



HOWARD COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY BOARD
3430 Court House Drive ■ Ellicott City, Maryland 21043 ■

Ned Tillman, Chair

http://www.howardcountymd.gov/OES/OES_Board.htm

To the Howard County Executive and the County Council:

It is my honor to submit to you the 2009 Annual Report of the Howard County Environmental Sustainability Board. We believe that during our first year we have developed an effective process for pursuing the goals of the Howard County Commission on the Environment and Sustainability and the objectives set out in our charter. Howard County has clearly made progress in the area of becoming more sustainable. However we have a long and very important way to go. We encourage your ongoing leadership in helping all aspects of our community to embed good sustainability practices into everything we do.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this report and our ongoing role in advising you over the next year. Please let me know if there is a time you would like us to meet and discuss the report. We routinely meet on the third Thursday of the month and certainly welcome your participation if you would like to join us.

Sincerely,

Ned Tillman

Ned Tillman on behalf of the Environmental Sustainability Board

The Howard County Environmental Sustainability Board

Annual Report to the Executive and to the County Council

The Environmental Sustainability Board was created in the winter of 2008 and consists of 13 members with varying terms. The current members are:

Ned Tillman, Chair	Rebecca Morley
Rocky Bostick	Christina Mudd
Jim Caldwell	Carol O’Keeffe
Chein-Chi Chang	Zack Shariff
Georgia Eacker	Betsy Singer
Sherman Howell	Mark Southerland
Cathy Hudson	

The board met monthly throughout the year (currently on the third Thursday of each month at 7pm in the County Offices on Gateway Drive) to discuss issues, track progress, and advocate for the embedding of more sustainable practices into all facets of everyday life and work here in Howard County. This report summarizes the different activities that were conducted throughout the past year organized into the following three sections.

1. The first is a tracking of progress of the recommendations that were made by the Commission on the Environment and Sustainability in 2007.
2. The second is the list of actions taken by the Executive Branch to encourage more sustainable practices within the county.
3. The third is the use of an independent benchmarking system to track how we are doing relative to other counties and organizations across the country.

Section 1: Commission Recommendations – Progress to Date

In August 2007, the Commission on the Environment and Sustainability, created by County Executive Ken Ulman, presented the Executive with a report containing 97 recommendations to create a more environmentally sustainable county. These recommendations were, in essence, the blueprint for a greener Howard County. Therefore, one of the primary roles of the current Environmental Sustainability Board (ESB) is to monitor, evaluate, adapt, and facilitate implementation of these recommendations through its advice to the Executive and the County Council.

The Commission recommendations were organized in the following six categories:

- Green Building
- Energy
- Air and Water Quality
- Open Space and Land Preservation
- Education and Outreach
- Governance

The Governance recommendation to create a permanent Office of Environmental Sustainability (OES) and advisory ESB has already been realized, though the current size of the OES (1 full-time director and 2 part-time staff) limits its ability to perform all five functions of the OES envisioned by the Commission. The ESB continues to advocate for additional staff and resources for the OES, but is not considering additional recommendations related to governance.

In its review of progress toward achieving the recommendations of the Commission, the ESB assessed the recommendations according to five categories.

- Have already been implemented
- Are currently being implemented
- Have been evaluated and no action is being taken
- Have been evaluated and are being adapted
- Are currently being evaluated

In some cases, the recommendations have been consolidated or modified to minimize duplications and help facilitate reporting during the evaluation and implementation process. In addition, the ESB developed new recommendations that have been developed by the ESB and added them to the list under separate heading. The ESB believes that this process has been largely successful and has produced a “living” list of recommendations that can serve as a mandate for a greener Howard County, as well as a record of progress. Monitoring the progress of recommendations and action items on the consolidated list of recommendations is a metric through which the ESB will judge progress toward the County’s sustainability objectives.

Appendix A provides the list of 55 “living” recommendations. It is organized into the same five categories as provided in the Commission report (minus the governance category) with the addition of a sixth category for new recommendations developed by the ESB. As described above, many of the

original Commission recommendations have already been implemented and are discussed in more detail in Section 2 of this annual report. Appendix A describes each recommendation and includes the relevant agencies, status, budget implications, and advocacy or education needed by the ESB to facilitate progress. Therefore, the list is also a repository of actions to be taken for the ESB or relevant county agencies, especially as they relate to the budget process and development of departmental work programs. Below is a summary of the recommendations and actions under each of the six categories.

Green Building

The County passed legislation in 2007 that included many of the green building recommendations of the Commission. The three remaining green building recommendations include two that would add to the green building provisions already adopted and one that would create a public outreach and communication program for green development as part of the General Plan. One new provision would mandate recommissioning of certified LEED buildings after five years; this would require legislative approval by the County Council. The other provision would formalize a waiver process to allow the use of new green technologies that are not currently approved, beyond the current case-by-case consideration that is conducted by DPZ and DPW. Ultimately this approach would lead to revising regulations so they permit new technologies as these methods are proven effective. The ESB will continue to advocate with the Executive and Council to strengthen the green building provisions and to work with DPZ on ensuring that the General Plan process fully incorporates environmental sustainability issues.

Energy

The energy recommendations include 10 that would mandate specific energy or greenhouse gas (GHG) emission targets, generally following the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement that County Executive Ulman signed on February 19, 2007, and the Maryland Climate Action Plan released on August 25, 2008. These include reductions in GHG emissions; non-renewable energy use by government, commercial, and residential sectors; and renewable transportation fuel use by government and private sectors. The County would establish an alternative fuels strategy to support the latter. In addition, the County would purchase increasing percentages of electricity from Maryland renewable energy sources through 2020, as well as increase the use of renewable transportation fuels by the same percentages. The Howard County Climate Action Plan being prepared by OES with contractor support is addressing all of these recommendations. In addition, the ESB/OES created an Energy Task Force subcommittee of experts (chaired by an ESB member) charged with developing specific actions to implement these recommendations and others from the HC Climate Action Plan (Appendix B.) ***The Board sees the appointment of an Energy Manager as a priority and is pleased that various funding options are being considered.***

The Energy Task Force was comprised of ten experts on energy, and three staff members, with participation from the consultant who developed the inventory and action plan. The members of the task force represented the renewable energy industry, energy providers, and the transportation, efficiency, energy purchasing, and policy sectors. The Task Force met several times a month for five

months. Discussions were organized according to four broad categories: residential sector, commercial sector, education and government facilities, and transportation. The list of recommendations developed by the Task Force as well as the full membership list is attached as Appendix B.

Air and Water Quality

There are nine recommendations dealing with air and water quality. Five of these recommendations deal with strengthening protection of natural resources during the land development process, for example, implementing Low Impact Development (LID) techniques which are already allowed and encouraged (or required) in some cases, consistent with state regulations. New State regulations requiring LID (now known as Environmental Site Design or ESD) as the preferred choice for new construction and redevelopment were published in April 2009. One Commission recommendation is to strengthen the existing buffer protections for streams, wetlands, and steep slopes that are currently narrower than some counties. The ESB encourages the county to propose changes to the forest conservation program to strengthen these protections. This and other changes would require legislative approval. Another recommendation that is being considered by HC is expansion of the tree preservation and forest canopy activities to include planting on private property. The ESB is advocating for more funds for planting and outreach on this issue. Waiver reform is another major land development recommendation that includes stronger review, more transparency for the public, and prohibitions in certain cases. DPZ is making waiver information more available, but ESB needs more research to determine if legislative changes are necessary.

One major recommendation under Air and Water Quality is development of a comprehensive watershed restoration strategy. HC Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ) is currently preparing the Water Resources Element (WRE) of the Comprehensive Plan to meet State requirements and plan for future growth. ESB is advising HC on the WRE, which will address drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater within the County. HC previously determined watershed priorities and subsequently has been developing watershed management plans in seven watersheds. Columbia Association (CA) is also developing plans for six of its watersheds. HC, CA, and GGP have partnered to develop a long term plan for the Little Patuxent watershed and will receive 2010 Trust Fund monies from the state management and restoration within the watershed. The ESB will be advocating for expediting management plans for the remaining county watersheds and dedicating funds for implementation of watershed projects which will require tens of millions of dollars. A key recommendation to meet this need is creation of a stormwater utility that would assess a "water quality protection fee" on stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces on all properties. These fees would fund the needed watershed projects. The ESB will be undertaking education of the public on this issue as a major outreach initiative and hopes to see HC consider a stormwater utility in the future.

The last three Commission recommendations deal with transportation, air pollution, and application of pesticides and toxic substances. The first is to reduce automobile use by advocating for more commuter transit, bikeway connectivity, carpooling, and telecommuting. As chair of the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, Executive Ulman achieved a transfer of monies from road projects to transit projects. Another recommendation is to eliminate or minimize county use of machinery or products

producing emissions on Code Red and Code Purple days. DRP currently sends global emails to staff on this issue. Lastly, ESB recommends the reduction or elimination of toxic products in favor of integrated pest management (IPM). DRP recently completed a pesticide audit and has reduced its inventory of such products. A horticulturist is now revising all landscape plans and pesticide notification signs are being expanded.

Open Space and Land Preservation

A key recommendation for land preservation is the recognition that since build out in HC may occur in 15 years, 5,000 acres of the uncommitted lands should be pursued for preservation as soon as possible. A related recommendation is partnering with the state to preserve additional parcels along the Patapsco and Patuxent greenways. The reduction in land values makes this a good time to purchase, but reductions in the amount of state Program Open Space funds have also been substantial. All grants and funding options should be pursued and ESB plans to work with land trusts and watershed groups to leverage all opportunities. Within open space and land preservation, preserving existing forested lands is a priority. Therefore the ESB recommends revising forest conservation requirements to preserve the remaining forested lands in the county.

The ESB has five additional recommendations to improve planning for land preservation including developing a green infrastructure plan for HC (to complement the state-level plan) with which to rank the uncommitted parcels and put them on fast-track preservation. Also recommended are increased outreach efforts to educate potential sellers and partner with CA on open space expansions. All of these recommendations would require additional staff time within OES or elsewhere in HC and ESB has not, thus far, pursued this issue. ESB will continue to advocate for resources to implement these land preservation recommendations.

Seven recommendations deal with land preservation during the land development process. One is to create staff review responsibilities for sensitive habitats beyond what is currently required. The newly created HC green neighborhood checklist provides incentives for preparation of habitat management plans, but no new review requirements. A second recommendation is to revise the County Design Manual to eliminate conflicts with sensitive resource protections. The ESB will continue to advocate for promulgation of stricter protections. The other recommendation that directly addresses land development is to improve the inspection program for county easements. Current inspection intervals and responsibilities are variable, and involve both state inspectors and county inspectors. ESB will advocate for additional staffing and more consistent inspections on appropriate intervals, possibly using volunteers.

Other land development planning recommendations include incorporating smart growth principles in BRAC and transportation initiatives (which are being addressed by HC participating in regional BRAC efforts), ensuring that environmental features are included in the Robinson Nature Center and Blandair Park designs (which is being addressed by respective planning committees and public review), and convening a Builders for the Bay workshop (which is not currently being pursued),

The last eight recommendations deal with land management issues including consolidating DRP best management practices into a model document and disseminating this information both within and outside HC government (there are currently no staff available for this): creating an invasive species task force (that needs implementation funds rather than funds for planning): reducing deer populations (two sites have been added to the program and there is general support from the public): and using guidelines for amphibian and reptile habitat protection (no action has been taken). To address funding constraints, the ESB recommends creating a budget line item for open space management. Lastly, the ESB recommends pursuing partnerships with the HCPSS and HOAs (including CA) to institute best management practices and develop selected demonstration projects. To date, the OES has worked with a middle school, three small HOAs, and the village covenant advisors on demonstration projects.

Education and Outreach

The ESB has four key recommendations for education and outreach that will help accomplish the many actions described in the other categories. Foremost among these is the creation of an information clearinghouse, known as Green Central Station, which will be a central source of information, referral and possibly technical assistance for the general public, the private sector and HC government. The concept of Green Central Station has support from the community, including the Howard County Citizen's Association (HCCA), Howard County Conservancy, Robinson Foundation, and other organizations. HC is issuing an RFP for a consultant to develop the web site. The second recommendation is to develop specific education campaigns for the community. The Climate Action Plan will incorporate this concept and identify campaign priorities. Another recommendation for educating the general public is to use small group training and discussion sessions. This strategy is being implemented by a grassroots effort, the Climate Change Initiative of Howard County.

ESB recommends that HC create partnerships with HCPSS, HCC, the Chamber of Commerce, local business, and other community organizations to coordinate and realize synergies. The OES and ESB chair met with the HCPSS superintendent and the HC Chamber of Commerce president in preparation for the ESB Summit. ESB members also participate in Howard County Environmental Education Resources Organization (HEERO) activities. This partnership with the Howard County School System is critical to many of the ESB's education and outreach goals.

As a step toward fulfilling its commitment for fostering communication between all sectors of our community, the ESB hosted The First Annual Environmental Sustainability Summit on April 4, 2009. This event was coordinated with the countywide GreenFest event held this year at the Howard Community College. More than 100 people attended presentations made by the following key organizations and individuals: Environmental Sustainability Board, Office of Environmental Sustainability, Delegate Liz Bobo, Howard County Green Business Council, Howard County Public Schools, Howard Community College, Howard County Health Department, Agricultural Community (represented by Kathy Zimmerman, Agricultural Marketing Specialist at the Economic Development Authority,) and County Executive Ken Ulman.

The ESB plans to provide this forum annually, increasing the number of participants as other groups become more involved in embedding sustainability into their operations. The electronic versions of most of these presentations can be found at: http://www.co.ho.md.us/OES/OES_bd_summit.htm

The ESB has provided leadership for another education effort to address some of these recommendations: the Howard County Legacy Leadership Institute for the Environment. Several ESB members and the OES Director were part of the Steering Committee for the inaugural session of this Institute, co-sponsored with the University of Maryland, College Park. The program recently enrolled 17 senior environmentalists who completed intensive training with representatives from ESB, NASA, NOAA, University of Maryland, Center on Watershed Protection, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks, and others. The environmentalists are currently working as volunteer leaders for the Office of Environmental Sustainability, Climate Change Initiative of Howard County, Howard County Conservancy, Robinson Foundation, Department of Recreation and Parks, Friends of the Patapsco Valley and Heritage Greenway, and University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service Howard County. In the future, ESB members are looking at a second session that would solidify partnerships and seek volunteer opportunities to support Howard County schools or other venues.

New Recommendations

The ESB recognized that, in addition to the recommendations of the Commission, opportunities for actions will arise where the ESB can have significant influence on important issues. Two such issues were identified this year and ESB members were designated to lead board participation, as follows:

- Vegetation Management in Transmission Line Rights-of-Way (ROWs). Public concern with excessive vegetation clearing by BGE in transmission line ROWs in eastern Columbia led to creation of an ESB committee co-chaired by Cathy Hudson of ESB and Elaine Pardoe of the Committee for Lake Elkhorn Environmental Restoration (CLEER). Other members of the committee came from ESB, BGE, Constellation Energy, HC stormwater management, CA, Maryland DNR, as well as Councilwoman Jen Terrasa. The committee has met several times and is overseeing a demonstration of Integrated Vegetation Management in the ROW from Oakland Mills Road south to Lake Elkhorn. BGE has hired an expert consultant and is working with the committee to develop public acceptance of a new management program that will benefit the environment and that can be transferred to ROWs throughout the county.
- Redevelopment of Downtown Columbia. The ESB concluded that the redevelopment plans for Downtown Columbia would have important consequences for the entire county and therefore participated in most formal and informal discussions on the topic. The ESB approved testimony to the HC Planning Board on the submittal of the General Growth Properties (GGP) request for a General Plan and Zoning amendment. This testimony was given by the ESB chair Ned Tillman and focused on three issues: (1) explicit inclusion of all sustainable development provisions of the GPA in the Zoning Regulations or Design Manual, (2) retention of sufficient large healthy trees and good quality forest in Symphony Woods and the Crescent to constitute a true “central park” that provides ecological benefits and quality of life for people, and (3) creation of an Institute for Sustainable Cities. The ESB will continue to be involved as the County Council considers this submittal and the recommendation of the Planning Board.

Section 2: County Sustainability Initiatives

At the very beginning of his administration, County Executive Ulman put forth a daunting goal - make Howard County the national model of a green community. As you read in the previous section, the Commission on the Environment and Sustainability established a broad set of recommendations to help achieve the Executive's goal. It is important to understand, however, that the Commission's recommendations do not represent the entire sum of all that can and should be done. Over the last year, many additional projects and programs have been implemented that continue to bring Howard County to the forefront of sustainability.

RECYCLING



In addition to the positive environmental benefits of recycling, Howard County faces the situation of having to pay to ship trash to another state for disposal. We are charged a fee per ton for our trash and in less than five years, when the contract expires, dramatic increases in that fee are expected. Therefore, it is imperative that we do everything we can to reduce our collective waste stream to minimize the cost of disposal. After a successful pilot, Howard County provided every home served by County trash collection a large recycling bin with wheels and a lid. Studies have shown that making recycling convenient for the individual home owner is paramount in increasing recycling rates. This program has, thus far, seen recycling rates increase by more than 20% and our waste stream decrease by about 15%.

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN



The crucial first step in our campaign against global warming is doing a full assessment of our county's carbon footprint. This includes an inventory of greenhouse gas emissions attributed to the activities of County Government, the school system, and the community as a whole. We recently completed the assessment, the most comprehensive of any local government greenhouse gas inventory developed in the state. The inventory can be found at http://www.howardcountymd.gov/OES/OESDocs/HoCo_GHG_CAP2008.pdf.

At the time of this report, the County is working diligently to develop an action plan for emission reductions based on the information within the inventory.

REGIONAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE



With the proliferation of new Offices of Sustainability and other environmental and sustainability work being done by counties, Executive Ulman, as Chair of the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC), formed a regional sustainability committee made up of Sustainability Directors from all of the jurisdictions in the BMC. This group reflects the recognition that the issues of sustainability certainly do not stop at our county borders. The regional sustainability committee, chaired by Howard County's Sustainability Director, is working to develop a regional greenhouse gas inventory and action plan and plans to hold a regional summit for sustainability leaders to help craft a regional vision and strategy.

HYBRID CARS AND BUSES



More than a year ago, the County instituted a policy whereby any vehicle that should be replaced will be replaced by a hybrid, if the market has a hybrid equivalent; the vehicle is replaced with a hybrid. This policy has given Howard County the largest hybrid fleet of any jurisdiction in the state of Maryland, including the state government.

Howard County has also purchased, or is in the process of purchasing, 14 hybrid diesel buses. These busses dramatically improve fuel efficiency

and reduce emissions over standard diesel buses.

GREENFEST



Last year was the County's first ever GreenFest. GreenFest 2008 was held at Glenwood Community Center and had a Green Building theme. More than 1,500 people attended GreenFest and while there, learned about tools for becoming more sustainability through workshops and interacting with the private companies, government agencies, and non-profits that had booths at the event. With the overwhelming success of GreenFest, it instantly became a flagship sustainability education event for the County and the region.

In 2009, the County partnered with Howard Community College to put on GreenFest. With a theme of Energy & Water Conservation, over 1,700 participants once again made GreenFest a successful event. This year, the Sustainability Board held, in conjunction with GreenFest, the first annual Howard County Environmental Sustainability Summit. Designed to be an assessment of Howard County's environmental and sustainability progress, the Summit had speakers from the government sector, education, health care, business, and agricultural sectors.

LAND PRESERVATION

In partnership with the Howard County Conservancy, Howard County has, for two years, encouraged landowners of relatively small but environmentally critical lots to place their properties in a preservation easement. These owners are often forced to develop because of the steep increase in property values. Often these lots are the same properties that become small developments shoe-horned in to the property to the dismay of neighbors. Through this partnership, over 100 acres have been permanently preserved to date.

RENEWABLE ENERGY DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS



The County built a solar energy system on the roof of the East Columbia Library. That system has generated almost 6,000 kWh of electricity and prevented the emission of more than 12,000 pounds of carbon dioxide. Library users can learn about the project through a computer terminal located at the front desk of the library, and

information can be found at <http://www.hclibrary.org/solar>.

Additionally, a solar array was placed on the back of Merriwether Post Pavilion to power tour buses as they idle and Just this Side of Paradise Farm installed the first wind turbine in Howard County.

UPCOMING PROJECTS AND CHALLENGES

As the above examples indicate, environmental and sustainability initiatives often materialize as targets of opportunity without previous planning. This in fact is an important piece of successful sustainability work for Howard County and other jurisdictions on the forefront of sustainability. However, sustainability work demands continual assessment of the community to prepare for opportunities, issues, or concerns that appear to be on the horizon. Four major areas appear to be of primary importance in the upcoming year. Of these areas, some overlap dramatically with the Commission recommendations and some do so only tangentially.

- 1) **Water Resources** – As previously mentioned, state legislation requires all local jurisdictions to amend their general plans to incorporate a Water Resources Element (WRE). The WRE must have policies and actions intended to ensure that the County has adequate water resource capacities to meet future growth needs through 2030. In particular, the WRE is to ensure a safe and adequate supply of drinking water, and adequate land and water capacity for the treatment of wastewater and stormwater. The WRE must reflect the opportunities and limitations presented by local and regional water resources. It is intended to improve protection of land and water resources and to address water resource goals within the context of local and State smart growth policies.
- 2) **Green Central Station** – With the upcoming hire of a website design team and with the support of the HoLLIE volunteers, the OES is ready to make progress in developing an online resource for all sustainability subject matter in Howard County. Developing and updating the content for this site will require an ongoing commitment of staff and volunteer resources.
- 3) **Green Infrastructure Plan** – Green Infrastructure is the interconnected network of waterways, wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitats, and other natural areas; greenways, parks, and other conservation lands; working farms, ranches and forests; and wilderness and other open spaces that support native species, maintain natural ecological processes, sustain air and water resources and contribute to health and quality of life. The County already has many existing resources that constitute a skeletal framework for a plan to support and protect Howard County’s green infrastructure. Over the upcoming years, the task will be to connect the gaps and to start filling out the framework with a plan. That State government and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council are also working towards green infrastructure plans, making Howard County’s work in this area a key component of a broader effort.
- 4) **Energy Plan and Implementation** – With the completion of the Greenhouse Gas Inventory, the recommendations from the Energy Task Force, and the completion of the Climate Action Plan, it is time to move into the implementation phase. The ESB will continue to offer recommendations as updates become available throughout the implementation process.

Section 3: County Progress based on the independent SCORE Benchmarking System

The Board felt that, while the Commission recommendations provided one mechanism to assess our County's progress, it was crucial that we also find a framework to put our work in the context of the work being done by similar jurisdictions around the country.

The Board selected the SCORE benchmarking system which was developed by Darcy Hitchcock and Marsha Willard as part of their book, *The Business Guide to Sustainability*, in collaboration with members of the International Sustainable Development Foundation and the Zero Waste Alliance. The process was first conducted by the ESB in February 2008 when a score was calculated for the county both (1) that point of time and (2) for the status of things in the county in Jan 2007, when the current administration took office. So with this year's, 2009, benchmarking, we now can show the progress or lack thereof, for three consecutive years.

The SCORE Benchmarking process allowed comparison of Howard County's progress toward generally accepted sustainability goals with other groups across the country. The Board evaluated the county overall, the Executive Branch, and the Sustainability Office. The SCORE process resulted in the following graphs. Note that all charts are based on a 0 to 9 scale. A score of 0 means that no progress has been made toward becoming more sustainable. It is basically "business as usual". A 9 indicates that the functional area is fully sustainable. At this point in the process you will see that a 3 is quite good since the national benchmarks are generally below 3.

The first graph is for the Executive Branch. The first thing one notices on this graph is that the Executive Branch is clearly ahead of most other organizations and has made significant strides over each of the past two years. There has clearly been an effort to start to embed best sustainability practices into a wide range of executive level functions. This is a good start. To keep up this progress it will now require that all members of the Executive Branch adopt the vision, the language, and the commitment to sustainability into everything that they do. This will require expansion of the vision, more training, and better tracking of progress at all levels of government.

The second graph shows how the Sustainability Director/Office is performing relative to the national benchmark. Again we can see that in all areas, our local Sustainability Director/Office is well ahead of the benchmark and has been making progress over the past two years. The most notable change is the Role category. The Director has successfully developed a green team and embedded a sustainability ethos into the daily workings of the County Government. This effort will be critical over the next year to ensure that sustainability is championed from the bottom up as well as from the top down.

The next two charts show progress across the government sector. There are several areas where the county has very strong programs, such as in Emergency Preparedness, Health, and Tolerance/Diversity. There are also areas where we have made major strides over the past two years, such as in Energy, Buildings, Waste Management, and Sustainable Education. The graphs also show weakness in our efforts in the areas of Land Use, Transportation, Contract Services, and the encouragement of Sustainable Economic Development. Whereas the Transportation area may be difficult to achieve in our largely suburban setting, it is clear that this sector as well as the other weak sectors require much more attention.

Background on SCORE and Results

Welcome to SCORE, a powerful tool to assess sustainable practices and to plan future actions. A short explanation of the tool is discussed below.

How SCORE Was Developed

SCORE was created by Darcy Hitchcock and Marsha Willard as part of their book, *The Business Guide to Sustainability*, in collaboration with members of the International Sustainable Development Foundation and the Zero Waste Alliance. They wanted to create a tool that would help organizations evaluate how well they were doing on their path toward sustainability but also help the organizations understand what they ultimately will need to do.



How SCORE is Structured

SCORE is divided into two main sections, sectors and functions. The ones the Sustainability Board used are checked below.

Sector Assessments	Functional Assessments
Service Manufacturing ✓ Government	✓ Executives Facilities Human Resources Office Management Purchasing Environmental Affairs Marketing/Public Relations Finance/Accounting Information & Communication Technology ✓ Sustainability Director or Coordinator

How to Interpret Results

Ratings for each practice were entered by the Board on a 0-9 point scale. Scores were guided by three benchmarks of performance, the Incubator, Initiative, and Integrated levels. You had to have qualified under the lower performance score to qualify for a higher one. See the sample item below.

OFFICE PRACTICES				
Points	Practice	Incubator	Initiative	Integrated
		1 point	3 points	9 points
	Office Supplies and Equipment: Minimize impacts associated with the purchase and disposal of office supplies, furnishings and equipment.	<p>Select a couple targeted purchasing categories and identify more sustainable options.</p> <p>Have an effective recycling system in place for paper, cans, & bottles.</p>	<p>Have a system in place for routinely assessing the impacts of purchases and are working on finding better options.</p> <p>Have systems for composting food scraps from lunchroom and recycle/donate electronic equipment, batteries, CDs.</p>	<p>80% or more of office supplies and equipment come from sustainable sources (i.e., from a certified sustainable source, 100% post-consumer waste, recyclable, product take-back).</p>

As you review results in this document, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- SCORE assesses sustainability practices, the degree to which sustainability is embedded in broader organizational practices.
 - 0=business as usual.
 - 1=initial, early actions; good first steps.
 - 3=formal initiative, significant steps have been taken.
 - 9=fully sustainable, sustainability is embedded within the government organization and pressure is being put on other stakeholders as well.
- **Anything above zero is good at this point in history, and a 3 is considered excellent. However, the bar will keep rising.**
- Benchmark data lets you see how Howard County compares to other similar governments that have taken SCORE.

Where Howard County is in our development

Howard
County
is
Here

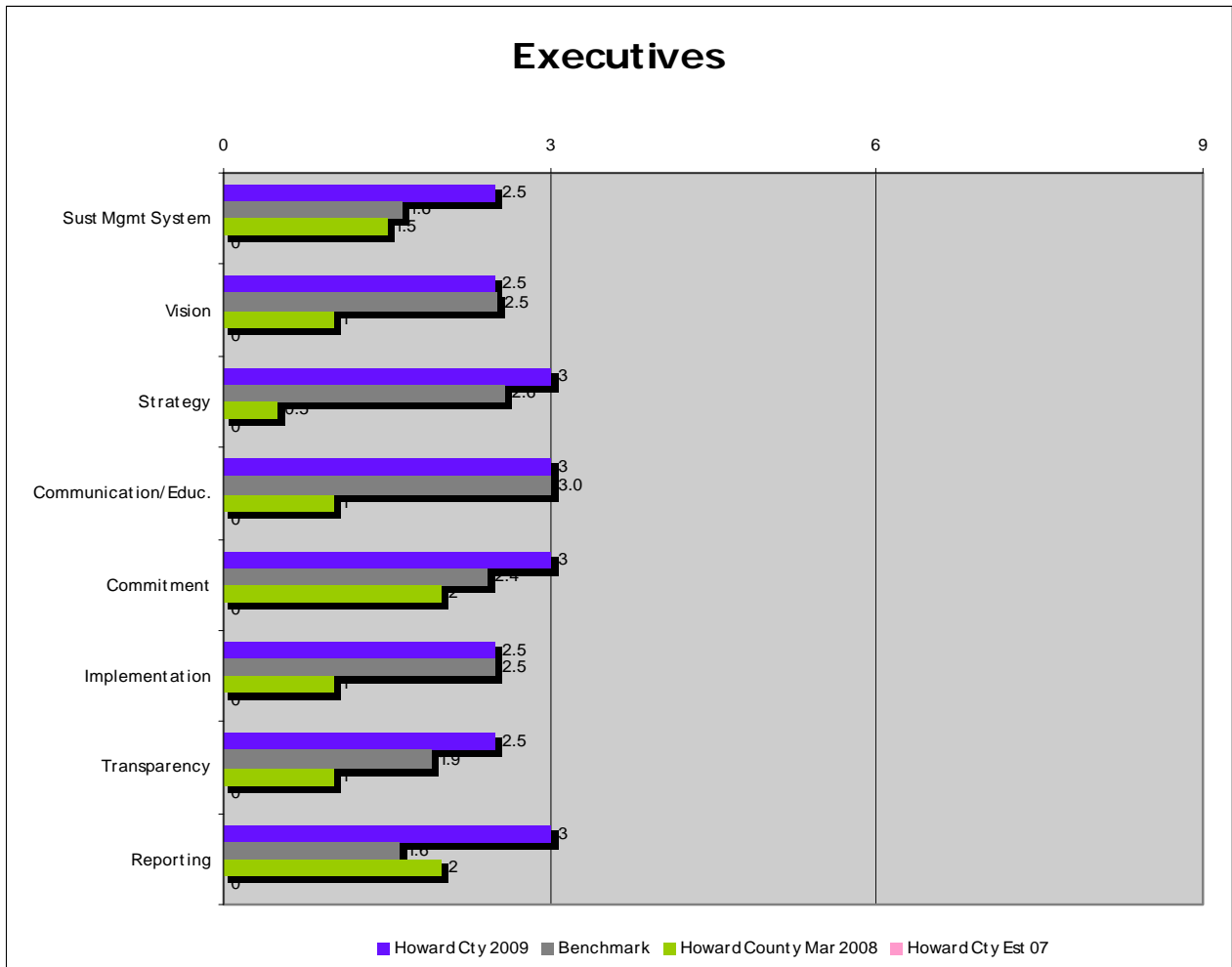


Incubator	Initiative	Integrated
<p>Early ad hoc efforts</p> <p>Pilot efforts in isolated parts of the organization, instigated by people with passion for sustainability</p> <p>May or may not have top management support</p>	<p>A formal initiative with top management support</p> <p>Sustainability is being embedded into formal practice across the organization</p> <p>There are formal structures to support sustainability (e.g., a sustainability coordinator, a steering committee, etc.)</p>	<p>Sustainability is fully integrated into the organization and is part of the organization’s public image and core values</p> <p>The organization is using its influence to encourage other stakeholders to pursue sustainability goals</p> <p>The organization is a leader, taking responsibility for its externalities</p>

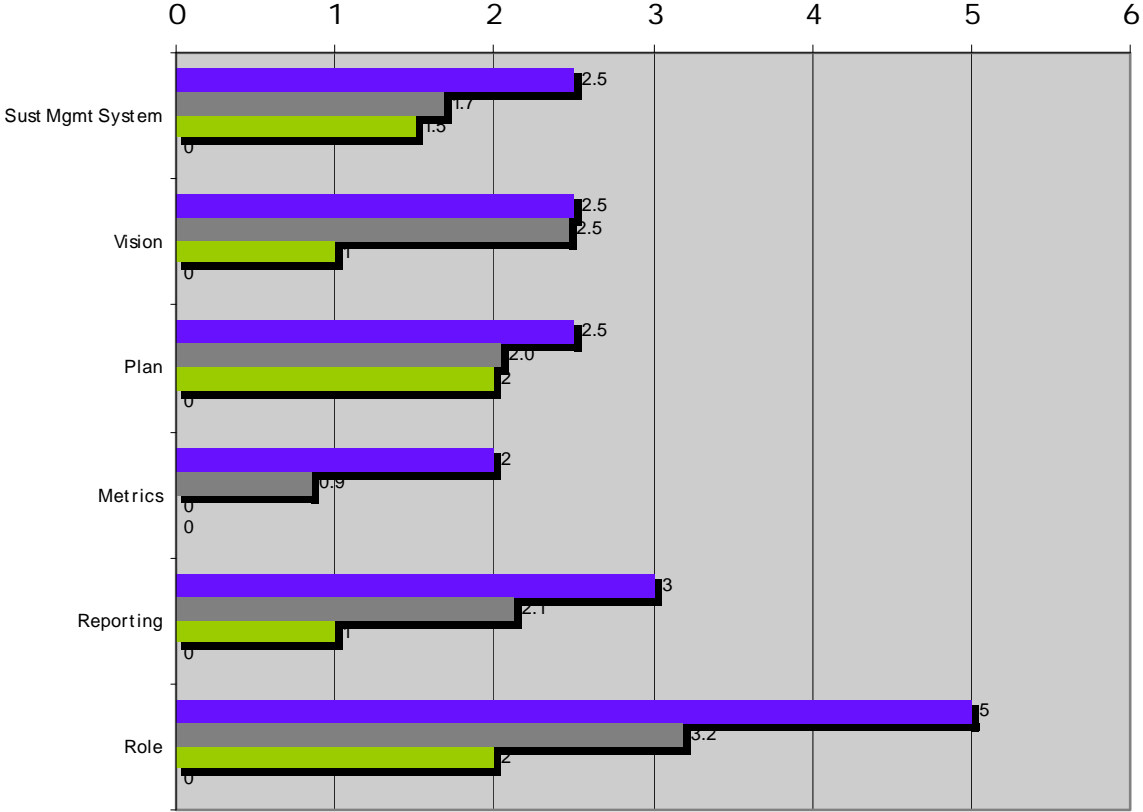
Organizations early in the implementation often fall into the Incubator stage, where efforts are ad hoc and they may be occurring with or without the knowledge and blessing of management. Once an effort is an official organizational initiative, the implementation is more intentional and spreads across the organization. Few organizations are yet at the Integrated stage where they have internalized and institutionalize sustainability, have a clear vision for what they must do to become fully sustainable and are influencing other stakeholders to do the same.

SCORE Results for Functions

The following chart shows average scores for each functional area as compared with the benchmark. Note that these are averages of all the practices for each functional area. These charts includes the Sustainability Board’s assessment for 2009, assessment done in 2008, and the Board’s 2008 estimate of what the assessment would have been in 2007 (for this chart the 2007 assessment was 0 for all categories). Additionally this chart includes the average of other governments and organizations that used the SCORE system (labeled “Benchmark”).



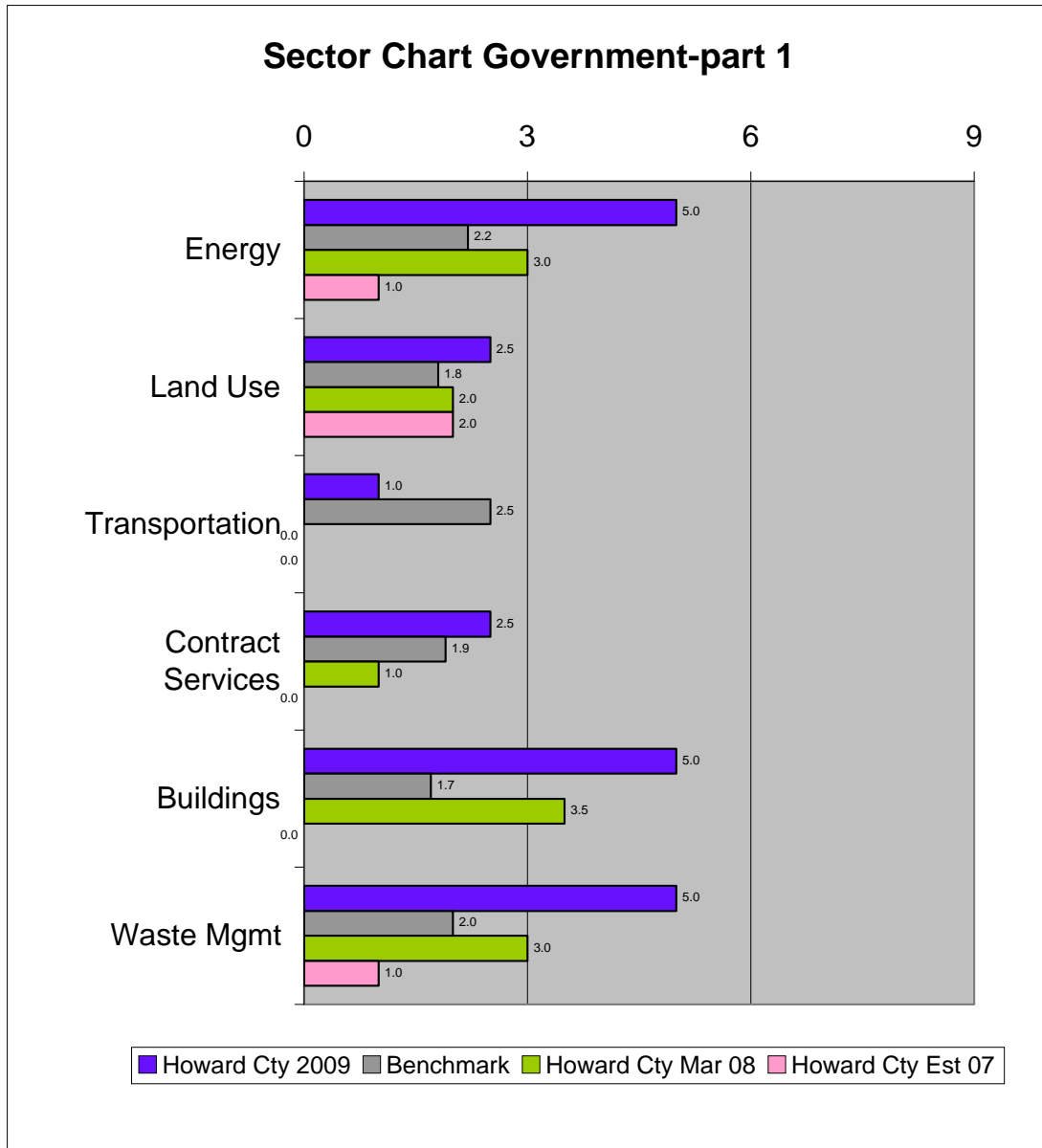
Sustainability Director



■ Howard Cty 2009
 ■ Benchmark
 ■ Howard County Mar 2008
 ■ Howard Cty Est 07

SCORE Results for Sector

The following chart shows average scores for each practice within the government sector. As with the function charts, these charts include the 2008 and 2009 assessments, the 2007 estimate, and a benchmark. With these charts, the benchmark includes only other governmental entities that have used the SCORE system.



Sector Chart Government- part 2

■ Howard Cty 2009
 ■ Benchmark
 ■ Howard Cty Mar 08
 ■ Howard Cty Est 07

