



City of
Rockville
Fiscal Year
2024

Annual Report

JULY 1, 2023 TO JUNE 30, 2024

Leading the Way

A MESSAGE FROM THE CITY MANAGER

To those I've met, thank you for the warm welcome! If I haven't met you, I'm looking forward to doing so in the future.

As this is my first annual report since joining the city as its new city manager in July, I wanted to take a moment to introduce myself.

As an International City/County Management Association credentialed manager, I bring over 30 years of experience in city management and community planning, including 13 years in executive-level roles working directly with elected officials. Most recently, I served as the city manager of Bozeman, Montana, for four years and, prior to that, I was the deputy city manager of Fort Collins, Colorado, for six years.

I am thrilled to bring my experience to Rockville to help move forward the Rockville Mayor and Council's clear and exciting vision for your city. I'm eagerly working with staff to help make that vision a reality.

I'm looking forward to engaging and creating lasting partnerships with the community, civic and business leaders, and other stakeholders.

Whether you live or work here, you're part of an exciting, dynamic and forward-thinking city led by a group of dedicated and experienced public servants.

It is on behalf of our city team that I'm pleased to present this 2024 Annual Report on the City of Rockville's progress. Rockville is leading the way.

The Mayor and Council have recently established their broad guiding principles. These consist of three focus areas: public safety, economic development and housing; and two core quality of life commitments: effective and efficient service delivery and stewardship of the environment and infrastructure.

While new, you'll see in this annual report that those principles are already at work throughout the Rockville organization.

- We've expanded our police force with new officers from diverse backgrounds that reflect those they protect.
- We've continued our focus on improving Town Center and Rockville's attractiveness and vitality with development that reflects our community's needs, while protecting its history and increasing safe, healthy, fair mobility for all.
- We're making our delivery of services even more efficient and effective.
- We are looking closely to uncover and mitigate areas of inequity in our city with planning, policies and regulations.
- Our Climate Action Plan is confidently guiding us to a cleaner, greener future.
- Finally, in 2023, more of you than ever voted to elect a new Mayor and Council with one major difference — an increase from five to seven members.

Many more accomplishments are listed in these pages.

On behalf of the Mayor and Council and city staff, thank you for your support as we rise together toward a better future, one that is vibrant, inclusive and engaged, with healthy businesses, and safe and diverse neighborhoods.

Jeff Mihelich, City Manager



2023 Election Brings in New Mayor and Council ...

In addition to 12,637 ballots cast on Election Day in November 2023, 133 provisional ballots were tallied, for a total of 12,770 votes. The number of votes cast in the 2023 vote-by-mail election increased 3.9% over 2019's 12,287.

Rockville voters elected, for the first time, six councilmembers and one mayor. Above pictured, left to right: councilmembers Adam Van Grack, Izola (Zola) Shaw, Barry Jackson, Mayor Monique Ashton, councilmembers Marissa Valeri, Kate Fulton and David Myles. The Mayor and Council serve four-year terms.

“ *The Council and I are excited to announce Jeff Mihelich as Rockville's city manager. Jeff Mihelich's significant experience as a credentialed city manager who is focused on results, in addition to his collaborative and adaptive leadership style, is exactly what we need to foster strong partnerships and drive meaningful change in Rockville. His experience in managing growth communities, supporting sustainability, improving quality of life for all residents and creating successful public-private partnerships will be crucial as we navigate our city's future opportunities and challenges. Jeff's leadership will help us build a more connected and resilient community, and our entire Council is excited to work with him to continue to make Rockville the best place to live, work and play.*

— MAYOR MONIQUE ASHTON



Guiding Principles Adopted by Mayor and Council to Help Lead the Way

The Fiscal Year 2025 budget outlines five guiding principles the Mayor and Council agreed to during priority discussions between March and May.

They include three focus areas: public safety, economic development and housing. These focus areas “represent opportunities to make positive change in specific arenas that the Mayor and Council care deeply about and where the city has considerable leverage to make an impact and produce improved outcomes for our residents, businesses, and visitors,” states the “Guiding Principles and Priorities for FY 2025” section of the budget document.

The two other guiding principles, called “core quality of life commitments,” are effective and efficient service delivery and stewardship of the environment and infrastructure.

“The two Core Commitments broadly represent the most vital work of the city that directly contributes to Rockville being an outstanding place to live, work, play, and thrive,” the budget states. “They reflect the ongoing provision of excellent municipal services and programs, responsibility for the resources entrusted to the city, and the resulting shared quality of life that is valued and expected by the community.”

Focus Areas

- Public Safety.
- Economic Development.
- Housing.

Core Commitments

- Effective and Efficient Service Delivery.
- Stewardship of the Environment and Infrastructure.

WHAT IS THE ANNUAL REPORT?

The annual report is a requirement of the city's charter, and is a review of administrative activity from the preceding fiscal year that is submitted to the Mayor and Council by the city manager. The accomplishments presented here cover progress made by your city from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Public Safety

Adopted the **Pedestrian Master Plan** as an amendment to the Rockville 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

1,254 construction documents reviewed by examiners from fire codes and fire protection.

1,056 visits by inspectors to commercial and multifamily structures in Rockville to ensure correct life-safety and fire-protection systems were installed and tested.

643 permitted inspections for fire protection systems in commercial and residential buildings. Ninety percent of those were conducted within three days of customers' request.

2,500 building inspections were carried out, including mechanical, electrical and plumbing.

222 guns turned in and destroyed during the four hours of the Rockville City Police Department's second gun buyback event in August 2023.

12 Coffee with a Cop events held where officers met and chatted with community members.

The feedback from these types of police/community events has been overwhelmingly positive and has increased our visibility, enhanced vision and mission for being a community policing agency. It has also provided additional recruiting outreach, but most importantly, has grown the relationship between our Rockville community members and our officers.

— ROCKVILLE CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

More than 500 community members attended RCPD's community open house in August 2023 to meet the men and women keeping them safe.

12 police officers were hired who mirrored the diverse makeup of Rockville's community. Due to staffing shortages at the

Montgomery County Police Department, RCPD has increased the body of authorized officers from 67 to 73 officers.

Promotions ... Two RCPD officers became sergeants; one became a major.

360 free steering-wheel locks handed out by RCPD, in partnership with Hyundai Motor Corporation, to prevent theft.

2 zoning text amendments in support of the recommendations of the Rockville 2040 Comprehensive Plan, adopted by the Mayor and Council. One allows for attached accessory dwelling units, under certain conditions, in residential areas. The other allows for rezoning development in accordance with land-use recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

Rewriting the zoning ordinance with the view of streamlining the review process, making the code more understandable, and implementing the zoning recommendations of the comprehensive plan. A consulting firm that is undertaking the rewrite has issued a diagnostic report — a comprehensive review of the state of the city's zoning ordinance. A second phase consisted of calibration, which looked at the future standards of the code. The next phase will be the codification of the new ordinance, resulting in a public draft in advance of public review.

City staff managed approvals for key development projects to attract residents and support economic development, including the city's first large office-to-residential conversion at 12501 Ardenne Ave., the mixed-use redevelopment at Rockshire Village Center and a new life-sciences building at 2 Research Place.

Cost and benefit ... A consulting firm, NewGen Strategies and Solutions,

on both sides of the Rockville Metro station — all part of a concept plan for development. The city is working in partnership with WMATA on the plan to help bring greater economic vitality and housing to the Town Center area.

was hired by the city to prepare a "Development Fiscal Analysis Report and Model" to analyze the fiscal impact of existing and future development within the city. The model will be used to calculate the potential cost and revenue of new development.

Significant updates of local amendments to building, trades and energy codes will transform the built environment in the City of Rockville. Updates to the building codes include streamlining and enhancing accessibility, as well as removing some restrictions on certain accessory structures for single-family dwellings. Updates to the energy codes will enhance sustainability and support the city's Climate Action Plan by further incentivizing electrification and renewable energy sources.

HOUSING

Lincoln Park design guidelines ... A final draft has been released that will ultimately ensure that new houses and additions are compatible with the existing neighborhood.

58 development-related applications processed by the city. This includes 350 newly approved housing units.

The second annual Senior Housing Resource Expo was held at Rockville Senior Center. This free event highlighted information about local housing facilities for older

adults, as well as services and companies that promote aging in place.

1,000 ... The number of landlord-tenant inquiries.

Provided school-based case management for 40 families (100 children), enrichment programs for 30 students and counseling for 20 students through the Linkages to Learning program at Maryvale Elementary School.

200 students served in the school community youth services programs.

EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT SERVICE DELIVERY

42,494 registrations for recreation and parks programs and services, a 21% increase.

100 ... The rough number of families helped through the city's partnership with Capital Area Food Bank to provide a monthly mobile market distribution of free fruits, vegetables and other groceries to area residents in need.

15,363 meals were served to Rockville Senior Center participants as part of services provided at the center.

16,428 bus rides for seniors to the senior center, grocery shopping and other places around town.

2,754 members of the Rockville Senior Center received services. Half of those also hold fitness center memberships.

\$53,503 secured by Senior Services division staff from the National Council on Aging through the COVID-19 and Influenza Vaccine Uptake Initiative grant. They achieved their objective of administering at least 200 COVID-19 vaccines, as well as additional vaccines, by organizing in-person, intergenerational family events and wellness clinics, and providing transportation to local pharmacies.

200 students were served in school Community Youth Services Programs.

Visualizing development: A new tool with 3D modeling and analytics will

empower the Department of Community Planning and Development Services to conduct 3D analysis and visualizations of city development projects.

100 ... The number of participants in new youth STEM/STEAM programming at Lincoln Park Community Center.

Aged 20-30? The city began a new young adult sports program for that age range, focusing on building new friendships and connections, something that became apparent as a need post-pandemic.

Accessibility for all: Design was completed for King Farm Farmstead electric infrastructure, F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre Americans with Disabilities Act improvements and Lincoln Park Community Center improvements. ADA accessibility was improved at Broome Athletic Park by constructing a path to connect amenities to the parking lot.

STEWARDSHIP OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

7 certificates of approval for work to be completed on locally designated historic properties.

15 tax credit applications processed for locally designated historic properties.

~\$17,000: A grant from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority to clean up and perform archaeological surveying at the Avery Road Colored Cemetery.

Equity focus: Which areas of Rockville have higher concentrations of lower-income people, who may have barriers to language, be increasingly cost-burdened as renters, have less education and may not have access to health insurance? The Department of Community Planning and Development Services developed a data-driven tool to identify equity focus areas and to help mitigate inequality through developing plans, policies and regulation.

17,840 tons ... collected by the recycling and refuse team from about 14,315 customers, including 4,044 tons of recycling and 3,628 tons of yard waste.

108 tons of food waste collected at the Rockville Senior Center and Rothgeb compost drop-off stations.

AWARD: Rockville's flood resiliency program was the Governmental Sector recipient in the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' 2023 Climate and Energy Leadership Awards.

\$61,744 in incentives issued through the Flood Mitigation Assistance Program to help floodproof 24 properties.

Designs completed for capital improvement projects/subprojects:

Stream Restoration: Croydon Creek/Calvin Park Tributary.

Denham Road outfall stabilization and Denham Road storm drain improvements.

Leland Street sewer relocation and Grandin Avenue sewer replacement and water treatment plant safety improvements.

1.3 miles of water main rehabilitation completed, approximately, including replacement of 10 fire hydrants that flowed less than 1,000 gallons per minute.

The Town Center Road Diets project created new traffic patterns on North Washington Street and East Middle Lane after two motor vehicle travel lanes were converted into one lane in each direction, creating new bike lanes. New on-street parking spaces were also added.

JULY.23

FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE

The city holds a triple-A bond rating. This is the highest possible rating, and allows the city to borrow at the lowest interest rates, saving taxpayers money.

AUGUST.23

FY 2024 OPERATING REVENUES BY CATEGORY

Category	Percentage
Property Taxes	29%
Income Tax	13%
Charges for Service	31%
Other Governments**	9%

SEPTEMBER.23

OCTOBER.23

Use of Money & Property* 2%
Licenses & Permits 3%
Fines & Forfeitures 3%
Other Revenue 3%
Transfers 7%
Other Governments** 9%

*Includes cable franchise fees, land and building rental, and interest earnings.

**Includes revenue collected by county, state and federal government and passed to the city, such as tax duplication, admissions and amusement tax, highway user and grants.

NOVEMBER.23

ZERO

The amount the real property tax rate has increased since 1995.

DECEMBER.23

FY 2024 EXPENDITURES BY DEPARTMENT

Category	Percentage
Non-Departmental*	29%
Police	10%
Rec & Parks	17%
Public Works	23%
Other	11%

JANUARY.24

City Attorney 1%
Mayor and Council 1%
Human Resources 2%
Finance 2%
DHCD** 3%
IT 3%
CPDS** 4%
CMO 5%

*Non-departmental expenses support citywide insurance programs, contingency accounts, and capital and debt service costs.

**Housing and Community Development; Community Planning and Development Services.

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Vision Zero: All scheduled items were completed. Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate all traffic and pedestrian fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, fair mobility for all. Visit the city's website for updates on the progress of each Vision Zero Action item: www.rockvillemd.gov/VisionZero.

Completed: Feasibility studies for the Martins Lane bicycle lanes, Fleet/Monroe streets shared-use path and the Beall Avenue road diet.

Completed design (and construction started) on the **West Gude Drive sidewalk project** between MD 355 and Watkins Pond Boulevard.

Completed phase 1 of converting street lights to light-emitting diodes.



9 ... The number of new, public, on-street level 2 electric vehicle charging stations installed on Vinson Street, Prettyman Drive and Bouic Avenue.



16, 1, 3 ... respectively, the number of battery electric, plug-in hybrid and hybrid vehicles in the city's fleet.

171 trash bags full — the amount of waste removed by 287 volunteers through the Adopt-a-Stream program, making for cleaner waterways.

The RainScapes program helped properties reduce stormwater runoff by rebating the installation of:

- **14** rain barrels.
- **8,216** square feet of conservation landscaping.
- **23** trees.
- **400** square feet of pavement removed.



200 ... Native trees handed out at the Fall Tree Giveaway.

450 volunteers who, over 41 public workdays, removed invasive, nonnative plants from Rockville parks through the Weed Warriors program.



560 hazardous trees removed throughout the city with an equivalent number of new trees planted in the rights of way and parks.

29,000/44,500 annual flowers and flowering bulbs, respectively, planted in parks and rights of way.

76.21 tons of trash collected from 212 trash cans in parks (with 585 cans serviced weekly).



1,800 reforestation trees and shrubs were planted with deer protection fencing on a former fairway in RedGate Park, as part of a Chesapeake Bay Trust grant. Work included preparatory nonnative invasive species removal and continued maintenance following planting.

35th consecutive year that the city has received the Tree City USA Award from the National Arbor Day Foundation and received the PLANT (People Loving and Nurturing Trees) Award from the Maryland Urban and Community Forest Council.



4,220 street trees were pruned in the Twinbrook neighborhood on both sides of Veirs Mill Road.

Parks staff gave Arbor Day talks to **595** first graders and distributed tree seedlings in nine city elementary schools.



ROCKVILLE: AT WORK AND PLAY, AND GIVING BACK

783,625 visits were made to city recreation facilities and special events. Attendance at Independence Day and the Suds and Soles 5K broke records.



4,548 kids registered for summer camps.

1,300 runners registered for the Rockville 10K/5K Race, which sold out for the first time ever. The Suds and Soles 5K had 1,200 runners registered, the most since the race's inception.

1,460 kids took part in the winter youth basketball league. New this year, a six-team softball league was created for adults in the 12-step recovery program.

~20,000 attendees flocked to Hometown Holidays, many to see national-headlining band Everclear. It was the largest crowd yet at the RedGate Park venue.



30,000+ attendees enjoyed Rockville's Independence Day celebration fireworks.

2 new murals. "Cool Blue Rockville" was painted on the generator screen at City Hall by Baltimore artist Shawn James; "Connections," by Mount Airy artist Katie



Giganti, is now on the wall adjacent to the gardens at the Rockville Senior Center, thanks to the city's Art in Public Places program.

45 years of the Art in Public Places program was celebrated.

455 people completed lifeguard certifications through Red Cross training courses at the Rockville Swim and Fitness Center, making the center an American Red Cross top-



training provider for safety training class registrations.

1,858 volunteers gave 61,434 hours to recreation and parks programs. Valued at \$31.80 per hour, according to the Independent Sector, a coalition of charitable organizations, volunteers contributed time valued in excess of \$1.9 million.



Users will have a better experience with enhancements to the user map, brochure and audio experience of the **African American and Historic Rockville online tours**. And see where Rockville has villages with the Rockville Village Map. Villages are local, volunteer-led, grassroots organizations that foster social connections through activities and events, and coordinate volunteer help at home using a neighbor-helping-neighbor model. See all the city's maps at www.rockvillemd.gov/maps.



\$2,730 ... Money raised from RCPD's participation in the Special Olympics Maryland Polar Bear Plunge at Sandy Point State Park in Annapolis. The team more than doubled its \$1,000 fundraising goal.

6 officers and a mental health specialist from RCPD were honored at the Rockville Chamber of Commerce's 35th Annual Rockville Public Safety Awards.

Completed ... the initial phase of a comprehensive Lead Service Line inventory for the Rockville drinking water system. This critical first step identifies LSLs, safeguarding public health.

MANAGING THE MONEY ...

889 responses from you to the annual community priorities budget survey, a 55% increase over the prior year. The survey helps inform how the budget is shaped by city staff and the Mayor and Council. Visit www.rockvillemd.gov/budget to learn more about Rockville's budgeting process.



MARCH.24

APRIL.24

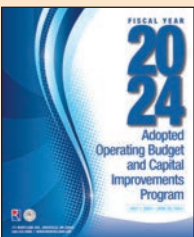
MAY.24

JUNE.24

FINANCIAL AWARDS ...

Government Finance Officers Association awards for:

- Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the FY 2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.
- Popular Annual Financial Reporting Award for the FY 2023 Popular Annual Financial Report.
- Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the FY 2024 Operating Budget and Capital Improvements Program.



EARMARKING \$\$\$...

Thanks to advocacy by the Mayor and Council and city's congressional delegation, including U.S. Rep. Jamie Raskin and Sens. Benjamin L. Cardin and Chris Van Hollen, Rockville received earmark funding in two separate legislative packages signed by President Joe Biden in March.

- Interoperable police radio communications equipment: **\$963,000**.
- Water main rehabilitation: **\$959,752**.
- Potomac Woods storm drain improvements: **\$900,000**.
- Maintenance and Emergency Operations Center: **\$592,500**.
- Sewer line rehabilitation: **\$500,000**.

