

2026 Work Plan

EAC PURPOSE

Created under Chapter 31 of the Carroll County Code of Public Local Laws, the Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) is dedicated to exploration and promotion of the County's environmental management responsibilities, to providing the Commissioners with educated information and/or advice that is in the best interest of the County and the County's residents, and to assisting with environmental education efforts.

EAC FUNCTION

The EAC functions at the direction of the Carroll County Board of Commissioners and, as such, works cooperatively with County environmental staff to research environmental policy issues; to advise the Board of County Commissioners; to foster environmental education; and, generally, to act in the best interest of County residents by promoting effective environmental protection and management principles.

WORK PLAN PURPOSE

As an advisory body to the Board, the EAC provides information to the Board on emerging environmental policies and projects. Projects may be individual, discrete projects of the EAC, supplemental or supportive to staff projects, or recommend measures to mitigate environmental impacts for projects initiated by or supported by the Board.

This work plan outlines the topics, projects, and/or issues where the EAC will assist and advise the Board for the 2026 calendar year. The EAC reviewed these topics with the Board in the annual joint meeting held on February 5, 2026. This work plan includes proposed projects as well as projects requested by the Board.

TOPICS AND PROJECTS FOR 2026

In Calendar Year 2026, the EAC will work on the following topics and/or projects:

Topic/Project	Expected Product
<p><i>Cost Savings Projects with Environmental Benefits:</i></p> <p>At the Board’s request, the EAC will identify proposed capital projects that may provide the co-benefit of cost savings as well as environmental benefits. Relevant County Departments will identify proposed projects to be requested in the FY 2027 budget that may meet these criteria. The EAC will provide a summary of the environmental benefits of these cost-saving projects.</p> <p><i>Target Completion: April 2026</i></p>	Brief
<p><i>Guide to Becoming a Community Solar Subscriber in Carroll County:</i></p> <p>In 2019, with the birth of community solar energy facilities in Maryland, the EAC prepared a public outreach brochure to provide information to help the County’s public understand what a community solar project is and where to find information about them.</p> <p>Solar companies are now marketing their facilities, including mailers and knocking on people’s doors. Given the changes that have occurred in the past six years, the brochure needs to be updated to provide citizens with current resources to help them determine if a project that is marketed to them is legitimate and determine if a subscription is the right fit for them. The EAC will update the brochure. Other energy brochures may be updated as well if needed.</p> <p><i>Target Completion: October 2026</i></p>	Update Brochure
<p><i>Alternative Energy Options for County Projects:</i></p> <p>Alternative energy has been a prominent topic in recent years.</p> <p>Per the Board’s request, the EAC will research energy options available that the County could consider incorporating to future County projects. The EAC will develop a report providing information on these options and some of the potential co-benefits that could be realized. Pros and cons to consider for each option will be included.</p> <p><i>Target Completion: December 2026</i></p>	Report



Report

New Land Uses on the Horizon:





The County can benefit by being proactive in the future through potential code updates to specifically address the unique needs of new technologies and other uses not yet contemplated in the Code. This includes both zoning and development requirements that allow for better control over siting, design, and mitigation of impacts. Ultimately, the County will benefit by being prepared to act with foresight, creating flexible, forward-thinking land use policies that welcome innovation and necessity while protecting community, environmental, and infrastructure interests.

Per the Board's request, the EAC will research new land uses on the horizon for which the County may not yet address currently through code requirements or do not fully address these uses. The information will be provided in a report to the Board that identifies what new land uses may be most relevant to the County and summarize information on each.

Target Completion: December 2026

ONGOING TOPICS AND PROJECTS

The EAC will address the following ongoing topics and projects:

-  The Carroll County Commissioners adopted the **Environmental Action Awards** program in 1990 to recognize individuals and groups that have exemplary accomplishments in the protection, conservation, and improvement of our environmental resources through their actions or projects. Awards are presented biennially to individuals and groups chosen from nominees submitted for consideration by their peers, although self-nominations will be accepted. Unless the timeframe for the Carroll EnviroFest changes, the public campaign to solicit nominations for the 2027 Environmental Action Awards will roll out in late spring/early summer 2027. Nominations will be due in September. The EAC will review the nominations and select a winner for each of the three categories – Student Engagement, Positive Practices, and Educational Outreach. Prep work for this process could begin in late 2026.
-  The EAC will participate as an exhibitor in the annual **Carroll EnviroFest** organized and hosted by the Carroll County Planning & Land Management Department. This includes preparation of a display and materials, as well as pursuing any additional opportunities to enhance the EnviroFest.
-  The EAC will proceed with developing a public outreach piece for **Residential Graywater Use** in Carroll County once regulations are adopted by Maryland Department of the Environment. This publication is intended to help provide Carroll's residents with basic information regarding graywater, its residential uses, and benefits.
-  In its continuing role to promote **public education and awareness** on environmental issues, the EAC will also address citizen concerns as they arise and are brought to the EAC's attention.

- From time to time, an **informational tour** is arranged for the EAC. These tours are intended to raise awareness and knowledge of various environmental issues, such as the EAC's tour of Lehigh's conveyor system in 2017, the landfill tour in 2024, and the Howard County composting facility in 2025. A similar tour may be arranged if the opportunity arises.
- As needed, an **ad hoc committee** of EAC members will serve, as needed, to hear and decide an appeal of any of the following environmental code chapters/sections: Ch. 53 Environmental Management of Storm Sewer Systems, Ch. 150 Forest Conservation, Ch. 151 Stormwater Management, Ch. 153 Floodplain Management, Ch. 154 Water Resource Management, and Ch. 157 Landscape Enhancement of Development.

Approval will be sought from the Board to proceed on any concerns requiring significant additional time, staff, or financial resources.

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

Other topics and/or projects may surface throughout the year for which the Board would like a review and/or advice from the EAC. If the Board seeks input from the EAC outside of the work plan process, the Board will request the review and input in writing. The request will specify what aspect of the issue/project should be discussed and/or the desired product from the EAC.

Other issues or projects for discussion may be brought to the EAC's attention during the year by a member of the EAC, the public, or staff. If the EAC chooses to pursue a project, a written request will be made to the Board for approval to amend the work plan with the additional project. The request will specify the scope of the project and expected product and outcome. The Board may modify the scope of the project with its approval.