Sustainability Report

2024

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1/27/25

Department of Community Development

INTRODUCTION

The 2024 Sustainability Report is intended to summarize activities that the Town of Leesburg has taken to create more sustainable government operations and identify opportunities for enhancement in the future. As the sustainability program grows the Sustainability Report will include status updates on communitywide sustainable actions in addition to government operations.

Sustainability is impacted by and integrated into all the things we do. This report organizes key areas of sustainability topics into the following categories:

<u>BUILDING AND ENERGY</u>

Improving energy efficiency, reducing consumption, and integrating renewable energy in buildings to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

<u>TRANSPORTATION</u>

Promoting sustainable mobility through walking, biking, and electric vehicle (EV) adoption while reducing vehicle miles traveled.

<u>LAND USE</u>

Fostering compact, mixed-use development to minimize sprawl, preserve ecosystems, and promote livable communities.

<u>WATER</u>

Conserving water, managing stormwater, preventing pollution, and ensuring sustainable water supply and treatment.

<u>SOLID WASTE</u>

Reducing waste, boosting recycling and composting, and advancing responsible waste management to minimize landfill use.

<u>PARKS AND OPEN SPACE</u>

Creating and maintaining green spaces for recreation, biodiversity, and ecosystem benefits like clean air and carbon storage.

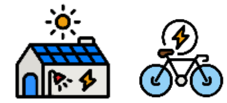
When reviewing this report, the icons that represent each of the categories are present on the upper right-hand corner of pages with significant information related to that category. Some of the items highlighted in this report cover one or more category. Accordingly, multiple icons are present on those pages.

The Town of Leesburg's vision for Sustainable Government Operations is to "efficiently manage town resources that meet the needs of all our residents while minimizing impacts on the environment." In 2024, the town has continued to strive toward that vision. The Town's Executive Steering Committee for Sustainable Government Operations is excited to share the highlights of this past year.

more than
50%
Reduction
in energy use from Streetlight conversion

more than
$1.8 Million
Awarded in Grants and Rebates

more than
5,200 lbs
Of litter collected



BUILDING AND ENERGY & TRANSPORTATION

The following pages reflect the key work that has been done in 2024 to improve energy efficiency, reduce consumption, and integrate renewable energy in buildings to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

The Town's Energy Efficiency Conservation Strategy establishes goals for the Town that also affect transportation. While all the goals are here, the transportation related goals will appear again at the start of the transportation section as a reminder.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY CONSERVATION STRATEGY

Council adopting the Energy Efficiency Conservation Strategy (EECS) was a critical step to moving forward the Town towards a more sustainable future. The EECS established actionable goals that will guide decision making on projects and programs for the town. The goals in the EECS focus on energy and fuel consumption. The goals of the EECS as approved on March 12th, 2024 are:

- **Goal 1**: 50% reduction in purchased energy for government operations from the business-as-usual projections by 2050, excluding wastewater and water treatment operations.
- **Goal 2:** 40% alternative fuel vehicle adoption for non-emergency response vehicles by 2034.
- **Goal 3:** 10% reduction in purchased energy (electric and natural gas) for wastewater and water treatment operations from business-as-usual projections by 2050.
- **Goal 4:** By FY2026, upgrade existing Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems with remote telemetry to efficiently operate wastewater and water treatment operations.
- **Goal 5:** Prioritize energy-efficient products for Utilities equipment replacements and improve pump and motor efficiency by correcting pump sizing, upgrading to premium efficiency motors, or variable frequency drives.

The full EECS report including baseline data can be found on the Town's website at www.leesburgva.gov/sustainability. The baseline data is from calendar year 2021 and was established via a thorough review of all invoices that were available via the Town's financial management system. Establishing that baseline took hours of work that would be difficult to replicate over time based on the over 150 invoices that come in each month. To become better stewards of our data, the Town implemented a comprehensive energy management system called EnergyCAP. This system went live in April of 2024 and once a full year of reporting has been completed, we will have statistically significant data to track our progress towards Goals 1 and 3 of the EECS. Status updates on these goals are filtered throughout this report in the relevant categories and highlighted on each page.

FROM BILL PAY TO UTILITY MANAGEMENT

One of the key successes in the first year of the Sustainability Program is the implementation of a comprehensive energy management system. With invaluable support from the Information Technology Department, the Sustainability Manager introduced EnergyCAP—an innovative software platform that consolidates utility data for over 150 town accounts across three vendors.

Key Benefits of EnergyCAP Implementation:

- **Streamlined Billing and Payment:** Provides near real-time access to utility bills, significantly reducing payment processing times and eliminating late fees.
- **Error Detection:** Automatically scans bills for inconsistencies, errors, and anomalies to ensure accurate billing.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Analyzes energy usage, enabling staff to calculate return on investment (ROI) for energy projects and measure program success.

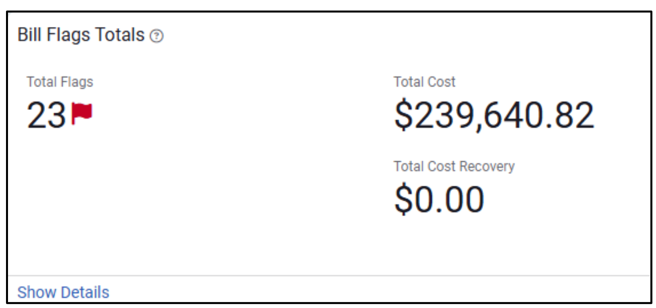
Before this system's implementation, the Town lacked the ability to measure total annual energy consumption, making it challenging to set and achieve meaningful energy reduction goals. Now, with consistent measurement capabilities, we can:

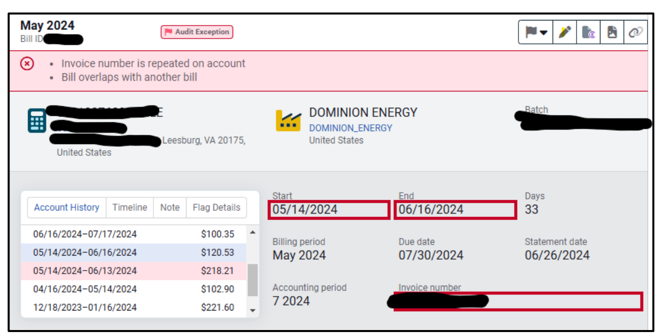
- Verify that the energy reduction targets in the Energy Efficiency Conservation Strategy are achievable.
- Identify the most cost-effective programs to reduce consumption.
- Validate the success of implemented strategies.

EnergyCAP marks a critical step forward in transforming how the Town manages its energy resources, ensuring fiscal responsibility while advancing sustainability goals. In the section below, some of the key reporting tools have been shared. This is no way encapsulates all the tools of the EnergyCAP software.

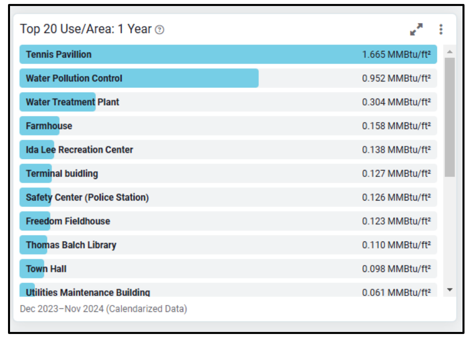
BILLING ACCURACY

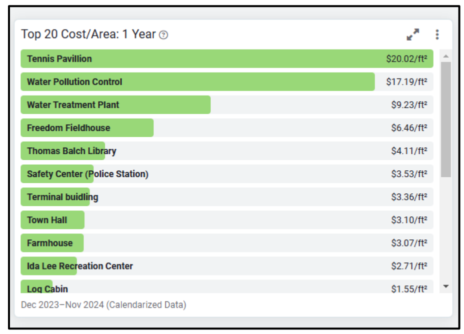
EnergyCAP not only proves helpful for the managing of data, but also provides bill payers and managers with quick insights into the accuracy of their billing. EnergyCAP automatically imports all bills and then completes and analysis to identify anomalies like, gaps between the previous bills, abnormal use and abnormal cost. The software then flags the bill with the list of anomalies for the bill reviewer. If there is no error, the reviewer marks it as fine. If there is an error, a report can be downloaded to share with the utility to get the issue rectified as swiftly as possible. This significantly reduces review time and gives a higher degree of confidence in the accuracy of the billing.





ENERGY COST & ENERGY USE PER AREA





Energy Cost by Area and Energy Use by Area are tools that allow us to compare energy system efficiencies across buildings. This information allows us to make decision that are data-driven, cost effective and align with the Town's energy efficiency goals by:

- Pinpointing buildings with disproportionate energy cost or consumption enabling targeted interventions.
  - The Tennis Pavillion is the largest energy user per square foot because of the high electrical requirement for keeping the bubble inflated. The Town can consider if a more permanent structure or system would better suit the Tennis community long term.
- Prioritize energy efficiency upgrades like retrofits, insulation or HVAC improvements where they will have the greatest impact.
  - The farmhouse has a relatively small footprint compared to other buildings and is one of the most inefficient. A focus on lower cost retrofits like insultation and building envelope improvements would make the building more comfortable for occupants and also decrease its emissions consumption.
- Facilitate more accurate budgeting and resource allocation by understanding how energy costs are distributed across facilities.
  - By understanding the use of each building, we can project how changes in activities in that building will affect energy costs for that building.
- Uncovers operational inefficiencies that can be addressed through better practices or automation.
  - The Freedom Fieldhouse is in the top 5 most inefficient by cost and the top 10 most inefficient by use. This suggests that there might be opportunities to modify building operations to reduce alignment with peak energy use times and associated increase in fees. We may also prioritize the freedom park campus low budget building efficiencies.

Each building on the list can be selected, so that more insights can be provided to help guide decision making.

ANNUAL ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Understanding Annual Energy Consumption at the click of the button keeps the Town on track towards achieving the goals in the Energy Efficiency Conservation Strategy (EECS). It's invaluable in identifying opportunities for renewable energy implementation and gives us key insights the investment needs per building based on use, or sizing the equipment and the interconnection fees required by the utility based on the size of the system. Since the program was not fully up and running until April 2024, a full year worth of annual energy consumption will not be available until that time.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY CONSERVATION STRATEGY GRANT AWARD

The Town of Leesburg was awarded over 76,000 dollars from the Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant administered by the Department of Energy. The funding will be used for Building Energy Audits. A building energy audit is a systematic evaluation of a building's energy consumption to identify opportunities for improving efficiency and reducing costs. It involves analyzing, inspecting building systems (such as HVAC, lighting, insulation, and equipment), and assessing operational practices to determine where energy is being used inefficiently. The audit provides recommendations for upgrades, retrofits, or changes in behavior to reduce energy use, improve performance, and lower greenhouse gas emissions. The audits will include walkthroughs and detailed assessments with energy modeling that are essential for informed energy management and sustainability planning. The agreement has been signed with the Department of Energy and the Town is currently waiting for a technical expert to be assigned.

Along with the monetary award, several members of the Town staff have been invited to receive specialized training through cohort programs. Staff members are enrolled in “Building Energy Audits” and “Energy Performance Service Contracts” training programs which will provide the tools needed to continue this critical work into the future.

2024 ENERGY PROJECTS

Town Hall is undergoing major renovations. All the lights on the 3rd and 4th floor were upgraded to more energy efficient LED.

153 streetlights were converted from high pressure sodium to LED. The LED lights reduce energy consumption by 56% on average. The lights also require less maintenance resulting in fewer outages. This is a less than 2-year return on investment for these upgrades.

SOLARIZE VA

The Town of Leesburg participated in the 2024 Solarize VA program, a community-based initiative aimed at making solar energy more accessible and affordable for residents and businesses. Through this program, the Town actively promoted solar adoption by raising awareness about the benefits of renewable energy and connecting the community with resources for streamlined solar installations. As part of the campaign, the Town shared information through social media and newsletters to encourage participation.

In 2024, the program has directly led to 7 new households going solar. The system sizes total 81kWh and could produce nearly 65,000kWh annually. With a growing concern about energy security in the region, Solarize VA guides residents through the process of sizing, installation, funding and rebate opportunities associated with renewable energy. Staff are optimistic that participation in Solarize VA will continue to grow in future years, which will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote clean, renewable energy in the region.

TRANSPORTATION

The following pages reflect the key work that has been done in 2024 to promote sustainable mobility through walking, biking, and EV adoption while reducing vehicle miles traveled.

Goal 2 in the Energy Efficiency Conversation Strategy is to convert 40% of the Town's non-emergency response fleet to alternative fuel by 2034.

FLEET VEHICLE ELECTRIFICATION PROVES COST EFFECTIVE

The Town currently has three electric vehicles in its fleet. Through a program offered by Virginia Clean Cities, the Town was able to offset the $4,350 cost difference between one newly acquired electric vehicle and a comparable internal combustion engine vehicle. While this program applied to only one vehicle purchased in 2024, it is expected to continue in the future.

Additionally, under the Inflation Reduction Act's "Direct Pay" program, the Town qualified for electric vehicle tax rebates. Two of the three vehicles are eligible, and the Town anticipates receiving $11,250 in total rebates. Through these rebates and the significant reduction in the cost of ownership, electric vehicles have proven to be both an economical and environmentally friendly choice for the Town.

At the end of calendar year 2024, the Town has converted 7.5% of its non-emergency vehicles to electric. The Town is still on track to achieve the goal of 40% adoption of alternative fuel vehicles for non-emergency response vehicles by 2034.

It should be noted that that the Town is exploring a fleet "right-sizing" initiative. "Right-sizing" involves assessing and adjusting the size, composition, and utilization of vehicles to meet operational needs efficiently. This process includes analyzing vehicle usage patterns, retiring underutilized or oversized vehicles, and replacing them with more cost-effective, fuel-efficient, or alternative-fuel models. The goal is to reduce costs, minimize environmental impact, and enhance fleet performance while ensuring that municipal services remain effective and responsive. During the right sizing process, the number of non-emergency vehicles may by altered, but the adoption goal will remain unchanged.

CHARGING AND FUELING INFRASTRUCTURE

To meet the needs of the existing electric fleet, the Town of Leesburg has installed two level two chargers in “back of house” locations available only to fleet vehicles. As with the Town’s own fleet, electric vehicle adoption is expected to continue to grow throughout the region. At the end of FY24, there were 91,000 electric vehicles registered in Virginia. That number is expected to grow to 220,000 by 2027.

Transportation related emissions is the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in Virginia. Leesburg is in a Department of Transportation designated Congestion and Air Quality Mitigation Area (CMAQ), revealing that transportation is a significant contributor to air pollution in our area.
Therefore, it is in the best interest of our residents to support the clean fuel transition.

Town staff have identified 5 sites for the installation of electric vehicle charging stations. All the locations identified are suited for level 2 charging. Level 2 EV charging uses a 240-volt power supply to provide faster charging compared to standard outlets, typically adding 10-20 miles of range per hour, making it ideal for residential, workplace, and public charging stations.

Location	**Number of Ports**
Lassiter Way	2
Town Hall Garage	4
Police Station	2
Ida Lee	4
Airport	6

The Lassiter Way site is in final design and construction is expected in early 2025. The police station location will be completed as part of the CIP expansion project. The remaining sites are proposed additions to the CIP. The Town has applied for $500,000 from the Department of Energy via the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grant to support the design and construction of the three remaining sites.

The publicly accessible EV charging stations have fees associated with use. The Town Council adopted a fee of 20 cents per kilowatt hour of charging. This fee was designed to cover the cost of electricity, plus a 25% administrative fee to help offset the cost of the software management. There is also an idling fee for any vehicles that are fully charged but remain in the electric vehicle charging space. This is to encourage turnover of the spaces. The Town does not envision EV charging fees as a profit earning endeavor. The publicly accessible charging stations are not limited to the public. Fleet vehicles will have access to these charging stations and will be able to charge at no fee.

LAND USE

The following pages reflect the key work that has been done in 2024 to foster compact, mixed-use development to minimize sprawl, preserve ecosystems, and promote livable communities.

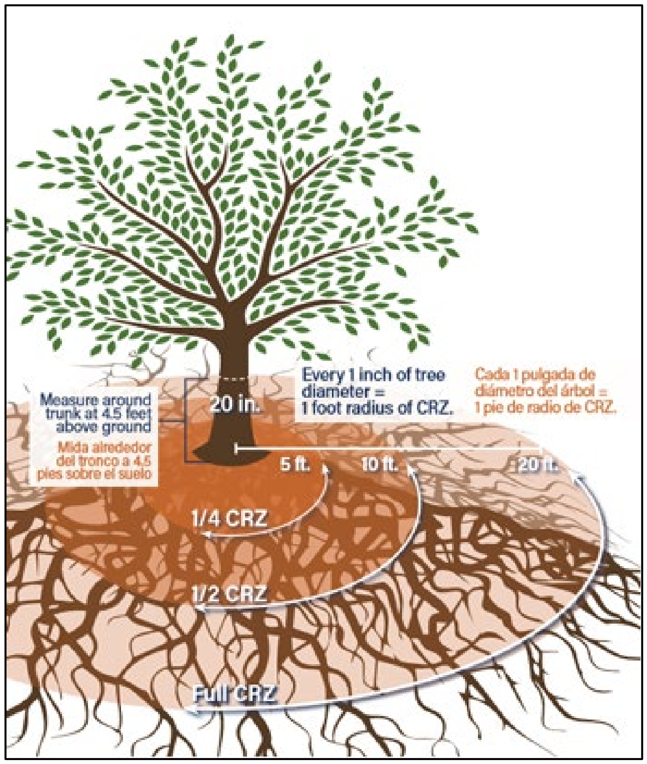
ZONING ORDINANCE RE-WRITE

The Department of Community Development has embarked on a multi-year initiative to comprehensively update the Town's zoning ordinance, a significant step forward in modernizing local land use regulations. A key feature of this update is the introduction of a Sustainability Index, a framework designed to incentivize environmentally responsible development practices.

The Sustainability Index is a point-based system that encourages developers to incorporate sustainable elements into their projects. Points are awarded for a variety of design and construction practices, including energy efficiency measures, the integration of green infrastructure, water conservation techniques, and the use of sustainable building materials. The more points a developer earns, the more incentives become available to the developer, creating a tangible reward for prioritizing environmental stewardship.

This approach aligns with the Town's broader commitment to sustainability and its vision for fostering development that balances growth with ecological preservation. By providing clear guidelines and measurable benefits, the Sustainability Index not only promotes greener practices but also facilitates collaboration between the Town and the development community to achieve shared sustainability goals. The Sustainability Section of the Zoning Ordinance also calls for the long-term monitoring or sustainability initiatives ensuring a cleaner greener future for our residents.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES: TREE PRESERVATION



Town staff, in collaboration with Delegate Martinez, have worked to craft legislation aimed at advancing protections for the Town's tree canopy. The house bill, introduced at the start of the 2025 legislative session, seeks to grant municipalities the authority to "require the developer to submit a survey or map detailing the location of critical root zones (CRZ) on the subject property, including any roots that have grown over the property line from mature trees on neighboring properties." This initiative is a critical step in the Town's conservation efforts as it faces a decline in tree canopy over the past decade.

Preserving existing canopy is vital to the Town's environmental health and sustainability. While planting new trees is essential, maintaining mature trees offers irreplaceable benefits. When CRZs are not factored into development plans, even trees designated for preservation may suffer fatal damage. Similarly, mature trees on adjacent properties can be severely impacted by development activities, leading to unintended losses. Although the Town can require the replacement of removed trees, such measures fall short of ensuring the preservation of mature trees, which are more resilient to environmental stressors and provide immediate ecological benefits.

Mature trees have well-established root systems that make them more adaptable to drought and environmental changes, whereas young trees require significant resources to establish and may take decades to reach similar levels of impact. Replanted trees have a lower survival rate and cannot immediately replace the benefits offered by mature trees. These benefits include intercepting rainfall to reduce runoff, filtering pollutants like nitrogen and phosphorus to meet Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements and mitigating urban heat island effects by providing shade that reduces heat-related illnesses. Notably, hospitalizations for heat-related illnesses in Virginia increased by 179% between 2016 and 2020, underscoring the importance of maintaining tree canopies.

The proposed legislation emphasizes the importance of mapping CRZs to enable data-driven decisions about tree preservation. This approach will help stakeholders identify conflicts, select trees for removal or preservation, and explore alternative construction measures to minimize damage. By prioritizing the protection of mature trees, the Town can ensure a healthier tree canopy, enhance its environmental resilience, and provide long-term benefits for its community.

WATER

The following pages reflect the key work that has been done in 2024 to conserving water, managing stormwater, preventing pollution, and ensuring sustainable water supply and treatment.

COMMUNITY FLOOD PREPAREDNESS FUND (CFPF) GRANT AWARD

In 2024, the Town of Leesburg was awarded a substantial grant through the Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund (CFPF) to advance flood resilience and preparedness efforts. The grant, totaling $1,763,001, will support a comprehensive capacity-building project designed to evaluate and enhance the Town's stormwater infrastructure and planning.

The funded project encompasses several critical components aimed at mitigating flood risks and improving resilience. First, the Town will conduct a detailed assessment of its entire stormwater system, including storm sewers, streams, and green infrastructure, to identify vulnerabilities and potential improvements. This assessment will also examine future land use conditions and their impact on flood events. Key outcomes include the identification of repetitive loss properties and exploration of opportunities to integrate the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Community Rating System to offer discounted flood insurance to residents.

Another significant aspect of the project involves watershed-level modeling of the Town's storm drain and floodplain systems. This modeling will account for current and anticipated land use changes, as well as the projected effects of climate change, enabling the Town to make data-driven decisions for long-term flood mitigation and infrastructure investments.

In addition, the project will develop a 10-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to prioritize necessary upgrades and identify potential funding sources. Recommendations for updates to policies such as the Town's Stormwater Management Ordinance, Subdivision and Land Development Regulations, and Zoning Ordinance will also be included. These updates will align the Town's policies with best practices for floodplain management and climate resilience.

The final deliverable of the project will be a Stormwater Flooding and Resilience Plan, a comprehensive document that will succeed the 1990 Stormwater Management Master Plan. This plan will integrate modern engineering and sustainability standards to address current challenges and future needs.

This grant represents a pivotal step in the Town's efforts to address climate-related risks and protect the community from flooding. By investing in advanced planning and infrastructure, the Town is ensuring a safer and more sustainable future for its residents while serving as a model for proactive flood resilience in Virginia.

SOLID WASTE

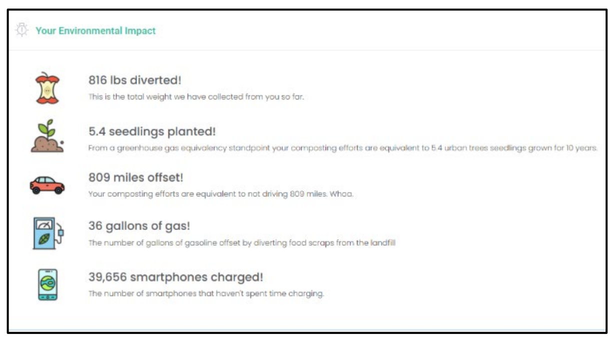
The following pages reflect the key work that has been done in 2024 to reduce waste, boost recycling and compost, and advance responsible waste management to minimize landfill use.

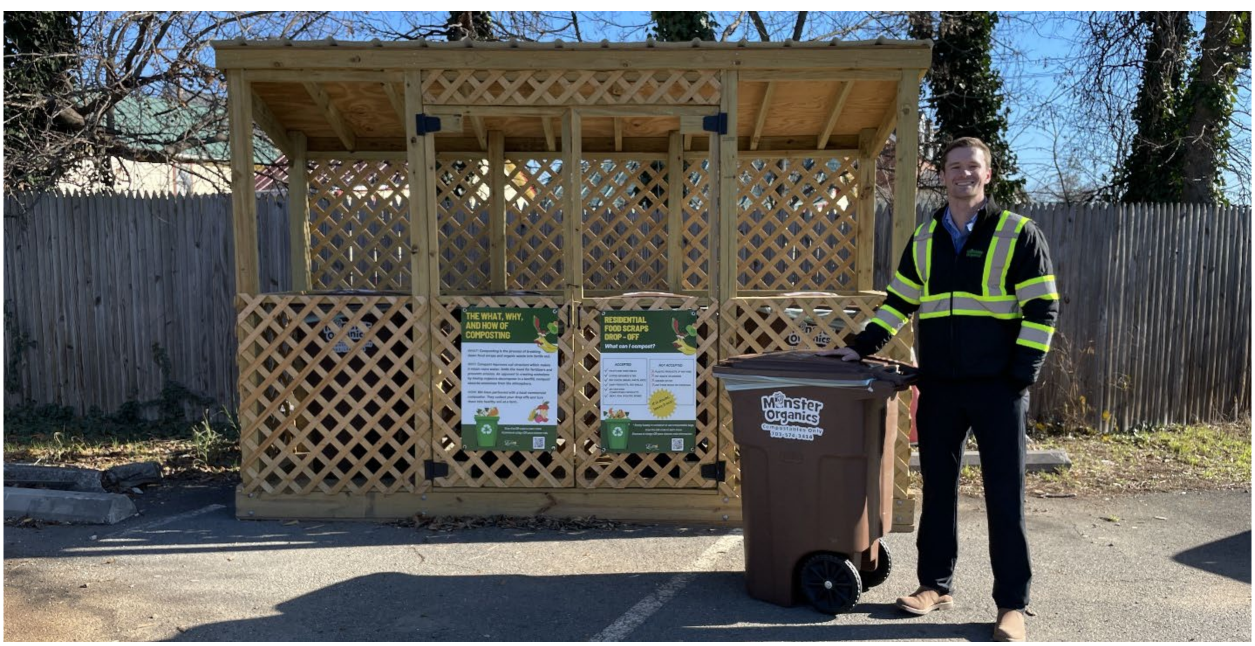
NEW COMPOSTING EFFORTS: FOOD SCRAPS

In December 2024, the Town of Leesburg proudly launched its new residential food waste composting program, an initiative aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and enriching soil health by diverting organic waste from landfills. This initiative provides residents with a simple, convenient way to divert food waste from the landfill by using the drop-off station located at Liberty Lot. Residents can transport their food scraps to the site, where they either deposit compostable bags or empty the contents of their containers into designated bins. The collected material is then transported weekly by a contractor to a commercial composting facility.

This program is especially welcoming to residents who may have been intimidated by backyard composting or lacked the space and resources to compost at home. Importantly, the commercial facility can process items like meat, bones, dairy, and certified BPI compostable wares—materials that typically do not break down in backyard composting. This allows even seasoned backyard composters to expand their efforts and divert more waste from the landfill.

In its first month, the program successfully diverted 816 pounds of food waste from the landfill. As awareness grows and more residents identify the best way to collect food scraps at home, staff anticipate this number will increase significantly in the coming months. The Town is excited about the program's early success and looks forward to its continued growth, helping to reduce landfill waste and promote sustainable practices throughout the community.





WASTE MANAGEMENT STATS

In 2024, the Town of Leesburg recycled mora than 2,854 tons of material!

According to a waste audit 13% of material that was placed in curbside recycling was considered contamination or non-recyclable materials.

More than **25%** of the waste generated in the Town of Leesburg was diverted from the landfill

ONGOING COMPOSTING EFFORTS UPDATE

The Town's waste hauling contractor collected yard waste from residents weekly between April and November. In 2024, this program successfully diverted 941 pounds of material from the landfill, which was composted or mulched. The resulting compost and mulch are made available to Loudoun County residents for free pickup at the landfill, returning these recycled materials directly back to the community.

Recognizing the changing climate and its impact on the timing of yard waste disposal, the Environmental Advisory Commission recommended, and the Town Council directed, staff to explore year-round curbside yard waste collection. This recommendation has been incorporated into the upcoming request for proposals for a new waste hauling contractor, marking a step forward in adapting to evolving community needs.

In addition to yard waste collection, the Operations Division of the Department of Public Works and Capital Projects conducts loose leaf collection from October through early January each year. The collected material is mulched and delivered to a local winery, where it is incorporated back into the soil. In 2024, the program collected approximately 5,200 cubic yards of leaves and 125 cubic yards of brush. This closed-loop approach to waste management exemplifies sustainable practices, ensuring organic waste is repurposed in our community rather than sent to the landfill. While exact weights are unavailable since the material bypasses the landfill, staff estimates that the total volume of material diverted equates to between 520 and 675 tons.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The following pages reflect the key work that has been done in 2024 to create and maintain green spaces for recreation, biodiversity, and ecosystem benefits like clean air and carbon storage.

INVASIVE SPECIES OUTREACH

The Town of Leesburg has launched a comprehensive Invasive Species Removal Campaign to address the growing threat of non-native plants to local ecosystems. This campaign focuses primarily on two problematic species: the Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) and the Spotted Lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*). Both species are highly invasive and pose significant risks to native plants, agricultural health, and biodiversity in the region.

The Tree of Heaven is a fast-growing deciduous tree that aggressively outcompetes native flora, disrupting ecosystems and serving as a primary host for the Spotted Lanternfly. The Spotted Lanternfly, an invasive planthopper, feeds on the sap of numerous plant species, weakening them and reducing agricultural and ornamental yields. Together, these species threaten the health of Leesburg's natural landscapes and the economic viability of local agriculture.

In response, the Town has embraced a community-focused approach to combat this issue. Residents are encouraged to participate by reporting sightings of these invasive species using an innovative online tool, the Invasive Species Locator Map. This interactive platform has already facilitated over 1,400 reports, helping the Town identify infestation hotspots and prioritize removal efforts. The Locator Map provides real-time data that empowers both residents and Town staff to take a proactive stance in managing the spread of these species.

Educational outreach is ongoing. The Town's Tree Commission has presented valuable information during a series of the Town's "Live in Leesburg" and shared key information at the Flower and Garden festival. The Town's ongoing efforts reflect a commitment to safeguarding its ecological health and ensuring a sustainable future. These efforts will help preserve Leesburg's vibrant ecosystems and protect them from the harmful effects of invasive species.

ELECTRIFIED LAWN CARE EQUIPMENT

The Town's Parks Department is actively exploring the use of electric lawn care equipment as part of its commitment to environmental sustainability and improved community well-being. In 2024, the department initiated a pilot program to test an electric leaf blower, evaluating its performance, environmental benefits, and potential for broader adoption. The first electric leaf blower is anticipated to be operational in the spring.

Electric lawn care equipment offers several advantages over traditional gas-powered tools. The electric leaf blower significantly reduces noise pollution, creating a quieter and more enjoyable experience for park visitors and neighboring residents. Additionally, it eliminates emissions associated with gasoline engines, contributing to improved air quality and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

The pilot program will provide valuable insights into the feasibility of transitioning to electric equipment on a larger scale. The Town is looking to be a leader in this area. The Town's Environmental Advisory Commission has recommended that the Mayor and Council advocate for a ban on gas-powered leaf blowers in Richmond, aligning with broader sustainability goals and reducing the environmental impact of landscaping activities. If successful, it could pave the way for more sustainable maintenance practices across all Town parks and open spaces, reinforcing the Town's leadership in environmental stewardship.

KEEP LEESBURG BEAUTIFUL

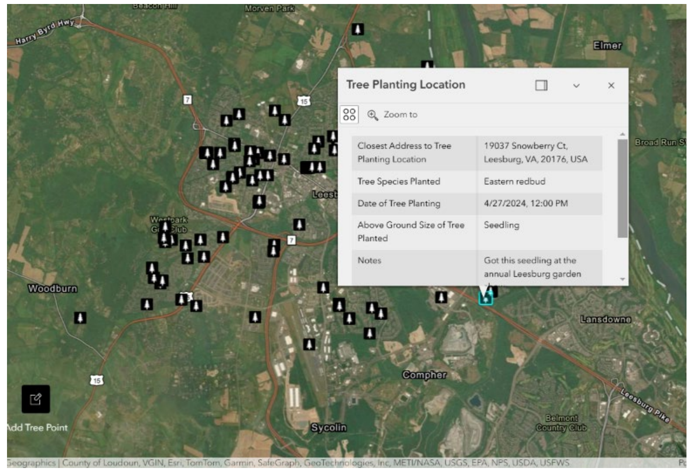
Keep Leesburg Beautiful is an annual, month-long event that inspires residents to clean, green, and beautify our community. This year, the celebration began on April 6th with a kickoff event hosted by the Environmental Advisory Commission at Raflo Park. During this event, 46 volunteers collected 110 pounds of trash in just two hours. To support the effort, the Town distributed trash grabbers to participants, an initiative that drew the attention of passersby, many of whom joined the cleanup on the spot.

The saying "trash begets trash" underscores the importance of consistent attention to litter collection to maintain a high quality of life for our residents. Throughout the remainder of April, additional volunteers helped clean various areas around town, resulting in the collection of an additional 5,200 pounds of material. The month-long initiative showcased the power of community engagement and the shared commitment to keeping Leesburg a beautiful and welcoming place.

Looking ahead, the Town remains committed to supporting litter collection efforts year-round, encouraging residents to stay involved in maintaining the cleanliness and beauty of our shared spaces. This ongoing dedication ensures a healthier and more vibrant community for all.

TREESBURG PROGRAM

The Treesburg Initiative is an effort by the Town of Leesburg to restore and enhance its tree canopy, a critical component of the community's environmental health. This program, spearheaded by the resident-led Tree Commission, empowers residents to actively participate in planting and tracking new trees across the Town. Using a geographic information system (GIS) map, residents can upload the location and a photo of their newly planted trees and update the map annually to document their growth and contribution to the local ecosystem.



Hundreds of saplings were distributed during the Town's Annual Flower and Garden Festival. Interest was so strong that additional tree distribution events were held at Ida lee where residents could select a variety of different tree saplings. These events really kickstarted participation in the initiative. The ongoing success of the Treesburg Initiative highlights strong citizen interest in Tree preservation throughout the Town.

By integrating technology, community involvement, and environmental stewardship, the Treesburg Initiative is setting a standard for sustainable urban forestry practices. The program's success demonstrates the power of collaboration between local government, residents, and dedicated volunteers in creating a greener, healthier future for Leesburg. This initiative was recognized by the Virginia Municipal League with an Innovation Award during the 2024 meeting.

MEDIAN PLANTING PROJECT

In 2024, the Town's Urban Forester identified 50 potential medians that were devoid of trees that may benefit from plantings. The locations were vetted and prioritized by the traffic engineer and public works leadership. The Town work out a comprehensive plan to improve the soil quality of the medians and create a place for trees and shrubs to thrive. 420 trees and shrubs were planted in the rights of ways and will be watered regularly for 2 years to ensure the plants are well established. The work for this project was completed with the 100,000 annual budget for Urban Forestry and supplemented with a 50,000 dollar tree planting grant from the Department of Forestry.

THANK YOU!

Sustainability is everyone's responsibility, and this program cannot move forward without the strong cross departmental support from everyone in the organization. Support for this work is widespread, but several employees have been in key in advancing the program forward this year. To highlight their effort, the Sustainability program offers thanks to:

The Executive Steering Committee for Sustainable Operations made up of Deb Moran, Keith Markel, James David, Renee LaFollette, Owen Synder, Amy Wyks and Chris Kohr for their unwavering support and guidance in moving the program forward.

Noble Atkins, Urban Forester, for his commitment to finding innovate ways to encourage tree preservation during Development.

Jon Cleaves, Assistant Director of Parks, for his willingness to trail new products and new ways of doing things.

Wesley Harder, Assistant Superintendent of Building, for building the food waste drop off shed.

Leah Kosin, Assistant Public Information Officer, for support in the development of the "Sustainability Tip with Deb Moran" videos on social media and for always making sure that our residents are updates about all the growth in our program.

Matt Michau, Senior Systems Analyst, has been an incredible resource and integral part of the ingratiation of our EnergyCAP software. An extra special thanks is due to Matt for this guest star appearance in the October Sustainability Tip video.

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Thank you.