

UMD Honors College Park for Achieving "Green" Status

OCTOBER 23, 2013

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COLLEGE PARK, Md. - The University of Maryland's [Environmental Finance Center](#) (EFC) honored the City of College Park last Friday for achieving [Sustainable Maryland Certified](#) status, which recognizes the city's efforts in adopting sweeping green, sustainable practices. College Park joins six other Maryland communities—the cities of Annapolis, Hyattsville, Frederick and Gaithersburg, and the towns of Edmonston and Bladensburg—that received this prestigious status at a special ceremony at the Maryland Municipal League Fall Conference.

"These communities are municipal leaders that are making important strides towards the long-term goal of a sustainable Maryland," said Joanne Throwe, director of the EFC. "Having College Park join the ranks is a big milestone for us. Their efforts will serve as models for other Maryland communities seeking to ensure a more environmentally and economically resilient future for their residents."

Launched by UMD's EFC in the spring of 2011, Sustainable Maryland Certified helps towns and communities go greener, providing cost-effective and sustainable strategies to preserve assets and revitalize their communities. By offering a menu of "greening" actions to choose from, the program helps municipalities tailor their plan to meet the needs and priorities of their community, offering trainings, case studies, program tools and other resources to help them meet their goals. The free and voluntary program has already certified 12 communities throughout the state.

To obtain certification, municipalities are required to form a "Green Team" comprised of local residents, community leaders, municipal staff and officials and complete a variety of sustainability-related actions. Using best practices in resource areas like water, energy, planning, health, food, and economy, a municipality can earn points toward sustainability certification. Once a community accumulates at least 150 points, they must submit the appropriate documentation as evidence that the Sustainable Maryland Certified requirements have



been satisfied. Actions range from overhauling a community's storm water management to creating a weekly farmer's market.

College Park's path to certification took 14 months to complete. Because many of the city's proposed initiatives focused on improving the health and quality of life for those who live, study and work in College Park, the city worked closely with UMD, leveraging the university's intellectual assets and student community to forward several of their campaigns. The university supported and promoted the city's inaugural "buy local" campaign, "Shop College Park," with special emphasis on promoting locally-owned and independent businesses. The city also worked closely with UMD to set up a pit-stop event for the Metropolitan Area Council of Government's annual Bike to Work Day. College Park also developed an innovative recycling program that includes single stream recycling, electronics and yard waste, a comprehensive workplace wellness program for municipal employees, including frequent lunch hour seminars and workshops, as well as an employee reimbursement program for fitness activities outside of the office.

"This is just the beginning," said Andrew M. Fellows, Mayor of College Park. "We are happily engaged in a friendly and environmentally restorative competition with our fellow Maryland municipalities to be the most sustainable community in the state."

There are currently 30 communities in Maryland seeking certification by SMC. The program is a vital part of UMD's continued mission as a service institution focused on the statewide needs of Maryland citizens, leveraging faculty and research expertise to assist local officials across the state as they embark on sustainability programs.

"These awards are a testament to the passion and dedication of both volunteer residents and municipal staff and elected officials to go green, save tax dollars, and improve the quality of life in their communities," said Mike Hunninghake, program manager for Sustainable Maryland Certified.

A number of partners share the responsibility for creating and managing the Program. SMC sponsors include the Maryland Municipal League, the Town Creek Foundation, and The US Environmental Protection Agency. Program partners include the EFC's sister center, the National Center for Smart Growth, as well as 87 other organizations from the public and private sectors, nonprofits, and academia.

For more information about Sustainable Maryland Certified, visit www.sustainablemaryland.com.

Photo: College Park Councilwoman Denise Mitchell with the certification award, which is made from recycled glass.

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