



Charles County  
Government  
**2025**

# ANNUAL REPORT

TURNING PLANS  
INTO PROGRESS

**CHARLES COUNTY** is a code home rule county governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners. The five Commissioners are elected at large to four-year terms of office. The Commissioner President is the presiding officer of the board at meetings and hearings. The Commissioner President may reside anywhere in the county. The other four Commissioners must each reside in a Commissioner district.

**BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Generating revenues to fund the county’s capital and operating budgets, as well as other county departments and agencies.
- Providing for the public health, safety, and welfare of Charles County residents and visitors.
- Adopting and updating the Charles County Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Plan, and Zoning Ordinance.
- Overseeing the development process.
- Establishing, promulgating, and enforcing county rules, regulations, ordinances, policies, and procedures.
- Appointing boards, commissions, and task forces.
- Fulfilling the mission of Charles County Government.

**COMMISSIONER MEETINGS**

**BOARD MEETINGS** — The Board of Commissioners meetings are scheduled regularly and held virtually and/or in the County Government Building at 200 Baltimore Street in La Plata. The public can watch meetings on Comcast 95, Verizon Fios 10, Roku, or Apple TV streaming devices (Charles County Government), and online at: [www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/services/media-services/charles-county-government-television](http://www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/services/media-services/charles-county-government-television). For virtual meetings, residents without internet service or cable access can listen to the meeting at 301-645-0500. Meetings are advertised in advance at [www.CharlesCountyMD.gov](http://www.CharlesCountyMD.gov).

**COMMUNITY MEETINGS** — The Commissioners hold community meetings virtually and at convenient locations throughout Charles County. These meetings are open to the public and provide an opportunity for attendees to ask questions and discuss items that are important to the community.

**CHARLES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**



**COMMISSIONER PRESIDENT REUBEN B. COLLINS, II, ESQ.** is a lifelong resident of Charles County, raised in Bryans Road. He is a graduate of Charles County Public Schools. For more than 20 years, he has practiced law for R.B. Collins Law, LLC. He served three previous terms as County Commissioner for District 3. This is his second term serving as Commissioner President. He is the first African American elected to this Charles County position.



**COMMISSIONER VICE PRESIDENT RALPH E. PATTERSON, II, M.A. (DISTRICT 4)** Commissioner Patterson enjoys giving back to his community through coaching youth in soccer and volleyball. He has a strong family background of service. Currently, he is a high school Special Education teacher.



**COMMISSIONER GILBERT "BJ" BOWLING, III (DISTRICT 1)** is a lifelong resident of Charles County and lives in Dentsville. He owns and operates a fifth-generation family farm with his grandfather and father and has worked professionally in public safety for more than 20 years.



**COMMISSIONER THOMASINA O. COATES, M.S. (DISTRICT 2)** is a native of Charles County, proud graduate of Charles County Public Schools, and lives in White Plains. She owns a small business in Charles County and worked in information technology for the federal government for 30 years.



**COMMISSIONER AMANDA M. STEWART, M.ED. (DISTRICT 3)** is a 30-year resident of Charles County, proud graduate of Charles County Public Schools, and is serving her third term as a County Commissioner. She has more than 15 years of experience in public education and co-owns a small business with her husband.



# Welcome

Commissioner President Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq.

It is my honor to present the 2025 Charles County Government Annual Report. This year reflects meaningful progress in strengthening our governance, expanding opportunity, and shaping a future that works for every resident. Guided by our shared commitment to transparency, fiscal responsibility, and inclusive growth, we have taken deliberate steps to ensure Charles County remains a vibrant and forward-thinking community.

Charles County's continued triple-A bond rating reflects our community's strength and our government's commitment to sound financial management. For nine years in a row, we've earned the highest possible rating because we plan responsibly, invest wisely, and work together to build a strong future for our residents.

One of the milestones we are especially proud of this year is the completion and advancement of the Affordable Housing Strategy Report. This comprehensive report provides a roadmap to address housing affordability challenges facing seniors, working families, and young professionals. By pursuing its recommendations, we are laying the groundwork for policies and partnerships that will expand housing options, encourage thoughtful development, and help more residents achieve stability and long-term success in our community.

Economic development continues to transform Charles County, particularly in Waldorf. The 150-acre Waldorf Station development is taking shape with a dynamic mix of retail and residential components that will create jobs, expand our commercial tax base, and provide new amenities for residents. This investment signals strong confidence in Charles County's future and supports our broader vision of a walkable, connected, and economically resilient Waldorf. Complementing this growth, we welcomed the opening of Sprouts Farmers Market last year — a specialty grocery that enhances local food access, supports healthy living, and reflects the growing demand for diverse retail options in our community.

Throughout 2025, we have remained steadfast in our commitment to sound financial stewardship, strategic infrastructure investments, and high-quality public services. Together, we are shaping the county's future in a way that balances growth with responsibility, innovation with tradition, and opportunity with equity. I am grateful for your trust and partnership as we continue moving Charles County forward.

On behalf of my fellow Commissioners, thank you for your continued engagement and dedication to our shared success.

Sincerely,

**Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq.**  
Commissioner President

# YOUR CHARLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

## COMMISSIONER VICE PRESIDENT RALPH PATTERSON (DISTRICT 4)

Commissioner Vice President Ralph Patterson was active throughout the community, consistently supporting and participating in a wide variety of county events and initiatives. He hosted **town halls**, attended **public meetings**, celebrated **groundbreakings**, **ribbon cuttings**, and many neighborhood events to stay directly connected with residents. Commissioner Patterson emphasized transparent communication, encouraged public participation in local government decision-making processes, and contributed his support to many nonprofit causes that support a thriving community.

## COMMISSIONER GILBERT “BJ” BOWLING (DISTRICT 1)

Commissioner Gilbert “BJ” Bowling remained committed to strengthening civic engagement and promoting transparency in county government. He consistently represented District 1 in policy discussions and public forums, encouraging meaningful community input and improving access to local government.

Through his **Farmers Feeding Charles County** initiative, he advanced food security by coordinating distribution events that delivered fresh, locally grown products to families in need. These efforts supported residents while reinforcing partnerships between local farmers and community organizations.

**Public safety** continued to be a priority. In 2025, Commissioner Bowling and the Board approved 10 new Emergency Medical Services positions, bringing the four-year total to 62. This investment improves response times, supports first responders, and enhances emergency services for residents.

Protecting **natural resources and rural character** also remained central to his work. Over the past five years, 7,122 acres were permanently preserved through state and county programs, safeguarding farmland, open space, and long-term environmental sustainability. He also supported the County’s Resilience Authority in advancing stormwater infrastructure and watershed improvements that reduce flooding and strengthen environmental resilience.

As **Chairman of the Tri-County Council**, Commissioner Bowling played a key role in advancing regional agricultural and economic initiatives. He supported the long-term effort to establish USDA retail meat processing capacity in Southern Maryland — an achievement made possible through collaboration among local farmers, agricultural leaders, trades professionals, and community partners. This expansion provides producers with new processing options, wholesale opportunities, and access to locally raised meats bearing the “U.S. Inspected and Passed” designation, strengthening local businesses and the regional food supply chain.

Commissioner Bowling continues to focus on building a strong, safe, and sustainable future for Charles County.



# YOUR CHARLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

## COMMISSIONER THOMASINA O. COATES, M.S. (DISTRICT 2)

It has been an honor to serve the residents of Charles County for two terms (8 years), representing the County on local and regional boards and advocating for small, women- and minority-owned businesses, nonprofits, seniors, equitable housing, and economic growth. I have supported key community initiatives, including holiday giveaways with the **Jolly Foundation**; donations to the **Juneteenth Foundation**, **African American Heritage Society**, **Bel Alton High School Alumni Association**, and **Pomouke High School Alumni Association**; and the provision of laptops for the 2025 HBCU Fest to assist college-bound students.



My work also includes securing bond support to bring **Oasis Groceries** to the community; **obtaining \$50,000 in nonprofit funding** through a riverboat lottery license partnership; **improving public safety** with new traffic signals on Route 301 and Billingsley Road; introducing the County's **first Affordable Housing PILOT**, leading to Magnolia Gardens in District 2; supporting **USBTA** grant funding; advancing the **Sports and Learning Complex** and the **Bryans Road Recreation Center study**; launching the **Recreation Assist Program** and **Girls Flag Football** in CCPS; and helping distilleries transition to commercial zoning.



## COMMISSIONER AMANDA STEWART, ED.D. (DISTRICT 3)

Commissioner Dr. Amanda Stewart remained actively engaged in county governance, focused on ensuring that county government remained responsive and accessible to its residents.

A highlight of her year was hosting her **11th Annual Back to School Fiesta**, a drive-through event that provided backpacks filled with supplies to Pre-K through 12th-grade students in Charles County schools to help families prepare for the new school year. The event reflected her ongoing commitment to supporting youth and families by connecting local resources directly with those in need. Beyond this signature program, Dr. Stewart demonstrated a sustained effort to **foster community well-being and strengthen public engagement** with local government.



## MOZAMBIQUE SISTER CITY PARTNERSHIP ESTABLISHED

Charles County formally established a sister city partnership with Matola, Mozambique, expanding the County’s global connections and creating new opportunities for residents. As Mozambique’s second-largest city and a major economic hub, Matola joins Walldorf, Germany, and Jõgeva, Estonia, as Charles County’s third sister city.

The Matola delegation, led by Mayor Júlio José Parruque, visited Charles County to formalize a new partnership focused on shared priorities and long-term collaboration. Following a welcome dinner, the two governments signed an agreement on June 10 outlining cooperation in trade and investment, agriculture, manufacturing, education and youth exchanges, tourism, and community development.

Throughout the weeklong visit, the delegation engaged with county officials and community members through site visits to public schools, local small businesses like Landon’s Ices and Creams and Honey Bun Cake Factory, and agricultural operations such as Serenity Farm and Zekiah Ridge



Farm and Flowers, and concluded with a networking reception to celebrate the partnership and explore future opportunities.

This partnership is designed to drive long-term benefits for the community by opening doors for local businesses, entrepreneurs, students, and farmers to engage in international trade, education, workforce development, and cultural exchange. Through collaboration in industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, transportation, and tourism, the partnership strengthens Charles County’s competitiveness in the global economy while supporting job creation, innovation, and cultural enrichment. Partnerships like these help develop greater economic opportunity, expanded educational and youth programs, and a stronger, more connected Charles County with a growing presence on the international stage.

More photos at: [CharlesCountyGovernment.smug-mug.com/Board-of-County-Commissioner-Events/Mozambique-Delegation-Visit-June-2025](https://CharlesCountyGovernment.smug-mug.com/Board-of-County-Commissioner-Events/Mozambique-Delegation-Visit-June-2025)



# CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



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# CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY

We are a **DIVERSE, TALENTED, AND ENGAGED** workforce responsive to our community's needs.

We **ACTIVELY SHARE** information, knowledge, and ideas to guide our collaborative decision making and perform challenging work.

We are **CAREFUL STEWARDS** of our resources.

We are **EMPOWERED** to develop and deploy our talents and skills to provide high-quality services that strengthen our community.

We are **CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE** and work in a fair and supportive team environment.

We are **COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE** in public service.

**WE LEAD BY SERVING.**

*We are the employees of Charles County Government*





## A Message from the Acting County Administrator

Deborah E. Hall, CPA

It is a privilege to share our 2025 Annual Report, which reflects a year of meaningful progress and steady execution for Charles County Government. Over the past year, Charles County Government focused on one clear objective: **turning plans into progress**.

This year has been defined by action. Across every department and every strategic priority, our focus has been clear: move projects forward, deliver on our commitments, and get things done for the residents and businesses who rely on us every day.

Our strategic priorities — Economic Development; Institutional Governance; Emergency Preparedness, Response and Safety; Resiliency and Sustainability; and Quality of Life — continue to guide our work. But what matters most is not just the plans we make. It is the progress we achieve.

In 2025, we advanced major capital projects, strengthened our financial position with the reaffirmation of our AAA bond rating, and secured record-low interest rates that allow us to invest wisely in our community. We expanded critical public safety capabilities, launched new technology tools to better serve residents, and continued building infrastructure that supports responsible growth.

We have made measurable progress in economic development, from continued momentum in the Western Technology Corridor to vital redevelopment projects that are reshaping key commercial areas in our suburban center of Waldorf. We moved forward with the Sports and Wellness Complex following extensive community engagement, demonstrating that we listen first — and then we execute.

We also deepened our commitment to resiliency and sustainability through stormwater improvements, climate initiatives, and environmental restoration projects that will protect our community for generations to come.

At the same time, we never lose sight of the people we serve. Whether expanding youth employment programs, supporting seniors, investing in affordable housing, or strengthening services for families in need, our work is grounded in improving quality of life across Charles County.

None of this progress happens without our employees.

Our team members are the backbone of this organization. Their professionalism, expertise, and dedication turn strategic plans into real-world results. In 2025, we continued investing in our workforce through recruitment initiatives, leadership development, professional training, and a renewed focus on equity and engagement. I take great pride in the work our employees accomplish each day — and in the culture of accountability and service they uphold.

As you review this Annual Report, I hope you see more than projects and statistics. I hope you see momentum. I hope you see a county government that follows through. And I am confident you see a team that takes pride in delivering results that matter most to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah E. Hall". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

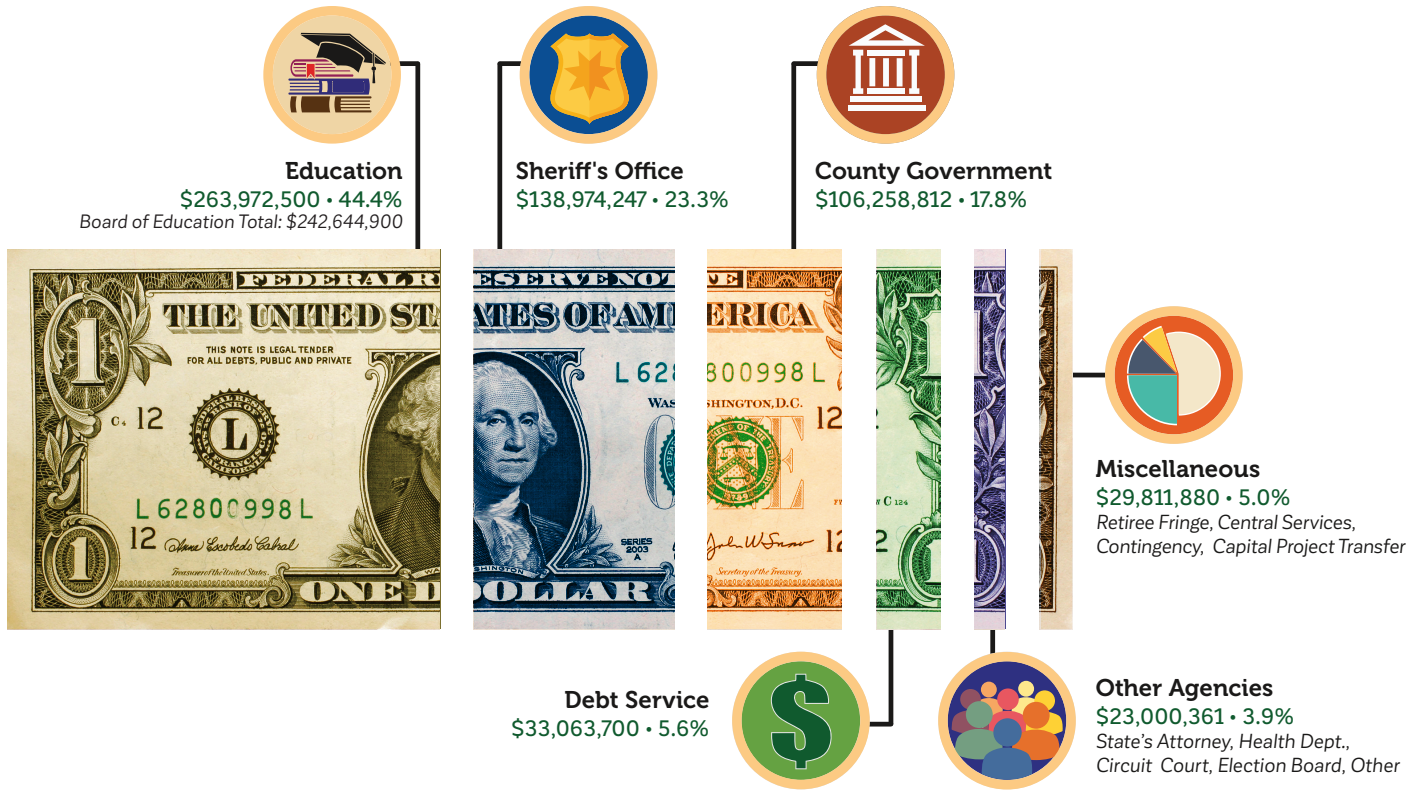
**Deborah E. Hall, CPA**  
Acting County Administrator

# FISCAL SUMMARY

Fiscal 2026 Approved Budget

## \$595,081,500

July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026



## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Charles County's education system received a total of \$263,972,500, accounting for 44.4% of the General Fund budget. The Board of Education accounted for \$242,644,900, supporting K-12 public schools. The College of Southern Maryland received \$12,170,300 to enhance higher education opportunities locally. Library services were allocated \$6,040,800, while State pension cost shifts and other education expenses added \$2,786,500 and \$330,000, respectively, ensuring a broad support system for learning and educational infrastructure.

## SHERIFF'S OFFICE

The Sheriff's Office was allocated \$138,974,247, or 23.3% of the General Fund budget, for funding law enforcement operations, public safety programs, and personnel. This investment reflects the County's commitment to maintaining safety, crime prevention, and emergency response capabilities for its residents.

## GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

County government departments and agencies received a combined total of \$106,258,812, or 17.8% of the General Fund budget. Key allocations included Emergency Services at \$32,216,474, Public Works – Facilities at \$19,191,140, and Recreation, Parks, and Tourism at \$14,976,862. Other major departments funded included Fiscal and Administrative Services, Planning and Growth Management, Community Services, Economic Development, and Administrative Services, supporting essential county operations, planning, and public amenities.

## DEBT SERVICES

Debt service obligations were funded at \$33,063,700, or 5.6% of the General Fund budget, covering principal and interest payments on existing county debt. This ensures the County maintains financial stability and meets long-term obligations without compromising public services.

## OTHER GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS

Other essential county functions, including the State's Attorney, Health Department, Circuit Court, Election Board, and miscellaneous/other government agencies, received \$23,000,361, or 3.9% of the General Fund budget.

# AAA BOND RATING REAFFIRMED

## RECORD-LOW INTEREST RATE ON BOND SALE

Charles County once again earned an AAA bond rating from Fitch Ratings, SandP Global Ratings, and Moody's Investors Service, reaffirming the county's **strong fiscal stewardship and long-term financial stability**. After reviewing the county's financial health, budget management practices, audits, and economic development efforts, the agencies confirmed the highest possible rating for the **ninth consecutive year**. Maintaining this triple-A status allows Charles County to borrow at the lowest possible interest rates, saving taxpayers millions over time while demonstrating a continued commitment to responsible financial management.

Building on this strong financial standing, the county successfully completed a competitive bond sale on November 18, issuing approximately \$69.2 million in Consolidated Public Improvement Bonds at a low interest rate. The bonds provide long-term funding for priority infrastructure projects, including school construction and renovations, government facilities, parks and recreation improvements, and water system upgrades.

The rating agencies cited Charles County's diverse and stable economy, growing population, low

unemployment, modest long-term liabilities, and proactive climate resilience initiatives as key strengths supporting the Triple-A designation. Together, the reaffirmed rating and successful bond sale signal to residents, businesses, and investors that Charles County remains financially strong, well-managed, and committed to sustainable, long-term growth.

Learn more at: [CharlesCountyMD.gov/government/departments/fiscal-and-administrative-services/budget-division](https://CharlesCountyMD.gov/government/departments/fiscal-and-administrative-services/budget-division)



Charles County's continued Triple-A bond rating reflects our community's strength, and our government's commitment to sound financial management. For nine years in a row, we've earned the highest possible rating because we plan responsibly, invest wisely, and work together to build a strong future for our residents. This achievement belongs to everyone who calls Charles County home.

— Reuben B. Collins II, Esq.  
Commissioner President

# INTERNAL AUDIT EARNS TOP RATING

The Charles County Internal Audit Office completed its first external peer review and **received the highest rating possible**. This independent assessment confirmed that the Office's quality control system is well-designed, effectively implemented, and provides reasonable assurance of conformance with professional auditing standards, underscoring the County's commitment to transparency, integrity, and high-quality audit services.

Following this achievement, the County updated its Internal Audit Charter to further strengthen oversight, independence, and accountability. The revisions clarified the roles and responsibilities of the Internal Audit Office and the Internal Audit Oversight Committee, expanded audit authority

across all County operations, and formalized internal and external quality assessments, reporting procedures, and follow-up processes. These updates ensure continuous improvement and alignment with the Institute of Internal Auditors' Global Standards, **protecting public resources and serving the community effectively**.

The Charles County Internal Audit Office demonstrates its ongoing commitment to maintaining rigorous audit standards, supporting the County's mission to ensure fiscal responsibility and public trust.

Learn more at: [CharlesCountyMD.gov/government/internal-audit/peer-review](https://CharlesCountyMD.gov/government/internal-audit/peer-review)





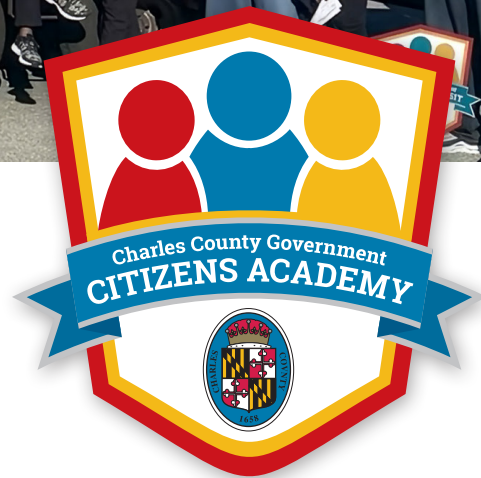
## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

Charles County Government continued its **commitment to community engagement** by expanding opportunities for residents of all ages to learn, participate, and help shape the County's future.

**Citizens Academy**, the County's flagship engagement program, continued to connect residents with local government operations through its spring and fall cohorts.

A total of 50 residents graduated in 2025, with 21 participants in the spring and 29 in the fall. Building on this success, the County launched the **inaugural Student Citizens Academy**, a new summer program designed to engage youth age 13-17. Offered in partnership with the Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism, the program welcomed 15 student participants and introduced the next generation to public service and civic leadership.

The Charles County Citizens Academy is the community's opportunity to meet county leaders, explore government operations, and discover ways to get more engaged in the community.



Learn more about community engagement and Citizens Academy at: [CharlesCountyMD.gov/services/media-services/community-engagement](https://CharlesCountyMD.gov/services/media-services/community-engagement)



Hear from participants about how the program opened their eyes to new opportunities, built connections with neighbors, and inspired them to make a difference: [Youtu.be/8u8wt1J2qSw](https://youtu.be/8u8wt1J2qSw)

# CITIZENS ACADEMY



**50** Total Graduates **21** spring **29** fall

## STUDENT CITIZENS ACADEMY

**NEW!** Summer pilot program for teens age 13-17. Offered in partnership with Recreation, Parks and Tourism

**15** teens were introduced to the program as the next generation to public service and civic leadership.

# Stay Engaged, Charles County

Your engagement makes a better Charles County.



## Community Engagement

Charles County conducts community engagement and outreach activities on important policy issues, programs, and initiatives that affect the public to keep them informed and solicit input.



## Housing

Charles County is home to a diverse and growing community. Housing involves related services, resources and information for tenants and homeowners.



## Planning and Development

Planning and Development projects cover tremendous scope and provides immense value to the Charles County community.

The County's online engagement platform, "Stay Engaged, Charles County," remained a key tool for gathering public input. In 2025, 12 active projects invited residents to share feedback on topics ranging from the fiscal year budget to planning initiatives and capital improvement projects. Two initiatives drew especially strong participation. The "Share Your Thoughts: What Do You Envision for the New Sports and Wellness Complex?" survey generated 2,114 responses, while "Dollars and Sense: How Should Charles County Budget for Fiscal Year 2026?" received 1,347 responses, underscoring residents' interest in shaping major investments and financial priorities.



Visit the Stay Engaged website at:  
[Charles-County-MD.civilspace.io/en](https://Charles-County-MD.civilspace.io/en)

**Social media** continued to play a vital role in keeping the community informed and connected. Across platforms, the County shared more than 1,000 posts in 2025, including 154 videos that generated over 80,000 views. The County's digital presence also grew by more than 1,000 new followers, reflecting increased public engagement online.

Staff facilitated and attended a variety of **community meetings and outreach events**. More than 300 residents attended an informational meeting at the new Sports and Wellness Complex, making it the highest attended County public meeting of the year. The County also hosted a "Stay Connected with Charles County Government Night" at a Southern Maryland Blue Crabs game at Regency Furniture Stadium and maintained a strong presence at the annual Charles County Fair, ensuring residents could access information and resources in familiar community settings.

Together, these efforts demonstrate Charles County Government's ongoing commitment to transparency, accessibility, and meaningful public participation.



## STAY ENGAGED, CHARLES COUNTY

Active engagement projects **12**

Sports and Wellness Complex survey responses **2,114**

Fiscal 2026 Budget "Dollars and Sense" survey responses **1,347**

## DIGITAL OUTREACH

**1,000+** social media posts

**154** videos shared

**80,000+** video views

**1,000+** new followers gained



## MEETINGS AND EVENTS

300+ attendees at the Sports and Wellness Complex public meeting

Outreach Night with the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs at Regency Furniture Stadium

County presence at the annual Charles County Fair

# ADVANCING EQUITY AND ACCESS THROUGH ACTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

## Office of Equity & Access



Charles County Government advanced its commitment to a welcoming, inclusive workplace through the leadership of the Office of Equity and Access (OEA). A key milestone was the completion of a comprehensive Employee Equity Assessment and the adoption of an updated Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Strategic Plan to guide long-term organizational growth.

The assessment, conducted by an external vendor, drew participation from 364 employees and a 45-member cross-department workgroup. Findings highlighted strong supervisor support, access to resources, and employee comfort in raising concerns while identifying four priority areas for improvement: Leadership Readiness, Equity and Access, Professional Development, and Conflict Resolution.

Adopted in July 2025, the updated DEI Strategic Plan establishes clear goals, accountability measures, and timelines to strengthen leadership development, improve transparency in advancement, expand equitable access to training, and build a more proactive conflict resolution culture. Implementation is supported by the expanded Equity Community of Practice (ECOP), now representing departments across the organization and serving as a bridge between staff and leadership.

**Together**, these efforts from the Office of Equity and Access move Charles County beyond compliance and toward a fully integrated culture of equity, where employees feel valued, supported, and empowered to succeed.

### CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## 2025 DEI AT-A-GLANCE

### EMPLOYEE EQUITY ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION

**364** Employees Responded Exceeded **95%** confidence target

**45** Employees participated in cross-department focus workgroup

### WORKPLACE STRENGTH SNAPSHOT

**82%** Have the resources needed to do their jobs

**82%** Feel comfortable raising concerns to supervisors

**80%** Feel supported during difficult public interactions

**74%** Report accessible workplace supports

**72%** Say employees respect differences in identity

### The **EQUITY COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (ECOP)**

Expanded from **7** to **25** members in 2025 representing departments across County government.

### 2025 STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

- Leadership Readiness
- Equity and Access
- Professional Development
- Conflict Resolution



## WORKFORCE TRAINING AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Charles County Government continues to invest in its most valuable asset — its people. In fiscal 2025 and calendar year 2025, the County strengthened leadership development, expanded equity-focused training, and increased participation in professional development programs to ensure a skilled, innovative, and future-ready workforce.

### LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT ON THE RISE

The County’s Leadership Academy and instructor-led professional development courses saw a **19% participation increase in fiscal 2025**, reflecting growing engagement across departments. The Leadership Academy equips emerging and mid-level leaders with tools in strategic thinking, collaboration, communication, and organizational effectiveness — strengthening succession planning and long-term institutional resilience.

### ADVANCING EQUITY IN LEADERSHIP

The Office of Equity and Access expanded its training portfolio in 2025 by launching **three new equity-focused leadership trainings**, building upon the five-course Equity-Focused Leadership and Management Series introduced in 2024. Additional courses were developed specifically for the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and Senior Leadership Team (SLT), reinforcing inclusive leadership practices and equity-informed decision-making at every level of government.

### SYSTEMWIDE LEADERSHIP SPONSORSHIPS

Through the County’s Systemwide Training Program, **18 employees participated** in high-level external leadership programs in 2025, including:

- National Association of Counties (NACo)  
High-Performance Leadership Academy**
- Leadership Southern Maryland –  
Emerging Leaders and Executive Programs**
- Leadership Maryland Emerging Leaders**

These competitive programs strengthen internal leadership capacity while enhancing regional and statewide collaboration.

### OPERATIONAL TRAINING AND WORKFORCE CREDENTIALS

The Department of Emergency Services continues to deliver **nationally certified CPR, Defensive Driving, and EMS-specific training** to County personnel and volunteers, ensuring readiness and compliance with national standards.

In addition, the Department of Public Works, in partnership with Recreation, Parks, and Tourism, launched a County-funded **Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) Training Program** to expand internal workforce credentials and create career advancement opportunities. Participants commit to a 24-month continued service agreement, ensuring long-term organizational benefit.

# RECRUITMENT 2025 • PROGRESS AND IMPACT

The **CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT RECRUITMENT TEAM** achieved significant progress in hiring efficiency, reducing the average Time to Hire to 97 days — a substantial improvement from 183 days in 2024 and moving steadily toward the County’s 90-day target. This 86-day reduction reflects intentional workflow enhancements, streamlined processes, and focused efforts to eliminate recruitment bottlenecks. These improvements strengthen the County’s ability to attract and onboard qualified talent more quickly while maintaining high standards in candidate evaluation.

The County remains committed to inclusive, transparent, and competency-based recruitment practices. Hiring decisions continue to prioritize qualifications, alignment with organizational values, and equitable access to opportunity. Voluntary applicant self-identification data provides valuable insight into who is applying and advancing through each stage of the hiring process, allowing Human Resources to assess trends, refine outreach strategies, and ensure recruitment efforts reflect the diversity of the Charles County community.

In 2025, approximately 61% of applicants self-identified as Black and 26% as White. Among candidates interviewed, 52% identified as Black and 36% as White, while 54% of those extended offers identified as Black and 35% as White. These data points demonstrate continued alignment between applicant representation and hiring outcomes, reinforcing the effectiveness of Charles County’s inclusive recruitment strategies and its commitment to building a workforce that reflects the community it serves.

## TRACKING THE TIME TO HIRE

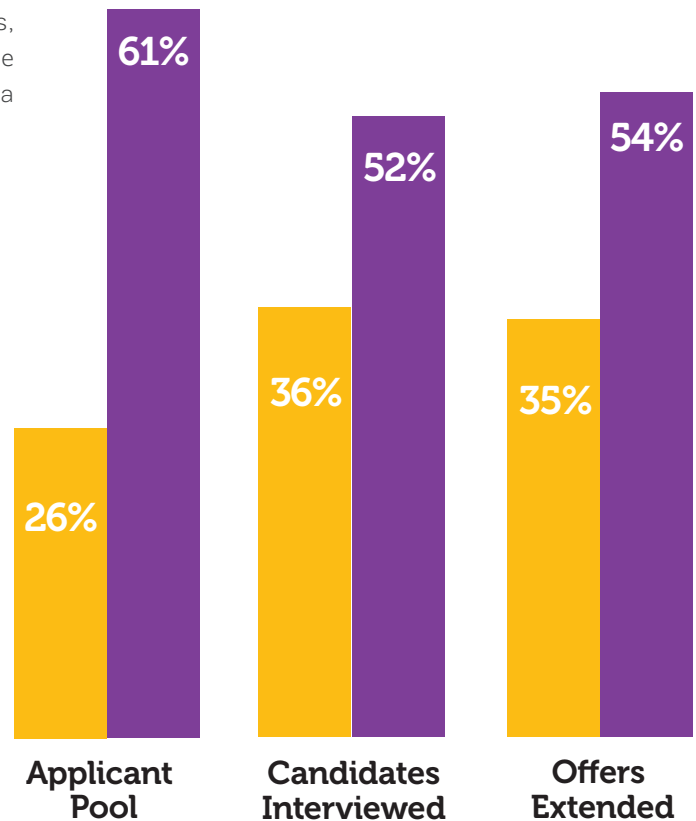
### 47% improvement in 2025 since 2024



## 2025 RECRUITMENT DEMOGRAPHICS (APPROXIMATE)

The data reflects continued alignment between applicant demographics and hiring outcomes, demonstrating the effectiveness of the County’s inclusive recruitment strategies.

Black ■ • White ■



# HUMAN RESOURCES, RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND WELLNESS

**A career is more than a job** — it's a defining choice. When you choose a path with Charles County Government, you're stepping into a dynamic, high-performance organization powered by more than 700 talented professionals who are passionate about making a difference. Together, they serve residents and strengthen the community.

As one of the largest employers in Charles County, the County offers more than just stability. Employees enjoy competitive benefits, meaningful opportunities for professional growth, and award-winning wellness programs designed to support both personal and professional well-being.

## EXPANDING RECRUITMENT OUTREACH

Participated in nine career fairs and hiring events in 2025, including the Department of Public Works Truck Rodeo, Tri-County Council Job Fair, five college and high school career fairs, the Charles County Construction Job Fair, and the Calvary Gospel Church Career Fair.



## ENHANCING RECRUITMENT MARKETING

Leveraged promotional videos, social media campaigns, e-newsletters, and the continued "Glad You Asked | We're Hiring" initiative to broaden candidate outreach and increase visibility of County career opportunities.



## HOLISTIC EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Offered year-round programming supporting physical, mental, social, and life-skills development, including walking clubs, step challenges, financial education seminars, caregiving workshops, team-building activities, and interactive wellness initiatives.



## RECOGNITION FOR WORKPLACE WELLNESS

Earned recognition from the Maryland Healthiest Business Initiative for the ninth consecutive year, maintaining Exemplar Level status since 2023 — the program's highest distinction.



WE ARE  
**HIRING**  
▶ JOIN CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Don't forget to watch our feature videos all about working for Charles County Government! Use the links below to access the playlists.

### FACES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

[Youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYKfJ608FjL\\_a2e6N6r-cOEUaxN0cQDa2Vandsi=UNSCBkDGHZA-yTTz](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYKfJ608FjL_a2e6N6r-cOEUaxN0cQDa2Vandsi=UNSCBkDGHZA-yTTz)

### THIS IS WHAT WE DO

[Youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYKfJ608FjL-QZ8okpqe2Bt-5vxNWuVVnyandsi=JwNtMs-bGXwhqzx1](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYKfJ608FjL-QZ8okpqe2Bt-5vxNWuVVnyandsi=JwNtMs-bGXwhqzx1)

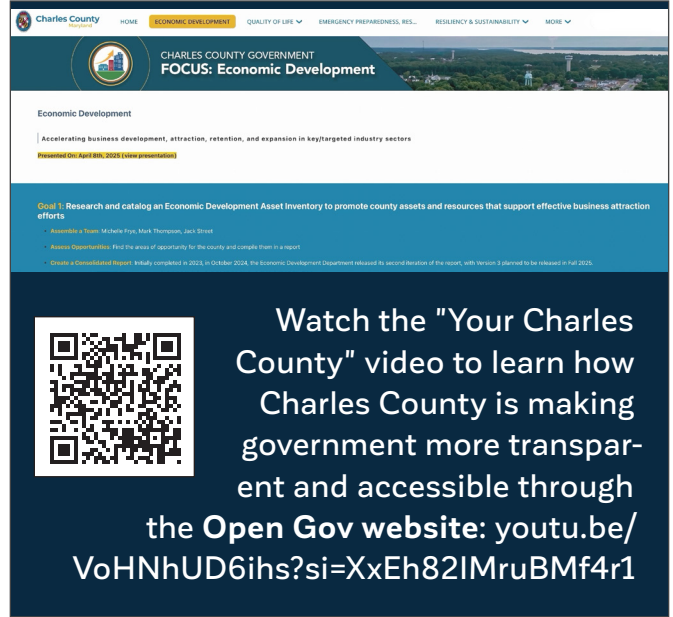
# TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

## INTERACTIVE PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD ENHANCES TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Charles County Government launched a new interactive Goals and Objectives dashboard to provide residents with clear, transparent access to the Board of County Commissioners' strategic priorities and progress. Hosted on the OpenGov platform, the online tool offers a user-friendly view of the five focus areas established at the beginning of the Commissioners' term (*listed to the right*). Each focus area includes detailed goals and objectives supported by data, charts, graphs, and narrative explanations that illustrate measurable outcomes.

Developed by the County's Information Technology Division, the dashboard was designed to serve as a strategic roadmap for the Commissioners' four-year term while strengthening public engagement. The platform highlights both successes and areas for improvement, reinforcing the County's commitment to accountability and continuous improvement.

By presenting performance information in an accessible, visual format, the dashboard **empowers residents** to better understand how local government initiatives positively impact the community and **encourages ongoing participation** in county affairs.



**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
Boosting business attraction, retention, and growth



**QUALITY OF LIFE**  
Creating spaces for community, leisure, and wellness.



**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND SAFETY**  
Connecting our community to critical life-impacting services.



**RESILIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY**  
Safeguarding our infrastructure and natural resources.



**INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE**  
Collaborating to enhance operational effectiveness and efficiency.

Visit the online dashboard at:  
[CharlesCountyMD.info/OpenGov](https://CharlesCountyMD.info/OpenGov)



# WESTERN *Charles* COUNTY TECHNOLOGY CORRIDOR



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### WESTERN CHARLES COUNTY TECHNOLOGY CORRIDOR

The Charles County Board of Commissioners established the Western Charles County Technology Corridor, a designated area aimed at fostering the growth of technology-related businesses. This designation will enhance the area's marketing, branding, and business attraction efforts.

**More than 138 businesses** are currently situated within the Corridor, which stretches from the Town of Indian Head to Bryans Road. The Corridor, still under development, will provide targeted incentives and support services to attract new technology enterprises to Charles County.

The Western Charles County Technology Corridor is conveniently located within a 40-minute drive of major federal laboratories and military bases in Baltimore, Richmond, and Washington, D.C. The Corridor boasts a skilled workforce, lower business costs, and a strategic location for engaging with major nearby commercial centers.

A key advantage of the region is its projected growth over the next five years. By 2027, both population and household numbers are expected to increase by approximately 0.3% and 0.5%, respectively. Median household income is also anticipated to surpass \$100,000 by 2027, reflecting a growth of over 15%.

Businesses within the Western Charles County Technology Corridor can take advantage of several **STRATEGIC INCENTIVES** to foster growth and innovation. These include federal Opportunity Zones and the HUBZone program, alongside the locally designated Priority Funding Area (PFA), aimed at driving investment.

Charles County offers tailored incentives such as the Commercial Real Property Improvement and Rehabilitation Tax Credit and the Recordation Tax Credit. Combined with Maryland State-level incentives, these initiatives are designed to enhance the economic landscape and support local businesses in this key technology hub.

Learn more:  
[MeetCharlescounty.com/  
western-charles-technology-corridor](https://MeetCharlescounty.com/western-charles-technology-corridor)



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## CHARLES COUNTY WELCOMED MARYLAND DEPT OF COMMERCE SECRETARY HARRY COKER, JR.

On September 11, 2025, Secretary Coker enjoyed a full day of tours showcasing innovation, entrepreneurship, history, and community across Charles County. Highlights of the day included visits to Mallows Bay (pictured), Maryland Technology Center (USBTA) in Indian Head, part of the Western Charles County Technology Corridor, a walking tour of downtown La Plata's Charles Street. The group also made a stop at CHUTES International in Waldorf, and spent an evening networking at Copper Compass, bringing together local businesses, community leaders, and government partners.

From innovation and technology to culture and community, Charles County has so much to showcase, and we take great pride in sharing our story with our state partners.

## OASIS FRESH FOODS MARKET

Oasis Fresh Foods Market is the first dedicated grocery store in the Town of Indian Head in more than two decades. It offers fresh, affordable produce, meats, fish, and other staples as well as locally sourced prepared foods.

Parcels surrounding the market provide parking and a community garden.

In addition to its grocery offerings, Oasis has seven market rate apartments for lease on the second floor of the space, which are fully occupied.

Oasis also shares a space with an adjacent ice cream parlor, Papaleo's Ice Cream, which features premium small-batch ice creams from Baltimore's Taharka Brothers.

Charles County provided a rehabilitation property tax credit to support the project.

The success of the project was recognized by the Maryland Economic Development Association with a "Project of the Year" award in 2025.

The market's proprietors, Bolans-Darby Partners, the owners of Clarity Coffee House and Pentagon Suites, continue to support the town's renaissance in a practical way.



Oasis Fresh Foods Market is the recipient of the 2025 Maryland Economic Development Association (MEDA) **Small Community Economic Development Project Award**. The project was honored for eliminating a long-standing food desert, revitalizing a vacant property near the Naval Support Facility, and fostering local economic growth through community collaboration.



## WALDORF STATION

Waldorf Station is a **145-acre mixed-use project** in Waldorf, MD at the intersection of U.S. Route 301 and Maryland Route 5. It is being developed by Greenberg Gibbons Commercial and serves as the **“Gateway” to Charles County** from southern Prince George’s County, and construction is already underway.

There are two sections of the project. **Phase 1** of the project is off of Route 5, which consists primarily of residential development (*pictured above*). A ribbon cutting was held during the fall of 2025.

On the western side of Route 301 is a retail shopping center anchored project with future townhomes, which represent **Phase 2** of the project (*pictured at right*). Phase 2 is under construction and tenants include Starbucks, Pollo Campero, and Honeygrow. Occupancy is expected in 2026.

Concurrent with the construction of Waldorf Station will be the **completion of the Western Parkway**, which will link the St. Charles Towne Center in south Waldorf to U.S. 301 at Waldorf Station. The first two phases of construction are complete, and the final phase of the Western Parkway is underway.

To further support this development, a number of road projects including improvements along Route 5 at the intersection with Mattawoman Beantown Road, the intersection at Pinefield Road, and the intersection at Substation Road, are also planned.



# RESILIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

## RESIDENTIAL STORMWATER DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Residential Stormwater Drainage Improvement Program (RDIP) was created to enhance climate resilience and address growing drainage-related concerns. Charles County Government has received hundreds of complaints in recent years, largely due to the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. In July 2019, the County received 3 to 4 inches of rain in a few hours causing major flooding. In 2018, we saw the wettest year on record with over 60 inches of rain — 20 inches above average. Climate change is expected to worsen extreme weather and related flooding.

The RDIP is a long-term solution for the County’s aging and often unmaintained stormwater systems. Ongoing support is reliant on future funding through County budgets and grants via the Resilience Authority. Continued, phased implementation will reduce the backlog of drainage concerns, enhance public safety, protect property, and build long-term community resilience.

### CAUSES OF DRAINAGE ISSUES

Common issues stem from aging or inadequate infrastructure, and older developments built before current stormwater regulations may lack drainage systems. Existing infrastructure may be deteriorated, failing, or undersized for today’s precipitation volumes.

### PROGRAM GOALS

The goal is to address flooding and drainage issues on private residential properties. This involves taking responsibility for privately owned drainage systems that:

- Are in existing subdivisions.
- Are not located within a County easement.
- Drain public property or rights-of-way.
- Have no existing maintenance agreement.
- Pre-date the County’s current Storm Drainage Ordinance.

To assume responsibility, the County requires an easement from property owners or HOAs, ensuring access for long-term maintenance. Unique or high-risk properties may be handled on a case-by-case basis.



Learn more: [www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/DrainageImprovementProgram](http://www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/DrainageImprovementProgram)



## 109 IDENTIFIED PROJECTS

**44**

Managed by Planning and Growth Management

**2**

Managed by Public Works

**22**

Under County review

**9**

Fully permitted

## FUNDING AND COSTS

**~\$16.2M**

Allocated from the County’s ARPA funds (51% of the total ARPA allocation).

**\$5.3M**

Spent on design; average design cost: **~\$118K** per project.

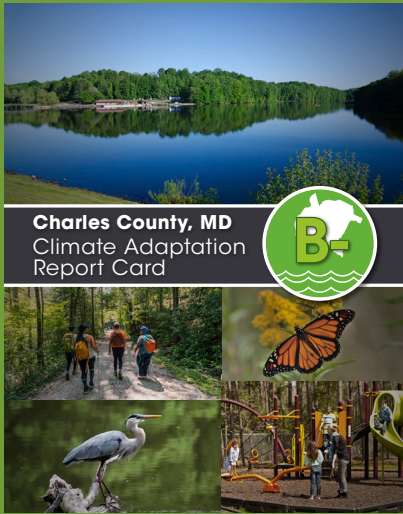
## PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

- Using existing engineering and construction services contracts.
- Established contracting thresholds and expedited internal review.
- Streamlined permitting with the Soil Conservation District.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Property owners are engaged throughout the process.
- Residents are informed about temporary and permanent easement requirements, and the roles and responsibilities for drainage system upkeep.

# RESILIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY



Charles County, MD  
Climate Adaptation  
Report Card

## FIRST-EVER CHARLES COUNTY CLIMATE ADAPTATION REPORT CARD

Charles County, in partnership with the Resilience Authority and the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, released the **first county-level Climate Adaptation Report Card in Maryland.**

- Provides a **comprehensive snapshot** of resilience to threats such as flooding and extreme heat.
- **Quantifies both progress and vulnerabilities** to guide future action.
- **Overall grade: B minus** across three resilience categories:
  - » Environment
  - » Human Well-being
  - » Flooding
- **Offers recommendations to prioritize adaptation and build resilience over time.**
- Marks the first time resilience and vulnerability indicators have been assessed together at the county level.

This groundbreaking tool **positions Charles County as a statewide leader** in climate preparedness and sets a model for other local governments.

The **Resilience Authority of Charles County** (“Resilience Authority”) is a nonprofit organization that, as a government instrumentality, responds to the impacts of climate change in communities across Charles County, Maryland. The Resilience Authority’s vision is to set a national example of climate resilience grounded in environmental justice by accelerating the pace and scale of climate resilience projects. Through government, education, nonprofit, and private partnerships, the Resilience Authority turns climate change challenges into opportunities to create resilient communities for everyone in Charles County.



### RESILIENCE AUTHORITY ACHIEVED CUMULATIVE MILESTONES

1. Securing a total of \$5.7 million for equitable, nature-based climate resilience projects across Charles County, and
2. Employing and providing climate resilience career development for local high school students and young adults for three years as part of the Charles County Resilience Authority Youth Corps.

Grant Name	Amount
Chesapeake Bay Trust – New Hope Urban Food Forest	\$1,242
CBT Charles County Forestry Grant	\$14,839
Maryland Dept of Transportation Urban Tree Program	\$27,000
Chesapeake Bay Trust Urban Trees Program	\$79,822
CBT Watershed Assistance Program (WAG-P)	\$83,801
CBT Watershed Assistance Program (WAG-P)	\$85,099
Maryland Community Forest Catalyst Fund	\$100,000
NOAA Coastal Zone Management Habitat Restoration	\$120,865
Chesapeake Bay Trust (WAG-P)	\$121,400
Maryland Community Forest Catalyst Fund (CF2)	\$175,322
Mid-Atlantic Environmental Justice Fund	\$226,609
Maryland DNR Chesapeake and Coastal Bays Trust Fund	\$410,830
Maryland Clean Water Commerce Act	\$3,685,000
Sustainability in Practice: Nat'l Recreation and Parks Assoc.	\$10,000
CBT Outreach and Restoration	\$108,582
MD Dept of Natural Resources - Greenspace Equity	\$395,623
CBT Adaptive Capacity Building	\$31,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,677,634</b>



Watch the "Charles County Now" for a closer look at the **CLIMATE REPORT CARD** — a snapshot of how we're doing. [Youtu.be/9oe2QxsPetU?si=-6HU6pnOIPFOiKR\\_](https://youtu.be/9oe2QxsPetU?si=-6HU6pnOIPFOiKR_)



## RESILIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

### EXPANDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE THROUGH STORMWATER POCKET PARKS

The **Charles County Resilience Authority**, in partnership with the Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism and the Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management, continued advancing nature-based solutions to address stormwater challenges and strengthen community resilience. Supported by **more than \$500,000 in grants** from the Chesapeake Bay Trust’s Watershed Assistance Grant Program and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources’ Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund, the **Waldorf Elite Gymnastics Stormwater Pocket Park** (pictured above) was selected as part of a \$29 million statewide ecological restoration investment recognizing its benefits to water quality, climate resilience, habitat enhancement, and environmental justice.

Stormwater pocket parks transform over-paved, flood-prone areas into functional green spaces with underground drainage, native plantings, pollinator habitat, and accessible pathways — reducing flooding and heat while creating shaded community gathering areas. This approach is demonstrated at the **Waldorf Senior and Recreation Center** (pictured, right) and will be expanded at the Waldorf Elite Gymnastics site, complementing the nearby Sunshine Art Park.

Supported by a Maryland DNR Greenspace Equity grant, a half-mile ADA-accessible “Nodes of Nature” Educational Nature Trail, featuring native trees and plants, a rain garden, soil restoration, a pollinator

meadow, and interactive outdoor elements, is being constructed at Bensville County Park. This project provides on-site restoration that also serves as a demonstration of how natural features can transform lawns into climate-resilient spaces. Together, these efforts reduce flooding, improve water quality, restore habitat, and lower temperatures in developed areas — creating cleaner, safer, and more resilient neighborhoods that enhance residents’ health and overall quality of life.

Watch the “Your Charles County” as the County begins turning small spaces into big environmental wins!  
[Youtu.be/YpdxmZzGuIA](https://youtu.be/YpdxmZzGuIA)



# ADDING SPACE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

## SPORTS AND WELLNESS COMPLEX

Throughout 2025, the Sports and Wellness Complex remained in a planning and engagement phase, with a focus on gathering community input, refining the project vision, and advancing preliminary feasibility considerations.

A community meeting was held January 29, 2025, at the former Sears building at St. Charles Towne Center in Waldorf, the proposed location of the Sports and Wellness Complex, as part of the County's official public engagement process. Residents had their first chance to directly influence the project's overall direction and desired amenities during this meeting. Concurrently, a public survey was introduced and remained open until mid-February. With over 2,100 survey responses and more than 300 residents attending the in-person meeting, participation surpassed expectations and demonstrated strong community interest.

In order to present survey results and gather more input, follow-up public meetings were conducted in March and May 2025, both in person and virtually. Staff members were able to validate and improve important themes that emerged from the community during these sessions. A competition-level swimming facility, fitness and wellness areas, indoor courts, walking and running facilities, and adaptable spaces for community use were all frequently mentioned in public feedback. The feedback also showed widespread support for a phased development strategy and the adaptive reuse of the former Sears building.

Based on community input and internal analysis, County staff refined the project into a multi-phased development concept and presented this framework to the County Commissioners during various 2025 updates. In order to support the development of a larger recreation, cultural, artistic, and entertainment district around the site, the phased approach identified an initial phase that would concentrate on the development of a natatorium within the existing structure, followed by subsequent phases that would expand the facility into a larger indoor sports and wellness complex. The goal of this strategy was to enable the County to respond to community priorities while coordinating scope, funding, and timing.

Staff gave the County Commissioners regular updates throughout the spring and summer of 2025 that summarized the results of the public engagement, the development of the initial concept, and the next steps.

The Commissioners were kept up to date on community input, planning developments, and new project opportunities and limitations through these briefings.

In December 2025, County staff presented the County Commissioners with an updated conceptual site plan illustrating potential indoor and outdoor amenities associated with the Sports and Wellness Complex. At that meeting, the Commissioners approved a budget transfer request to fund a market and financial feasibility study. This effort is intended to complement a separate study being conducted by the Maryland Stadium Authority relating to the project. Together, these actions represented a transition from conceptual planning and public engagement toward a more comprehensive evaluation of market demand, long-term operational considerations, and overall financial feasibility.

By the conclusion of 2025, the Sports and Wellness Complex project had established a strong foundation of public engagement, confirmed community demand and support, and defined a phased development framework to guide future planning. The project is positioned to proceed into feasibility analysis and further refinement in 2026, with continued coordination between staff and the County Commissioners to determine scope, funding strategies, and implementation pathways.



Charles County Government Model Report 2025



## ADDING SPACE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

### 2025 CAPITAL PROJECTS INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVITY

Charles County continued a robust capital improvement program in 2025, emphasizing transportation, safety, and community infrastructure.

#### ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

- Construction work is scheduled to commence on **Western Parkway Phases 3A-3** in January 2026 and for **Phase 3B** in January 2027, expanding this key corridor with multi-lane divided roadway and shared-use trails to improve mobility and safety.
- **Mill Hill Road Reconstruction** has started and will update a local collector road to current safety and design standards, including pedestrian infrastructure.

#### BRIDGES AND SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS

Through a combination of federal and local funding, the County completed several bridge maintenance projects and initiated design work for bridge repairs and replacements.

- **HANCOCK RUN ROAD BRIDGE** rehabilitation is complete (*pictured*)
- **Celestial Lane Bridge** rehabilitation is nearing completion
- Design work nearly complete for **Davis Road Bridge**
- **Poplar Hill Road Bridge** — nearly completed
- Approved for preliminary engineering: Trinity Church Road Bridge, Bryantown Road Bridge, and Liverpool Point Road Bridge



# ADDING SPACE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

## SIDEWALK NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

Pedestrian access is expanding with multiple sidewalk projects in key communities, including safe walkway construction on **Mill Hill Road** and design commencement on **Bryans Road** and **Hamilton Road**, along with neighborhood connections in **South Hampton** which was advertised for design.

## MAJOR FACILITY INVESTMENTS

Significant county facilities broke ground or progressed as part of long-term community infrastructure planning:

- **CHARLES COUNTY ANIMAL CARE CENTER** .....

Pictured to the right, the facility will be a modern 21,000-square-foot County animal care facility to support animal services and welfare. The project is currently under construction.

- **Pinefield EMS Station** — A new multipurpose Fire and EMS station in Waldorf is being constructed to enhance emergency response capacity.
- **La Plata Public Library** — A landmark 28,000-square-foot facility is being planned to serve the growing community.
- **Courthouse Cupola Restoration** — Preservation work is underway for an iconic architectural feature, reflecting investment in historic assets.

## WATER AND SEWER SYSTEM UPGRADES

Continuing investment in essential utilities ensures long-term system reliability and service quality:

- **Mattawoman Wastewater Treatment Plant (MWWTP) upgrades** — including a new flow equalization basin placed into service and ongoing electrical/automation improvements.
- **Rehabilitation of aging infrastructure** such as Clifton WWTP upgrades and replacement of sanitary sewer pump stations Countywide.
- **New capacity projects** — including Bryans Road Well #7 to enhance local water supply reliability and a new 2-million-gallon elevated water tower to improve system pressure and fire flow capacity.

## WATER QUALITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

The County made significant strides under the **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program**, enhancing stormwater management and environmental protection. Projects like **WHITE PLAINS GOLF COURSE POND IMPROVEMENTS**, White Oak Pond Retrofit, and Ruth B. Swann Stream Restoration will improve local waterway health and community drainage resilience. ....



# ADDING SPACE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

## INVESTING IN OUR WATER SUPPLY AND QUALITY

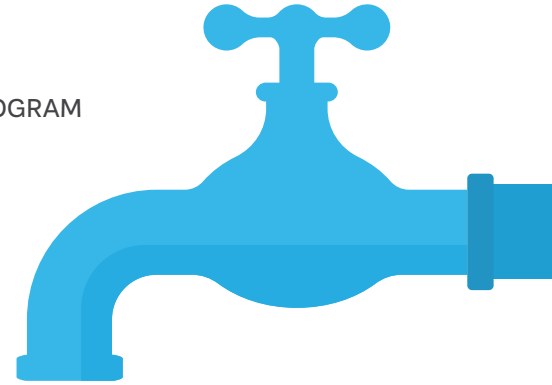
Charles County has proactively developed a long-term **PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY PROGRAM** to address projected water demands through 2045.

Building on prior water source feasibility studies, the program **identifies strategies to expand and diversify** the County’s water resources to meet residential, commercial, and economic growth needs.

Currently, the County’s public water system relies on groundwater sources from the Magothy, Patapsco, and Patuxent aquifers. While these sources continue to serve the community, diversification is necessary to ensure **long-term reliability**.



Explore the project in more detail at:  
[CharlesCountyMD.gov/government/planning-and-growth-management/public-water-supply-program](https://CharlesCountyMD.gov/government/planning-and-growth-management/public-water-supply-program)



### The Public Water Supply Program is designed to:

- Provide dependable and sustainable water supply through strategic infrastructure investments.
- Enhance water quality by blending treated surface water with existing groundwater sources.
- Support sustainable, long-term economic and community growth.
- Reduce reliance on groundwater aquifers to improve resiliency.

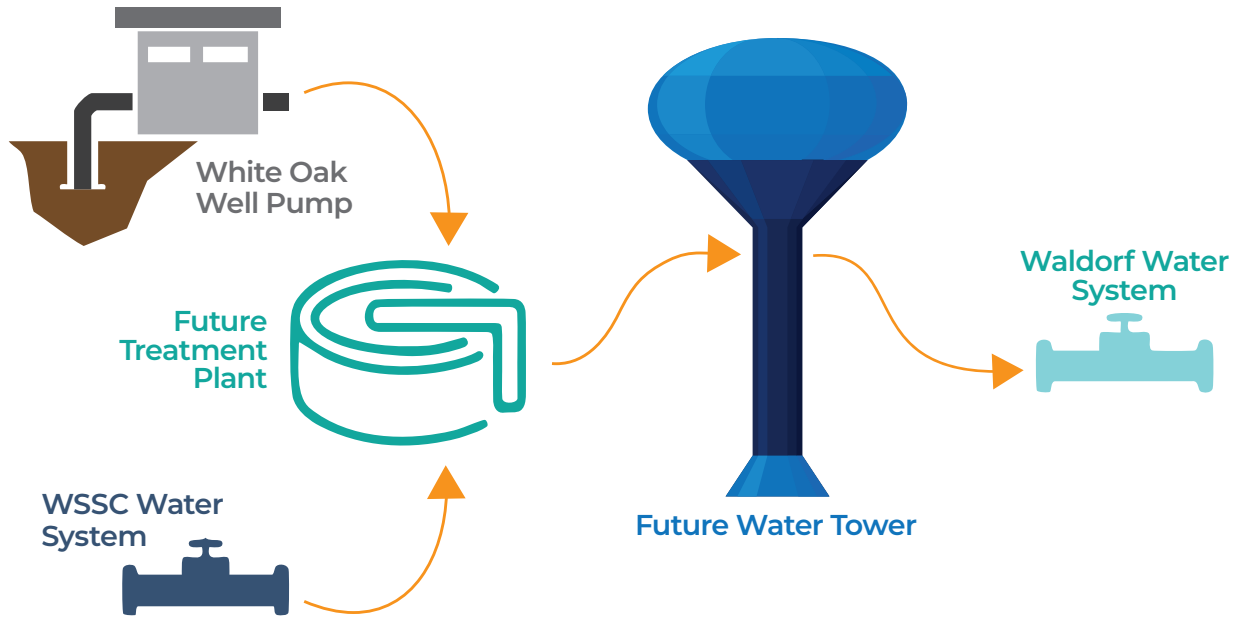
### A NEW POTOMAC RIVER WATER TREATMENT PLANT

To ensure long-term water resiliency, the County is planning for a new Potomac River Water Treatment Plant. The facility is expected to provide an initial capacity of 5 MGD, expandable to 10 MGD as future demand requires.

Implementation is projected for the mid- to late-2030s and will further diversify the County’s water supply portfolio by incorporating a sustainable surface water source.

Through continued planning, strategic investment, and regional coordination, the County remains committed to delivering safe, dependable water service to meet current and future community needs.

# ADDING SPACE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

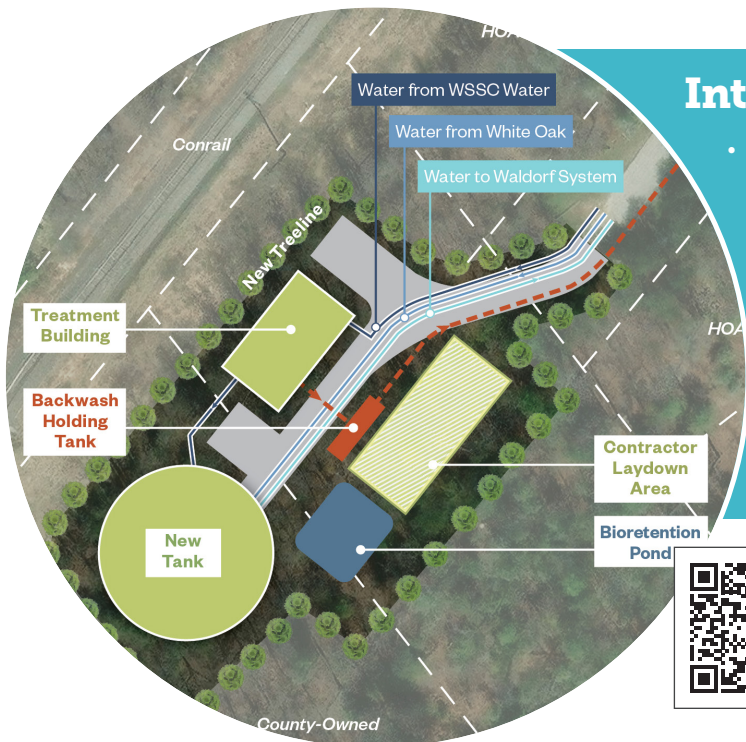


## WSSC WATER — WALDORF INTERCONNECTION PROJECT

The primary, near-term initiative is the WSSC Water-Waldorf Interconnection Project. This project will **deliver up to five million gallons per day (MGD)** of treated surface water from the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) system into the Charles County Waldorf Water System. The WSSC Water-Waldorf Interconnection Project will connect the Waldorf Water System in Charles County with the WSSC Water System in Prince George’s County.

This project will enhance the County’s public water supply, improve water quality, and support future community growth.

Construction is anticipated to start between 2027 and 2029, and the completion of the projected is slated to occur around 2030. Funding for the project is incorporated into the County’s Capital Improvement Program and supported through the Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund. The County has also secured a **\$250,000 EPA Community Grant** to assist with design services.



## Interconnection Key Components

- Construction of a new interconnection pipeline generally following the U.S. Route 301 corridor
- Development of a Water Blending and Treatment Facility to safely integrate surface water with existing groundwater supplies
- Infrastructure improvements to maintain regulatory compliance and water quality



Watch the "All About Water Supply Webinar" at:  
[Youtu.be/FmuHSFW9Vo0?si=I5kvZ\\_3OgmnnjCLE](https://youtu.be/FmuHSFW9Vo0?si=I5kvZ_3OgmnnjCLE)

# ADDING SPACE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

## SMRT — SOUTHERN MARYLAND RAPID TRANSIT

Funding in the amount of \$20 million has been secured for the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit (SMRT) Project, with another \$10 million via approval of a fiscal 2026 federal earmark and state match.



**ALLOCATED FUNDS TOTALING \$20 MILLION** — \$10 million from federal funding and \$10 million in State match.

Discussions in recent months with state leaders have **EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL FUNDING IN THE STATE'S BUDGET** through fiscal 2027 —and possibly seek the complete funding required for the project's final design.



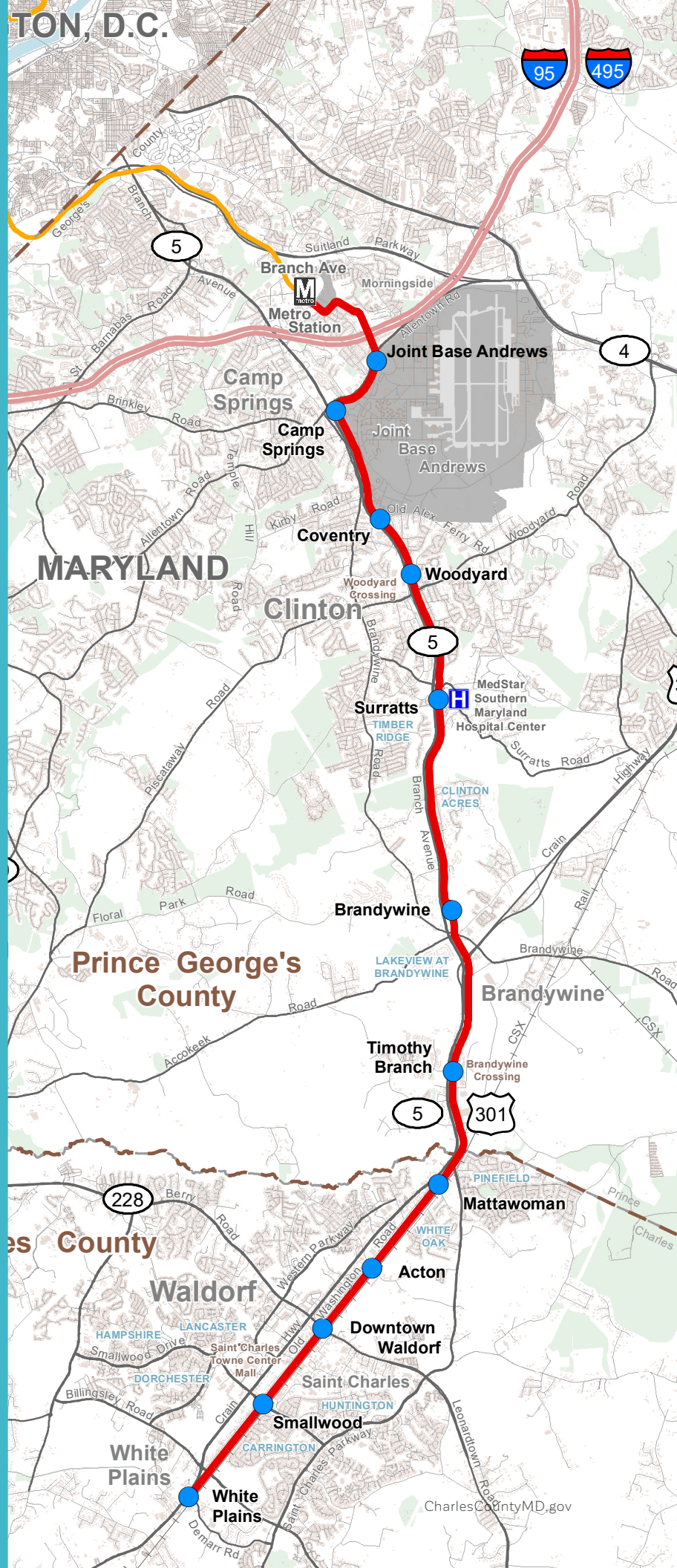
**NEW FUNDING REQUESTS** have been submitted to the Congressional Delegation in the amount of \$5 million for the next round of federal earmarks.

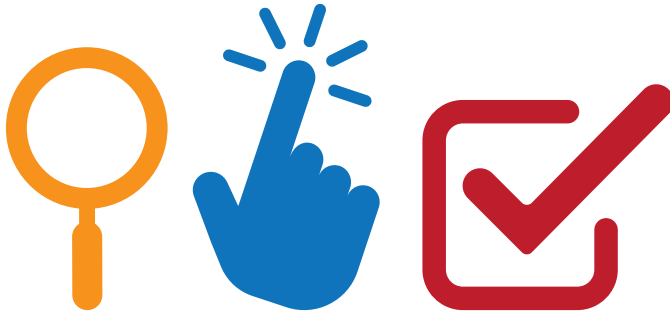


**DESIGNATED AS A TOP PRIORITY** for both Charles and Prince George's Counties.



The objective is to advocate for and support all efforts for the SMRT project.





## SEE CLICK REPORT CHARLES CO MD

### IMPROVING CUSTOMER SERVICE

Charles County launched **SEE CLICK REPORT**, a software application powered by Civic Plus and SeeClickFix 311. The program offers a centralized service request system that makes it easier for residents to report concerns and request County services.

The Civic Plus SeeClickFix 311 solution creates "collaborative experiences between governments and residents that co-create clean, safe, and happy communities."

Residents can submit requests by mobile device or desktop, track progress, and receive real-time updates from County departments. By routing all requests through one system, the County's **SEE CLICK REPORT** program improves coordination, reduces duplicate reports, and ensures issues are addressed efficiently and transparently.

As a result, most resident requests are acknowledged within one business day and resolved within five days — helping deliver **faster, more reliable service** across the community.

### FROM REQUEST TO RESOLUTION...

**1 Day** → **Acknowledged**  
**2p-5 Days** → **Resolved**  
**95%** ☆ **Closed**

Overall, SeeClickFix 311 has transformed how Charles County responds to resident needs by creating **A CLEAR, TRACKABLE PROCESS FOR SERVICE REQUESTS.**

The platform strengthens communication, improves accountability, and ensures residents have consistent and equitable access to County services.

### BOOSTING RECYCLING

Charles County strengthened its commitment to environmental sustainability by launching several initiatives designed to make recycling more convenient while reducing landfill waste.

The County transitioned to **weekly curbside recycling collection** for all eligible households — eliminating the need for residents to manage two weeks' worth of materials and making it easier than ever to recycle. The change supports cleaner neighborhoods, decreases landfill use, and advances the County's long-term environmental goals.

To further enhance waste diversion efforts, the Department of Public Works' Environmental Resources Division introduced a new **mattress recycling program** at the Charles County Landfill. By recycling mattress materials for reuse, the program conserves valuable landfill space and contributes to a more circular economy.

Together, these programs reflect Charles County's proactive approach to waste reduction and environmental stewardship — empowering residents to recycle more, waste less, and help build a cleaner, greener community for generations to come.



# 5,500

MATTRESS AND  
BOX SPRINGS  
WERE KEPT  
OUT OF THE  
LANDFILL!

## NEW PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

# CHARLES COUNTY Public Arts & Cultural Master Plan

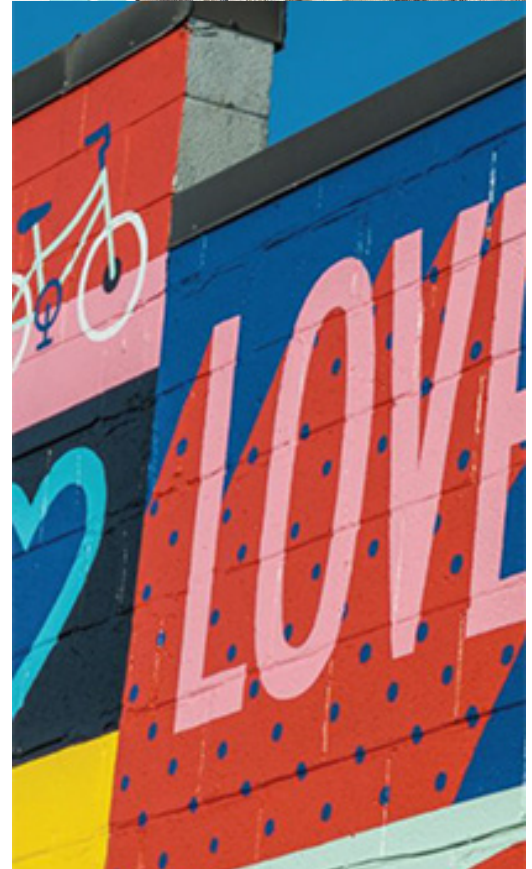
**CHARLES COUNTY COMPLETED ITS FIRST-EVER ARTS AND CULTURE MASTER PLAN**, establishing a comprehensive, community-driven framework to guide public investment in arts and culture. The Plan responds directly to resident input and aligns arts planning with **broader County goals for economic development, education, tourism, and quality of life.**

The Master Plan was **shaped through an inclusive engagement** process, including Countywide surveys, public meetings in La Plata, Waldorf, and Indian Head, sector conversations, interviews, site visits, and a comparative review of all Maryland county arts councils. Residents consistently identified a lack of arts spaces, limited walkable public places, and underinvestment in local arts as major challenges. Only 8% of survey respondents felt there are enough arts spaces in the County, resulting in many residents attending arts and cultural events outside the County.

The Plan recognizes that **arts and culture are proven drivers of economic vitality and community well-being.** Statewide, the arts sector supports tens of thousands of jobs and generates billions in economic activity, while research shows that arts-rich communities experience lower crime, better health outcomes, and stronger educational performance.

To address these needs, the Master Plan recommends action across four pillars: **Built Environment, Cultural Infrastructure, Community and Workforce, and Governance and Financing.** Key initiatives include expanding public art and micro-grants, studying a central arts venue, integrating arts into development and zoning, activating trails, waterfronts, and rural areas through arts and heritage projects, supporting creative workforce development and youth programs, and strengthening governance through sustainable funding.

Implementation is currently being evaluated, and discussions with various County departments are underway. While the plan outlines many strong and ambitious goals, we are committed to ensuring that funding is sustainable and realistic moving forward. Once these internal conversations are complete, updates will be shared with the public through briefings to the Commissioners and postings on the project's Engage page.



# NEW PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES



## INTRODUCTION AND DISCUSSION OF ZTA FOR DATA CENTERS

An initiation of the Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) process was started to **evaluate data centers as a permitted land use in Charles County**. Data centers are essential to the modern digital economy, supporting everything from online banking and streaming services to telemedicine and remote work. With demand growing — especially due to AI applications — the County is exploring how these facilities could fit into the community.

Data centers offer significant benefits, including commercial tax revenue, high-paying construction and operational jobs, and minimal demand on public services such as schools, roads, and parks.

They can also foster community partnerships that **enhance technology, education, and workforce development** programs.

At the same time, Charles County is mindful of potential impacts. Data centers require access to electricity, water for cooling, and fiber, and large facilities can create noise and visual impacts. To mitigate these concerns, **proposed locations will prioritize sustainability**, energy-efficient cooling systems, soundproofing, strategic site placement, and natural buffers.

The County is committed to keeping the community informed and engaged. Residents, businesses, and stakeholders are encouraged to review resources, ask questions, and share input as Charles County carefully considers the potential economic, technological, and community impacts of data center development.

Learn more: [Charles-County-MD.civilspace.io/en/projects/data-centers-overview](https://charles-county-md.civilspace.io/en/projects/data-centers-overview)



## Collaborative Community Improvement Project

In 2024, the Charles County **Board of Commissioners** selected Bryans Road and Indian Head as the pilot community for the **Collaborative Community Engagement Project** — a new initiative designed to strengthen relationships between county leadership, departments, and residents. This project recognizes that sustainable progress requires two-way communication, trust-building, and genuine collaboration with the people most directly impacted by County programs and policies.

Internal County staff and external community representatives came together for an inclusive and transparent process. Understanding the priority of community outreach, an in-person meeting was held in Bryans Road to gather initial perspectives, as well as a virtual meeting and online engagement surveys.

### PURPOSE AND DESIGN

Developed by the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the Media Services Division, the project aims to:

- **Educate** — Increase awareness of existing resources and programs available to residents in Bryans Road and Indian Head.
- **Engage** — Create accessible opportunities for dialogue between residents and County Government on needs, challenges, and opportunities.
- **Empower** — Ensure residents have an active role in shaping solutions.
- **Implement** — Deliver projects that directly support Commissioner’s Goals and Objectives and provide tangible community benefits.



Learn more: [Charles-County-MD.civilspace.io/en/projects/collaborative-community-improvement-project-bryans-road](https://charles-county-md.civilspace.io/en/projects/collaborative-community-improvement-project-bryans-road)

## NEW PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

### EXPLORE EXPERIENCES WITH TOURISM

The Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism expanded its seasonal offerings with new experiences alongside returning favorites — highlighting the County as a destination for music, family fun, and outdoor recreation.

Charles County **Restaurant Week** is a 10-day culinary celebration designed to showcase the diverse dining scene of the County. Typically held in mid-to-late January, the event serves as a community-driven initiative to support locally owned small businesses.

Tourism continued to strengthen its partnership with Charles County Public Schools in 2025 through the expansion of the **second-grade field trip program at Stagg Hall**. Tourism hosted student visitors for 44 group field trips, welcoming 923 second-grade students to experience hands-on, curriculum-aligned learning at the historic site. This marks a significant increase from 24 school trips in 2024 and just nine in 2023, reflecting the growing demand for local history and heritage programming. The program not only enriches classroom instruction but also fosters early connections to Charles County’s cultural assets, helping students develop a deeper appreciation for their community.



**Charles County**  
MARYLAND

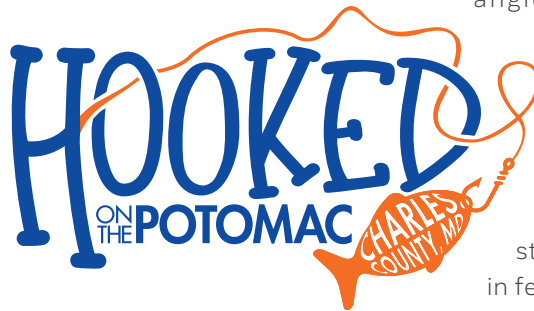
Legends, Lore and Room to Explore

A year-end tradition, the **Charles County Holiday Tour** is a collaborative open house event that allows visitors access to historic properties and cultural venues decorated in festive, period-appropriate decor. Taking place annually during the first weekend in December, the Holiday Tour showcases the County’s history and heritage through entertaining and experiential programming.

The Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism efforts reflect the County’s strategic commitment to tourism, economic growth, and community engagement. These events and programming elevate Charles County’s profile by attracting regional and national attention, supporting locally owned businesses, and creating meaningful experiences for residents and visitors alike.

**Hooked on the Potomac**, launched in partnership with Major League Fishing and quickly gained national attention. This two-day, family-friendly festival coincided with Major League Fishing’s prestigious Bass Pro Tour. The event welcomed approximately 70 of the nation’s top

anglers to compete on the Potomac River — one of the country’s premier bass fisheries — while attendees watched the action via live stream and participated in festival activities.



Through the **EXPLORE CHARLES COUNTY** series, Chief of Tourism Ashley Chenault highlights the county’s commitment to fostering community connections by promoting cultural and artistic experiences and elevating locally owned and operated businesses. From local distilleries, restaurants, and shops, the series showcases the unique offerings that define Charles County.

**Watch at:**

[Youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYKfJ608FjL\\_5PdXznZ60nnazWpII5Ipsandsi=ht2LdmsU6h5FdTXo](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYKfJ608FjL_5PdXznZ60nnazWpII5Ipsandsi=ht2LdmsU6h5FdTXo)





# Mix Tape CONCERT SERIES

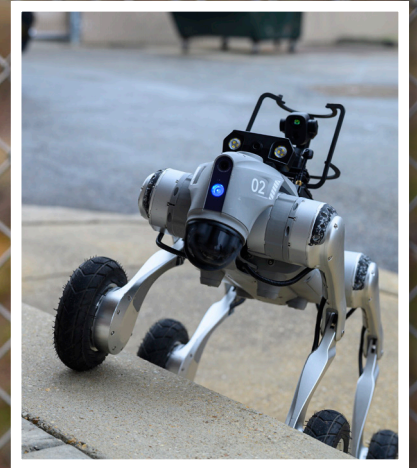
The **Mixtape Concert Series** launched over the summer season, bringing nationally recognized artists and offering diverse musical genres shaped by resident feedback. The thoughtfully curated mix reinforced the County's commitment to providing diverse cultural experiences while strengthening its reputation as an emerging destination for live music.

Performances included the Eli Young Band (*top, left*) with special guest Blanco Brown, Dru Hill (*right*) with special guest J. Holiday the Plain White T's (*bottom*).

Check out all the great photos at:  
[CharlesCountyGovernment.smugmug.com/Mix-Tape-Concert-Series](https://CharlesCountyGovernment.smugmug.com/Mix-Tape-Concert-Series)



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND SAFETY



## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS RESPONSE ENHANCEMENTS

In 2025, Charles County strengthened its Hazardous Materials Response Team by expanding **full-time HazMat Technician staffing to support 24/7 operational readiness**. This enhancement ensures continuous availability of specially trained personnel capable of responding to chemical, biological, radiological, and other complex hazardous materials incidents at any hour. The addition of around-the-clock staffing improves response times, increases on-scene technical expertise, and reinforces the County's commitment to maintaining a high level of preparedness for both routine and large-scale emergency events.

Complementing this staffing expansion, the Department of Emergency Services introduced an innovative robotic platform, **HAZ-MUTT**, to support hazardous materials operations. Haz-Mutt is a four-legged robotic responder designed to enter environments that may be unsafe for personnel. Equipped with advanced sensors and remote

monitoring capabilities, the robot can conduct reconnaissance, collect environmental readings, and generate detailed mapping of hazardous or unstable areas. By providing real-time situational awareness while limiting responder exposure, Haz-Mutt enhances operational safety and effectiveness during high-risk incidents.

Together, the expansion of 24/7 HazMat staffing and the integration of advanced robotic technology represent a significant advancement in Charles County's emergency response capabilities, **prioritizing both community safety and responder protection**.

Meet Haz-Mutt, the robotic "dog" helping Emergency Services keep our community safe. Watch at: [Youtube.com/watch?v=f6rNWQk96BY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6rNWQk96BY)





# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND SAFETY

## CHARLES COUNTY STUDENTS GAIN EARLY ACCESS TO 9-1-1 CAREER CREDENTIAL

In October 2025, the Governor’s Workforce Development Board CTE Committee approved the Emergency Telecommunicator Certification (ETC) as a Maryland State Department of Education Industry Recognized Credential (IRC). This designation allows Charles County high school students to earn the first required credential for employment in a 9-1-1 Communications Center while still in school.

Charles County piloted this innovative program — the first of its kind in Maryland — in partnership with Charles County Public Schools, the Charles County Department of Emergency Services, Charles County Volunteer Fire and EMS Association, and the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch. This milestone expands career pathway opportunities for local youth and strengthens the workforce pipeline for public safety communications.

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND SAFETY

### MOBILE INTEGRATED HEALTH (MIH) – FULL-TIME EXPANSION

In 2024, Charles County expanded its Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Team to provide 24/7 coverage, strengthening the County’s community paramedicine model that connects residents to healthcare services, chronic disease support, and community resources. Established in 2017 through an MOU with the Charles County Department of Health and Charles Regional Medical Center, MIH is funded through a mix of county and partner resources, including the county budget, ARPA, opioid restitution funds, CCDOH grants, and CRMC. Following the move to round-the-clock staffing — including dedicated paramedic and EMT positions — the MIH program increased active participation from 15 patients before expansion to more than 40 patients after expansion. Program performance data presented to the Commissioners also indicates reductions in hospital utilization among MIH participants (Year 7 data), including fewer ED visits, inpatient admissions, and 30-day readmissions.

### LAUNCH OF EMS-INITIATED BUPRENORPHINE

In October, the Charles County Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Team officially implemented **MARYLAND’S MODEL-T PROTOCOL**, expanding post-overdose care beyond traditional “leave-behind” naloxone (Narcan). Through this program, specially trained paramedics can initiate **Buprenorphine in the field for patients** experiencing opioid withdrawal following an overdose or requesting help for opioid use disorder.



Buprenorphine is a partial opioid agonist approved for the treatment of opioid use disorder. Under Maryland’s MIEMSS MODEL-T protocol, EMS clinicians may assess patients using standardized withdrawal criteria (e.g., clinical withdrawal scoring) and administer an initial dose when appropriate. The medication reduces withdrawal symptoms and cravings, lowers the risk of repeat overdose, and helps stabilize patients during the critical window between emergency response and formal treatment engagement. The protocol includes medical oversight, defined eligibility criteria, dosing guidelines, and required patient education and referral procedures to ensure safe, evidence-based administration.

In addition to medication initiation, the MIH Team provides direct linkage to care, coordinating follow-up appointments with community treatment providers and recovery resources to support continued treatment and long-term recovery. This effort is conducted in close partnership with the Charles County Department of Health Behavioral Health Division and under the clinical guidance of Medical Director Dr. Seaman, ensuring continuity between pre-hospital care and outpatient treatment services.

**The impact was immediate. Just four minutes after officially being placed in service, the MIH Team responded to its first call under the new protocol — underscoring the urgent and ongoing need for opioid dependence services in the community.**

By combining rapid EMS response, evidence-based medication treatment, and coordinated follow-up care, the program strengthens Charles County’s comprehensive approach to reducing opioid overdoses and improving recovery outcomes for residents.



## SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The Summer Youth Employment (SYE) Program provides career pathway development and employment mentorship for **young adults age 16-24** who are disengaged from school, higher education, and/or employment, also known as “opportunity youth.” Young adults are provided with the opportunity to become employed with local businesses and organizations and engage in the training and proficiencies necessary for emerging adults in the workforce. The goals of the program are to:

- Assist youth in career exploration and skill development by matching them with an employment site
- Assist youth with job searching, hiring, and interviewing processes

The program is managed and funded by the Department of Community Services through the Local Management Board.

“This program allowed me to not only broaden my horizon, but it gave me **a new outlook on what it means to work.** I have had two jobs before this program, and both left me feeling on my own to figure things out. Those negative experiences scared me. Then I was pointed towards this program where the training allowed me to be myself, to know that I wasn’t alone, and **to build confidence not only in the workplace, but in life.**”

— 2025 SYE Youth Graduate

	2024	2025
Number of employment applications received	569	800+
“Opportunity Youth” criteria met (or other risk criteria that poses barrier to employment)	24	27
Number of youth who attended “MATCH DAY” to meet interested employers	54	23
Number of youth who enrolled in the program	41	27
Number of youth who maintained employment for duration of program	38	Not available at time of printing.
Number of hosts/employers	26	23

**15** hosts/employers returned to hire youth from a previous year.

At least **2** youth have already been offered permanent employment from the 2025 program.

At least **4** youth from 2024 have continued their employment with their host site.



# SUPPORTING OUR YOUTH

## STARS! APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Acknowledging the talents and skills that STARS (Skilled Through Alternative Routes) contribute to our community, the Department of Human Resources partnered with Charles County Public Schools to join the Apprenticeship Maryland Career and Technical Education (CTE) Program, which prepares students (age 16 and older) for careers in STEM, manufacturing, and traditional occupations.

### OVERVIEW

Piloted in Frederick and Washington Counties; now available statewide

Students start in their junior year

### REQUIREMENTS

At least one year of classroom instruction

Minimum of 450 hours of paid, work-based training with a mentor

Formal agreement among student, school, and employer

Provides real-world experience serving the community while building career skills

**IMPACT** — The program introduces students to County Government, and helps them gain valuable technical skills and insight into future careers



# YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Charles County’s Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism (DRPT) continued to expand meaningful opportunities for youth and teens through programs that support social connection, personal growth, and future readiness. Inclusive and accessible, these initiatives provide safe environments where young residents can engage with peers, explore interests, and gain exposure to pathways beyond the classroom.

A cornerstone of the County’s youth offerings is the **Friday Teen Hangouts**, a free weekly program for teens ages 13–17 held at multiple community centers across Charles County. These Friday evening gatherings offer structured recreation, games, and social activities in a supervised setting, giving teens a consistent and welcoming space to connect, unwind, and build positive relationships. With a free RecCard available to all participants, the program removes barriers to participation and promotes broad community involvement.

Beyond weekly programming, DRPT supported teens’ long-term success through targeted career and college exploration events. In partnership with county agencies and community organizations, the **Trade Skills Career Fair** introduced teens to hands-on demonstrations, skilled trades, and workforce opportunities, highlighting viable career pathways. Additionally, the County hosted an **HBCU College Fair**, connecting students with representatives from historically black colleges and universities and providing guidance on college planning and academic opportunities.

Together, these programs reflect Charles County’s commitment to investing in its young people — supporting not only their social well-being, but also their educational and career aspirations. Through recreation, mentorship, and exposure to future pathways, the County continues to play a vital role in **preparing the next generation for success** while strengthening community connections.

2023

HR applied for and was approved as a participating employer with the Charles County Board of Education

## CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION TO STARS!

2024

- HVAC Apprentice (DPW, Facilities)
- Electrical Technician Apprentice (DPW, Facilities)
- Engineering Apprentice (PGM, Infrastructure)

2025

- HVAC Apprentice (DPW, Facilities)
- Electrical Technician Apprentice (DPW, Facilities)
- Meter Technician Apprentice (DPW, Utilities)
- Engineering Apprentice, (PGM, Infrastructure)



## SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM CULTIVATES THE NEXT GENERATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE LEADERS

Charles County Government’s summer internship program provides students with hands-on experience and insight into local government operations. Offering both 10-week and six-week sessions, the program welcomed high school juniors and seniors, college students, and recent graduates, opening doors to potential careers in the County.

Interns gained hands-on experience across departments such as Public Works, Environmental Resources, Recreation, Parks, and Tourism, engaging in real-world projects that built skills in communication, teamwork, and problem-solving.

The program emphasized that valuable experience is available regardless of a student’s field of study, allowing participants to explore career paths, build professional networks, and deepen their understanding of community engagement and public service.

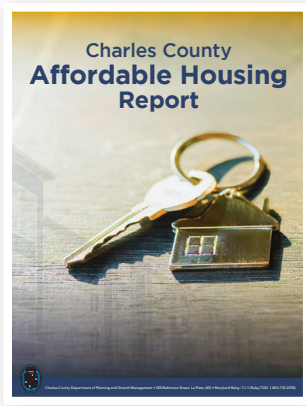
Charles County’s summer internship program continues to foster the next generation of local leaders, encouraging students to gain practical experience, contribute to meaningful projects, and grow both personally and professionally.

The 2025 Summer Internship Program commenced in June with a total of **1,200 applications** received, and **24 candidates selected** to fill positions.

# QUALITY OF LIFE

## CHARLES COUNTY TACKLES HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND ADVANCES COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

### AFFORDABLE HOUSING INITIATIVES



Charles County strengthened its commitment to providing safe, stable, and affordable housing. The County’s Affordable Housing Report, prepared by the workgroup established in 2023, highlights that over one-third of households earn less than 80% of the Area Median Income,

with many spending more than 30% of their income on housing. Rising home prices (more than \$460,000 for the median home) and rents exceeding \$2,300 for a two-bedroom apartment place local essential workers, including teachers, service employees, and law enforcement, at risk of being priced out of the community they serve.



To address this challenge, the report recommends a comprehensive mix of strategies: mandatory inclusionary zoning, expanded accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and tiny home options, “starter homes,” and Missing Middle housing near transit. Financial tools include a Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) program, expanded rental and home-buyer assistance, and a dedicated Housing Trust Fund. Countywide support measures, such as a new Affordable Housing Board, rental licensing, and limits on corporate ownership of single-family rentals, aim to ensure long-term sustainability. Implementing these policies is expected to add up to 240–260 affordable units annually, meeting current and future demand while supporting workforce retention, economic growth, and community equity.

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Parallel to housing initiatives, the County launched the 2026 Comprehensive Plan update, a state-mandated framework guiding **land use, infrastructure, transportation, environmental protection, and housing for the next 20–25 years**. Building on the 2016 plan — which emphasized rural preservation and targeted development in northern areas — the new update focuses on enhancing development districts, supporting economic and commercial growth, and ensuring equitable access to community amenities.

Key areas of review include the Waldorf Urban Redevelopment Corridor, transit corridors, available commercial and industrial land, and emerging redevelopment opportunities. Community engagement is central, with surveys, pop-up planning days, and educational outreach designed to gather broad public input. Feedback will help shape policies addressing transportation for all modes, housing diversity, and infrastructure improvements, ensuring the County’s growth reflects residents’ needs and values. The plan is expected to be adopted by the County Commissioners in early 2027, setting a vision and actionable roadmap for the next decade.



Learn more: [www.shapingcharles.org/](http://www.shapingcharles.org/)



**CHARLES COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES BLUE ZONES INITIATIVE, RELEASES REPORT**

Charles County partnered with the Charles County Department of Health, University of Maryland Charles Regional Hospital, and Blue Zones, the global leader in longevity research, to launch **BLUE ZONES IGNITE**. The initiative was designed to make healthy choices easier in the places where residents spend the most time — at home, at work, in schools, and throughout the community. It began with an in-depth readiness and feasibility assessment to identify opportunities and strategies to make Charles County a healthier place to live, work, grow up, and grow older.

“Blue Zones Ignite allowed us to engage the community directly to identify challenges and opportunities so that Charles County became a healthier, happier place for everyone,” said Dianna E. Abney, M.D., Charles County Health Officer. Mary Hannah, Vice President of Population Health for UM Charles Regional, added, “This initiative helped prioritize residents’ healthcare and wellness needs and implement programs that improved quality of life while reducing healthcare costs.”

The Blue Zones approach **focused on the environments in which people live**, rather than relying solely on individual behavior change. By creating permanent and semi-permanent improvements in policies, social networks, streetscapes, and workplaces, the program encouraged residents to eat wisely, move naturally, and connect socially as part of everyday life. Improving the Life Radius® — the area closest to home where most Americans spend 90% of their time — helped other communities achieve measurable health improvements, including reductions in obesity and smoking rates, increased economic investment, and lower healthcare costs.

Through Blue Zones Ignite, the expert team worked with Charles County leaders and residents to assess strengths and needs and developed a policy-focused transformation plan. The long-term vision included stronger family and community connections, increased access to fresh, locally grown foods, walkable neighborhoods, and overall improvements in population health and well-being.

By bringing the principles of Blue Zones to Charles County, the initiative helped create a community where the healthy choice was the easy choice, and residents of all ages had the opportunity to live longer, more fulfilling lives.

**PROJECTED IMPACT OF BLUE ZONES IGNITE IN CHARLES COUNTY**

**10-20% REDUCTION IN OBESITY RATES** — Participating communities saw double-digit drops in obesity after implementing Blue Zones strategies.

**10-15% REDUCTION IN TOBACCO USE** — Environmental and social changes encouraged residents to reduce smoking.

**4-14 ADDITIONAL YEARS OF LIFE EXPECTANCY** — Engagement in social and community activities contributed to longer, healthier lives.

**7-YEAR INCREASE IN LIFE EXPECTANCY THROUGH PURPOSE-DRIVEN LIVING** — Residents who had a clear sense of purpose experienced longer lifespans.

**4-14 YEARS ADDED BY REGULAR COMMUNITY OR FAITH PARTICIPATION** — Strong social networks and consistent involvement improved well-being.

**20-50% INCREASE IN RESIDENTS EATING MORE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES** — Plant-forward diets became a staple in daily routines.

**\$1-\$5 MILLION IN POTENTIAL HEALTHCARE SAVINGS PER COMMUNITY** — Communities saved on healthcare costs through healthier behaviors and preventive measures.

**100% OF RESIDENTS LIVED WITHIN A “LIFE RADIUS®” DESIGNED FOR HEALTH** — Walkable neighborhoods, access to fresh foods, and safe public spaces promoted daily movement and social interaction.



Watch *Charles County Now* to learn more: [Youtube.com/watch?v=r0itAcCyxbw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0itAcCyxbw)

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### PRESERVING CHARLES COUNTY'S HISTORY

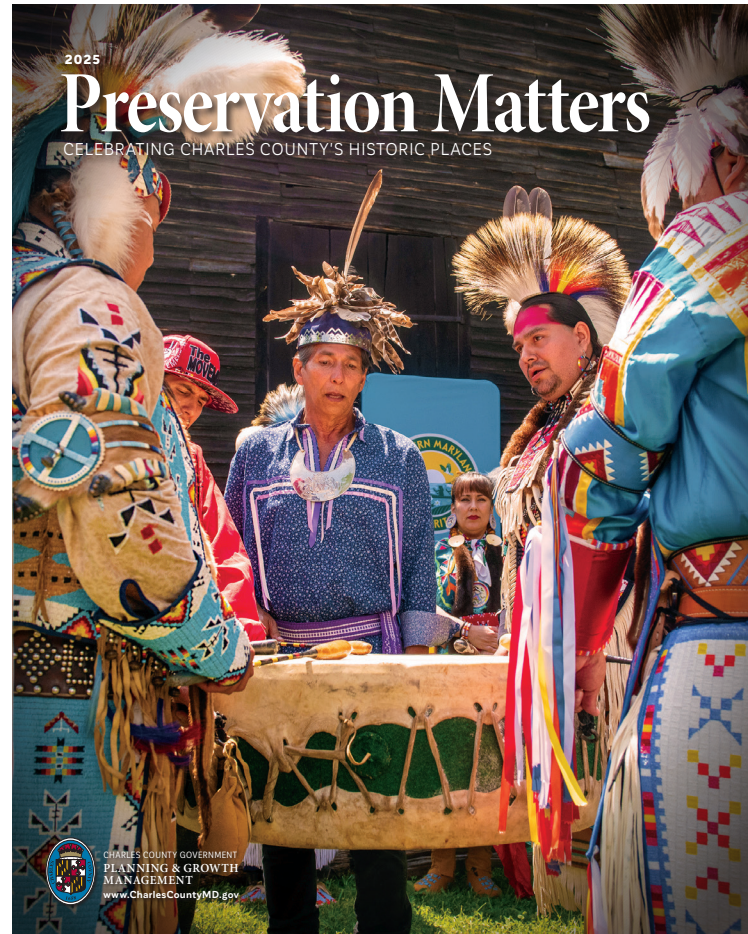
Through **PRESERVATION MATTERS**, Charles County continues to share the stories, places, and partnerships that reflect the community's deep connection to its history and landscapes. The semi-annual publication highlights the County's ongoing commitment to historic preservation, cultural recognition, and thoughtful stewardship of the places that shape community identity.

A major milestone featured in the 2025 publication was the establishment of the **Southern Maryland National Heritage Area (SMNHA)**, a nationally designated region that brings together communities across Southern Maryland to recognize the area's foundational role in the nation's story. This congressionally approved designation elevates the voices, traditions, and experiences that define Charles County — from Indigenous heritage and religious freedom to African American history, maritime traditions, and innovation — while supporting heritage tourism, environmental restoration, and local economic growth through strong regional partnerships.

The County also celebrated meaningful preservation achievements with the listing of **Bel Alton High School and the Pomonkey Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places**. These nationally recognized sites honor the importance of education, community life, and resilience within African American and Native American communities, ensuring that these locally rooted stories are preserved and shared with future generations.

To protect the landscapes residents value most, Charles County advanced land conservation efforts through updates to the **Protected Land Map**, identifying newly designated areas for land preservation. These targeted designations safeguard agricultural lands, cultural landscapes, environmentally sensitive areas, and historic resources, supporting balanced growth while maintaining the County's rural character and sense of place.

Central to these efforts is the County's ongoing collaboration with the **Piscataway people**, the original stewards of the land. In support of cultural recognition and reconciliation, Charles County advanced the **donation of land to the Piscataway Tribe**, strengthening partnerships grounded in respect, shared history, and long-term stewardship.



Together, these initiatives reflect **Charles County's commitment to preserving places that matter to its residents, amplifying underrepresented voices, and ensuring that community values continue to guide growth — protecting these lands and stories for generations to come.**



Read the latest *Preservation Matters*, at; [CharlesCountyMD.gov/government/planning-and-growth-management/preservation-and-long-range-planning/historic-preservation](https://www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/government/planning-and-growth-management/preservation-and-long-range-planning/historic-preservation)

## HOUSING CHOICE VOUCHER PROGRAM, PLUMBING IMPROVEMENT, TRANSITIONAL HOME IMPROVEMENTS



Charles County made significant progress in strengthening housing stability and improving essential living conditions for residents, even amid funding challenges. The Housing Choice Voucher program remained stable despite federal cuts. By November, the Program had reached **\$1 million in Housing Assistance Payments**, helping residents maintain access to safe and affordable housing. Proactive outreach by staff — totaling 385 calls and contacts between September 2024 and August 2025 — helped increase voucher utilization by reminding participants of critical deadlines.

In October, the Housing Authority received **\$300,000 from the Maryland Affordable Housing Trust Plumbing Poverty Program** to expand access to indoor plumbing for low-income households, particularly in rural areas. This program prioritizes households earning at or below 30% of the Area Median Income and supports critical plumbing improvements that enhance health, safety, and quality of life.

Additional investments strengthened housing-related facilities and services. The Department of Community Services repurposed **\$75,000 in COVID relief funds** to upgrade two county-owned homeless and transitional homes operated by Lifestyles of Maryland, Inc. Improvements included new flooring at the Fuller House Men’s Transitional Home and a renovated bathroom with enhanced ADA accessibility at Martha’s Place Home for Women and Children. Together, these efforts reflect Charles County’s continued commitment to housing stability, infrastructure investment, and resident well-being.

## FALL 2025 FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN RESPONSE

During the fall 2025 federal government shutdown, Charles County Government implemented a coordinated response to support **residents facing financial and service disruptions**.

The County compiled and shared a comprehensive list of local, state, and nonprofit resources to help residents access food assistance, financial relief, employment guidance, and other essential services, ensuring impacted families had timely information during the period of uncertainty.

### FEDERAL WORKER TRANSITION RESOURCES

Throughout 2025, Charles County continued to support federal employees and contractors navigating employment transitions by maintaining a centralized **Government Transition Resources** webpage. This resource connected workers with job search and workforce development services, unemployment guidance, emergency loan programs, and broader community supports through partnerships with state agencies, workforce organizations, and local service providers.

Learn more at: [MeetCharlesCounty.com/government-transition-resources](https://MeetCharlesCounty.com/government-transition-resources)



## PET OF THE WEEK

Charles County Media Services continued its successful partnership with the Charles County Animal Care Center through the “Pet of the Week” series. This weekly series highlights the center’s wide variety of animals — including dogs, cats, rabbits, gerbils, and even pigs — giving each a moment in the spotlight and a chance to find a loving home.

**NEARLY 70% of featured animals have been adopted**, helping more pets find their forever families while raising awareness about the center’s vital work. The collaboration showcases the power of media to connect the community with opportunities to make a difference, one pet at a time.



Watch the show at: [Youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYKfJ608FjL9Mqn7EKMovMLX-Pi0mPGP6x](https://Youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYKfJ608FjL9Mqn7EKMovMLX-Pi0mPGP6x)

## QUALITY OF LIFE

### SENIOR CENTER PLUS, MEALS ON WHEELS

Charles County continues its **strong commitment to supporting its senior residents** through programs that promote independence, connection, and overall well-being. The Senior Center Plus Program is a key part of this effort, providing an adult social day program with staff support and supervision for older adults who may not be able to attend senior centers independently, but do not yet require adult medical day care. Serving as an important “in-between” option, the program helps seniors remain active, social, and engaged in a safe and supportive environment.

The Senior Center Plus program celebrated its **30th anniversary**, marking three decades of successful service to Charles County residents. Participants attend senior centers alongside their peers and take part in a wide range of activities, including arts and crafts, exercise, social gatherings, and holiday celebrations. The program also offers meals and daily structure, fostering



meaningful connections while reducing isolation and supporting healthy aging.

The County’s commitment extends beyond social engagement to ensuring seniors’ basic needs are met. Charles County allocated **\$315,000 from previously awarded Maryland Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to support programs such as Meals on Wheels**. This investment helps ensure vulnerable seniors who are unable to shop or prepare meals for themselves continue to receive nutritious food and vital support, reinforcing the County’s ongoing efforts to help older adults remain healthy, independent, and connected within their communities.

### LOCAL MANAGEMENT BOARD AND RESOURCE CONNECTION

Recent economic disruptions, including the federal government shutdown, highlighted how quickly financial stress can impact Charles County families. Missed paychecks, rising costs, and uncertainty around food, housing, and mental health services placed additional pressure on residents who were already struggling. For the more than 15,000 county residents who rely on SNAP and many others living paycheck to paycheck, timely access to local support is not optional — it is essential to maintain stability.

The Charles County Local Management Board (LMB), within the Department of Community Services, plays a critical role in **ensuring residents can access the human services they need**. Through data-driven community assessments and strategic planning, the LMB identifies gaps in services and invests grant funding in programs that address both immediate challenges and long-term well-being. By focusing on priorities such as economic stability, behavioral health, safe communities, and child and family support, the Board helps ensure services remain accessible to residents regardless of income, insurance status, or background.

One of the most important tools supporting residents is the **Charles County Resource Connection website**, a centralized, one-stop platform that links families to **more than 100 local resources**.

Developed in response to community feedback, the site makes it easier for residents to find help with food assistance, employment, mental and behavioral health services, education, and family support — especially during times of crisis. The website also promotes community events and allows service providers to continuously expand available resources.

Together with the Local Care Team, which connects families facing mental, emotional, or behavioral challenges to coordinated support, these efforts ensure Charles County residents are not navigating hardship alone. By improving awareness, access, and coordination of services, Charles County is **strengthening community resilience and helping families** move from crisis toward long-term stability.



Visit Online for details:  
[CharlesCountyResourceConnection.com](https://CharlesCountyResourceConnection.com)

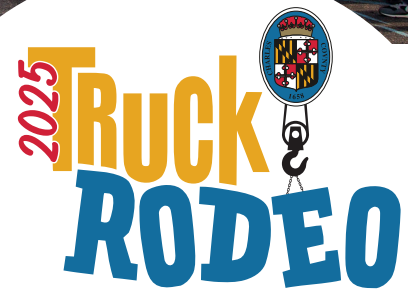




## TRUCK RODEO SHOWCASES SKILLED WORKFORCE AND INSPIRES FUTURE CAREERS

The Truck Rodeo once again invited residents to experience a day of live competition and hands-on demonstrations at Regency Furniture Stadium. Held on October 1, the free, family-friendly event showcased the skill and precision of Charles County's equipment operators as they navigated obstacle courses and demonstrated the heavy machinery that keeps the community running.

In addition to the action on the course, attendees had the opportunity to connect with Human Resources representatives to learn more about current career opportunities with Charles County Government. Recreation, Parks, and Tourism also hosted a Trade Skills Career Fair during the Truck Rodeo, which offered an opportunity for students age 13–18 to meet with industry professionals, see equipment demonstrations, and learn what it's like to work in their fields. The event highlighted both the professionalism of the County workforce and the community partnerships that support local government operations.



Check out more photos of the event at: [CharlesCountyGovernment.smug-mug.com/Community-Programs/Truck-Rodeo-2025](https://CharlesCountyGovernment.smug-mug.com/Community-Programs/Truck-Rodeo-2025)

## NEW LOCATION FOR RECREATION, PARKS, AND TOURISM HEADQUARTERS

In 2025, the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism transitioned its administrative headquarters to a dedicated office space at 107 Centennial Street, Suite A in La Plata. This move centralizes the department's recreation, parks, and tourism functions in a modern and accessible location, improving coordination of programs, services, and community engagement efforts.

The new headquarters serves as the primary point of contact for residents and visitors seeking information about recreational activities, park facilities, registration services, and tourism resources. By bringing key staff and functions together under one roof, the department is better positioned to support expanded services, streamline operations, and foster partnerships that enhance quality of life throughout Charles County.

This relocation reflects a broader commitment to strengthening customer service and operational efficiency across the department.





[CharlesCountyMD.gov/StayConnected](https://CharlesCountyMD.gov/StayConnected)



### ABOUT CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

The mission of Charles County Government is to provide our citizens the highest quality service possible in a timely, efficient and courteous manner. To achieve this goal, our government must be operated in an open and accessible atmosphere, be based on comprehensive long- and short-term planning and have an appropriate managerial organization tempered by fiscal responsibility. We support and encourage efforts to grow a diverse workplace. Charles County is a place where all people thrive and businesses grow and prosper; where the preservation of our heritage and environment is paramount; where government services to its citizens are provided at the highest level of excellence; and where the quality of life is the best in the nation.

It is the policy of Charles County to provide equal employment opportunity to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religious or political affiliation or opinion, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, genetic information, gender identity or expression, or any other status protected by law.

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### CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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