



Arlington's Steps Towards Sustainability

By Rick Keller

Arlington is making good progress towards realizing the goals of its Community Energy Plan (CEP) adopted in 2013. The goal of the CEP is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) within Arlington to 3 metric tons per household by 2050, a 10-metric-ton reduction from the starting point and equivalent to the best-performing cities in the world today.

At a meeting of the CEP's Implementation Review Team in October, County staffers shared results to date and described new initiatives in development. These are summarized below.

Solar

- The *Solarize* initiative – a joint project with VA Sun—resulted in 290 Arlington residents signing up for residential solar evaluations. As of October, 38 of these residents had signed contracts to install solar, with more expected.
- Arlington County and Arlington County Public Schools continue to investigate the use of Public-Private Purchase Agreements to add solar to existing buildings. Under PPAs, third party vendors own the facility (and therefore can take advantage of tax credits) while the facilities are able to negotiate favorable rates.
- Discovery Elementary, the newest APS school, opened this fall with 497 kW of solar power installed.

Lighting

- The County-owned garage at Ballston Commons Mall has undergone a LED lighting retrofit. This one change will save the County \$100,000 in energy costs and result in a 1% reduction in overall County energy usage.
- The Commercial Lighting Rebate Program has issued 32 rebates that will save 3.4 million kWh annually and a combined \$350,000 in energy costs.
- Through the County-sponsored lightbulb-swapping events, Arlington residents have exchanged more than 1,000 incandescent lightbulbs for more energy-efficient LED alternatives.

Buildings

- The Green Home Choice program has now signed on more than 50 builders, who have constructed 200 certified homes with another 116 in process.
- Arlington's PACE program (for commercial development) is under development. Arlington is looking to hire a program administrator before seeking County Board approval for the final steps.

- Arlington's Affordable Housing Master Plan now includes environmental components for more sustainable communities with a tenant education component that addresses energy efficiency, water usage, etc.

Community Energy

Arlington has launched the "Rethink Energy Challenge" which asks residents to sign up and pledge to take simple, energy-saving actions (the list is updated seasonally). Sierra Club members should go to <http://environment.arlingtonva.us/energy/take-the-rethink-energy-challenge/> to participate.

For more information on Arlington's Community Energy Plan visit <http://environment.arlingtonva.us/energy/community-energy-plan-cep/>

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