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## Mount Airy again named a Sustainable Maryland Certified community

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Mount Airy has once again been named a Sustainable Maryland certified community.

Sustainable Maryland is “designed to support Maryland’s 157 municipalities as they look for cost-effective and strategic ways to protect their natural assets and revitalize their communities,” according to a news release from Sustainable Maryland, part of the University of Maryland’s Environmental Finance Center.

Mount Airy was first certified in 2017.

Municipalities can collect points by using best practices in areas such as energy, planning and water. To get the certification, towns must meet certain requirements and obtain at least 150 points.

“We are very proud to be bestowed with the honor of being a Sustainable Community,” said Mayor Patrick Rockinberg, according to the release. “The town is actively working with countless volunteers to build a more sustainable future.”

Rockinberg said Mount Airy added additional charging stations to the town’s municipal parking lot and at Watkins Park. The stations are located near Interstate 70, which also encourages sustainable tourism to the town, he added.

Some of the items Mount Airy completed include establishing Pop Up Parks near local eateries to offer safe seating areas during the pandemic, hosting Rail to Trail days where volunteers helped clean up trails and wetlands, and organizing “Paint the Town Purple” during National Recovery Month as a way of bringing awareness to substance use disorders and mental health, according to the release.

Mount Airy is one of 11 municipalities in the state that were recognized at the Sustainable Maryland Awards Ceremony at the Maryland Municipal League's annual Fall Conference, which was held virtually.

Other municipalities that were either newly certified or re-certified were: Bel Air, Berwyn Heights, Boonsboro, Chesapeake Beach, Frostburg, Greenbelt, Landover Hills, Riverdale Park, Takoma Park and University Park.

"This year's 11 Sustainable Maryland Certified communities represent a broad cross-section of the state, from small towns to large cities, from rural agricultural areas to densely urban communities," said Mike Hunninghake, program manager for Sustainable Maryland, according to the release. "Each one has demonstrated a firm and ongoing commitment to meeting the urgent sustainability challenges we face here in Maryland, and as part of a planetary community in crisis."

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