

FY2023 Budget Comments

There are many areas in Charles County that have significant problems with Septic and Water system failures. Unfortunately, many of these failing systems are in areas that have a Priority Classification of W-6 and S-6 which means they are outside Designated Service Areas, and there are no current or future plans for public water or public sewage service by the county. Per the Charles County Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan 2006, "The County Commissioners have established the priority classification system in accordance with State Law. The County Commissioners have established a priority classification system in accordance with State law. The priority system is designed to show a rational, timely means to obtain such facilities while maintaining the integrity of both the County Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan and the County Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The priority system is designed to show need and intent of the County, its municipalities, and the development community for establishing or extending public, community, or multi-use water and sewer systems. The County Commissioners of Charles County segregate their water and sewer priority classification system as there are fundamental differences in the interpretation of these categories, which affects their implementation. Each category change requires an amendment to the Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan, as approved by the Charles County Commissioners, except for the change from Category 3 to Category 1'."

There is a significant need within the county to review and determine how many citizens live in areas outside of those serviced by the county for water and sewage that have failing systems. The number of systems that are aged, have failed, or have the potential to fail, and there's vast land across the county that can no longer pass a percolation test. A percolation test is a soil test designed to evaluate the soil's capacity to accept a subsurface sewage disposal system (septic system). If the land fails this test it must then pass a test for an alternative system. The last resort if this test fails is to install a holding tank which must be pumped on a regular basis which can be costly as well as have a higher risk of polluting the environment and groundwater. There are many holding tanks installed in the county as well.

Currently, there are only three primary areas that are provided water and sewer services by the county and meet the Commissioners Priority Classification System of W-1 and W-3 for existing service and planned service for water service and S-1, S-3 and S-5 representing Existing, Planned and Future Service respectively. These primary areas are within County municipalities (Laplata and Indian Head) and the Waldorf area in the northern portion of Charles County. This represents approximately 53% of the county's population. Charles County has a population of approx 166,617 citizens of which 77,234 citizens do not have access to public water or public sewage if they choose to obtain this service or have failing systems and need to access these systems. They can not get this service from the county because they have been designated within the Priority Classification System as "outside designated service areas" and in addition, if lines were available to connect to it is very costly. The population of citizens who live in the S-6 category (almost 50% of the population in the county) has a right to these county services because they pay almost half the taxes collected in the County. Many of the citizens in the county that have older homes and older antiquated systems that passed the regulations when the homes were built at that time but now are failing and need alternative solutions to meet the new regulations should have the same benefit of sewer and water services of homes that have the option of using County water and sewer services.

It is not fair nor should it be expected that almost 50% of the county's citizens have to fend for themselves and spend an exorbitant amount of money to have the basic resources (water and sewage options) afforded to them as is being afforded to the remaining 50% of the counties citizens. Mostly citizens who have built this county and made Charles County their home for generations...

This is a request that funds be invested in Charles County to improve water and sewer systems, avail affordable alternatives, and/or expand public water and sewer systems to improve the quality of life for citizens of the county who need water and sewer services.