community Engagement Mini Grant | Chesapeake Bay Trust | <https://bit.ly/3ojLvJe>
- Benefits of a Low Mow or No Mow Zone | <https://bit.ly/3uF7jmN>
- Creating a Wild Backyard - Ground Covers | MD Natural Resources | <https://bit.ly/3sxlpCQ>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- The current landscaping company is leaving grass clippings which are clogging storm drains. Green Team is interested in providing habitat for fireflies.

Plant Trees

Action Leads:**Target Year:****Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:****Potential Partners:****Potential Resources:**

- City Support | Gaithersburg | Environmental Services | <https://bit.ly/4hgDAp8>
- Outreach and Restoration Grant | Chesapeake Bay Trust | <https://bit.ly/3HwaZek>
- Community Engagement Mini Grant | Chesapeake Bay Trust | <https://bit.ly/3ojLvJe>
- Urban Trees Grant Program | Chesapeake Bay Trust | <https://bit.ly/3S6qerl>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- Consider establishing an annual Arbor Day/Earth Day planting with possible grant funding support. There's currently a lot of funding for trees, even on private properties.

WILDLIFE HABITAT

Coordinate an Annual Bio Blitz

Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

- BioBlitz Program | National Geographic Society | bit.ly/48EvdA7

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- A fun and informative single day educational event, where residents survey the plants and animals in their community. Done with a phone app. Nearby forested area is excellent for a Blitz. This can be promoted on website and listserv.

Plant Pollinator Gardens



Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

- Lands Green Waters Clean | Muddy Branch Alliance | <https://bit.ly/3u5iLu3>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- Garth expressed interest in habitat protection for bees, butterflies, fireflies. Consider installing in underused green spaces like parking medians, hillsides, or alleys between structures.

Install Bat Boxes

Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

- Bat Houses | MD Department of Natural Resources | <https://bit.ly/3uJiuV>

- Bat Houses | Bat Conservation International | <https://bit.ly/3BcBenC>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- The Green Team is interested in using bat boxes as part of a more comprehensive mosquito control program.

Establish a Mosquito Control Program

Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

- Mosquito Prevention Checklist | My Green Montgomery | <https://bit.ly/3HnfTtW>
- Make Your Own Mosquito Trap | My Green Montgomery | <https://bit.ly/3ukckB6>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- The Green Team is interested in proactively educating residents about how to maintain properties to minimize mosquitoes. They are also interested in installing mosquito dunks and/or traps. Green Team wants to continue to try and identify solutions with the City for the pond adjacent to the HOA property.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Promote Local Farmers Market

Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

- The Guide to Montgomery County Farmers Markets | Montgomery County | <https://bit.ly/3hwjydK>
- Farmers Markets | Gaithersburg | <https://bit.ly/3oKPU8n>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- Promote the City's Farmers Markets to residents via the HOA's website and listserv.

WASTE REDUCTION

Conduct Recycling Education and Outreach

Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

- Recycle Coach App | Gaithersburg | <https://bit.ly/3AZXIIh>
- Recycling & Bulk Pick Up | Gaithersburg | <https://bit.ly/33ec1wq>
- Recycling Service Summary | Gaithersburg | <https://bit.ly/3rL8AXH>
- Trash and Recycling Guide | Quince Orchard Park HOA | <https://bit.ly/3Bh4zqB>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- Common areas often have bulk items that are dumped there. Include educational material on website and in listserv.

Host a Document Shredding Event

Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

- Paper Shredding/Recycling and Reusable Clothing/Household Items Collection Events | Montgomery County | <https://bit.ly/3JgPNJH>
- Shredding Events in Your Community | Shred-it | <https://bit.ly/3stinAu>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- Participate in the City's shredding events (if they have them) or partner with Dorsey Estates to co-host.

Host a Community-wide Garage/Yard Sale

Action Leads:

Target Year: Existing

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

- 7 Ideas for Starting an Annual Neighborhood Yard Sale | Trulia's Blog | <https://bit.ly/3uA27ke>
- Getting HOA Buy-in for Your Next Community Yard Sale | Rich Swier's Blog | <https://bit.ly/3BNG2jJ>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- The Green Team currently holds an annual yard sale event.

CLEAN AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

Promote Energy Efficiency Practices

Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

- Home Performance Rebates | Pepco | <https://bit.ly/346LKAP>
- Residential Rebates & Discounts | Pepco | <https://bit.ly/3s8wL1e>

- HVAC Efficiency Rebates | Pepco | <https://bit.ly/3GqtU8K>
- Smart Thermostat Savings | Pepco | <https://bit.ly/40kSELP>
- Energy Wise Rewards | Pepco | <https://bit.ly/34Nze99>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- This can be promoted on website and listserv. Consider having a representative from Pepco (community liaison) participate in an HOA meeting to answer Green Team and homeowner questions. The electricity bill at the clubhouse in the winter was really high, however, Pepco made some recommendations.

Promote and/or Install Solar, Community Solar and Community Co-Ops

Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

- MD Capital Area Solar Co-op | Solar United Neighbors | <https://bit.ly/3rkmlXn>
- Oaks Landfill, Montgomery County Community Solar Project | Neighborhood Sun | <https://bit.ly/3omcX9w>
- Community Solar Resources | Pepco | <https://bit.ly/3sbn95H>
- Community Solar Pilot Program | MD Public Service Commission | <https://bit.ly/3AWpDJ8>
- A Guide to Community Shared Solar: Utility, Private, and Nonprofit Project Development | Sun Shot | <https://bit.ly/34sFXFT>
- HOA Solar Action Guide | Solar United Neighbors | <https://bit.ly/3sfW7tW>
- Completed Co-ops in Maryland | Solar United Neighbors | <https://bit.ly/3uFM9oA>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- Solar is permitted on rooftops. This can be promoted on website and listserv. Some HOA board members are interested in installing them on the clubhouse roof.

Upgrade to LED Streetlights

Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

- LED Streetlight Conversions in Maryland & Virginia: Opportunities, Challenges, and Strategies in 2020 | MD Energy Administration | <https://bit.ly/3siexKA>
- LED Street Light Conversion | Gaithersburg | <https://bit.ly/3gspjs8>
- County's Streetlight Conversion Yields Financial Savings and Reduces GHG Emissions | Montgomery County | <https://bit.ly/3oqMxTO>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- Exterior lights by the pool have been converted to energy-saving LEDs. And any time lights go out in common areas they are replaced with LEDs. The shed is probably the only area of the community that hasn't been upgraded yet.

Install On-Site Renewable Energy

Action Leads:

Target Year:

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

- HOA Solar Action Guide | Solar United Neighbors | <https://bit.ly/3sfW7tW>

- 2022 Maryland Solar Incentives, Tax Credits & Rebates | EnergySage |

<https://bit.ly/3Jna6Fq>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- Investigate installing solar panels on the clubhouse's roof (pool is not heated). Solar installers can determine solar access suitability and provide proposals.

TRANSPORTATION

Install Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Action Leads:

Target Year: Existing

Estimated Cost and Resource Needs:

Potential Partners:

Potential Resources:

- Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment Rebate Program | MD Energy Administration |

<https://bit.ly/3IUoQLB>

- EV Smart Program | Pepco | <https://bit.ly/3rIAVUj>

Progress and Implementation Notes:

- Residents are allowed to install their own electric vehicle (EV) charging stations (at their own expense).

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Map of Gaithersburg HOA Green Teams

