

# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



CHARLES COUNTY  
GOVERNMENT

**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 two previous terms as County Commissioner for District 3. This is his third term, and his first serving as Commissioner President. He is the first African American elected to this Charles County position.



**Commissioner Vice President Bobby Rucci (District 4)** is a longtime Charles County resident and is serving his third term as a County Commissioner. He owns and manages a business in Charles County and is a licensed REALTOR®.



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

Charles County can take great pride in the progress we have made over the past year. While we are still recovering from the impacts of COVID-19, we are moving forward on many important priorities. County leaders have been advancing initiatives that are achieving the goals we set out to accomplish, from expanding broadband to spurring economic growth, making investments in infrastructure and planning for climate change. We also continue to deliver the high-quality programs and services you rely upon every day.

We recognize our county is evolving and changing as we grow, as shown by our 2020 Census data. This gives County Government the unique opportunity to bring additional perspectives into planning for our future. We are also applying diversity, equity, and inclusion into the policy decisions we make, to best serve the community and its changing needs.

Charles County is committed to making sure no one is left behind as we recover from the pandemic. We have received and distributed millions of dollars to small business, nonprofits, and our residents in need. We are also looking toward the future as we plan for new federal investments in infrastructure that we need, including expansion of public transit, improved stormwater management, and additional broadband in rural areas.

Please take some time to review this annual report and provide your feedback to us. Charles County is a regional leader on the move and being recognized as an important government partner in the metropolitan Washington, DC area. We are proud to share the many achievements we have made together over the past year.

Sincerely,

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

Commissioner President

# Your Commissioners OUT AND ABOUT IN THE COMMUNITY!



On April 28, 2021, the Board of County Commissioners welcomed Governor Larry Hogan as they recognized the official groundbreaking for broadband expansion in rural parts of the county that will provide access for 1,400 households.



Commissioner Vice President Bobby Rucci (District 4) and Commissioner President Reuben Collins attend the community's National Night Out kickoff event.



Commissioner Gilbert "BJ" Bowling (District 1) at the Farmers Feeding Charles County Food Giveaway at Dorchester Community Center.



Commissioner Thomasina Coates (District 2) participates in an event recognizing the designation of Mallow's Bay as a National Marine Sanctuary.



Commissioner Amanda Stewart (District 3) gives away bookbags at her annual Back to School Fiesta.



Commissioner President Reuben Collins welcomes the Fox5DC Zip Trip Team to Charles County.



# Commissioner Program Highlights

## CHARLES COUNTY DRUG TAKE BACK

The Drug Take Back service provides our community with safe, convenient, and responsible means of disposing of all medications — securely away from children, potential addicts, and out of the county's wastewater systems.

There are five independent pharmacies currently participating in the program and accept properly packaged medications/drugs year-round, during their normal business hours.

The Drug Take Back Program is provided through a partnership with Charles County Government, the University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center, and the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention.



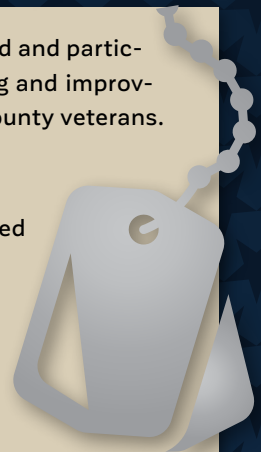
## Charles County Government Veterans Corner and Commission for Veterans Affairs

The Commission for Veteran Affairs was established in 2018 by Resolution 2018-02 to recognize the special concerns of Veterans of War in Charles County who may be better identified and served by an organized Commission.

The mission of the Commission is to provide leadership that creates opportunities for all Charles County veterans and their families. The Commission exists to evaluate, develop, and promote new and existing programs within Charles County. This Commission is dedicated to making our county the best place for veterans to live, work, and start a business in the State of Maryland.

During 2021, the Commission supported and participated in events focused on recognizing and improving the quality of life for our Charles County veterans.

- **Month of February** — 16 veterans recognized and honored during Black History Month and celebrated on the Veterans Commission Facebook page
- **July 24** — Veterans participated in the Team River Runner Kayaking with the CVA Commissioners
- **August 7** — Nine veterans recognized at the Purple Heart Event



Learn more: [www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/Services/Veterans-Corner](http://www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/Services/Veterans-Corner)  
Email: [VeteransServices@CharlesCountyMD.gov](mailto:VeteransServices@CharlesCountyMD.gov) • Phone: 301-645-0550



Charles County Government  
**2021 Annual Report**

Production of the Annual Report is managed by the County Administration Office, Media Services Division.

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Equal Opportunity Employer

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## A Message from Mark Belton County Administrator

Charles County Government is pleased to present our accomplishments over the past year. Our county employees have worked diligently to continue our progress in five key areas: economic development, public education, the environment, quality of life, and good governance. This annual report provides a summary with supporting data on the goals that our Board of Commissioners set out to achieve when they began their four-year term in December 2018.

Our achievements would not be possible without the outstanding team that we have in place to lead it. We have welcomed new members onto our executive leadership team, bringing a wealth of experience and fresh ideas to move us forward. We are able to recruit the best and brightest candidates by implementing the recommendations of the classification and compensation study over the past year. Our workforce is our most important asset. I encourage you to see how they have advanced our progress on important priorities while continuing to deliver vital services during the ongoing pandemic.

Responsible stewardship of county resources has helped us maintain top bond ratings and invest in new projects in a cost-effective way. Environmental stewardship has contributed to our fiscal ratings because we have implemented a thoughtful and innovative approach to planning for the impacts of climate change that prepare us well for the future. It will be essential for Charles County to balance growth while preserving our rural character and ecologically sensitive areas as we move forward.

Charles County is a wonderful place to live, work, and play and we are working on your behalf every day to maintain the high quality of life that makes our residents and businesses proud to call it their home. Please take time to learn more about how we are making that happen by reading our 2021 Annual Report.

  
**Mark Belton**  
County Administrator

# Staying Connected All Year Long

## Television and Radio News



**53** News stories about Charles County in 2021 on regional television and radio networks

## Inside Your County Government E-Newsletter



**26.83%** Open rate in 2020

**29.71%** Open rate in 2021. **INCREASED** 2.88% from 2020.

Industry standard open rate is 20%

## County Government Social Media



Facebook and Twitter collective reach **9.58%** Increase in FY20  
**46.83%** Increase in FY21 30% **MORE** than FY20

**FOLLOWERS:** 17.5K Facebook • 5.5K Twitter

## CCGTV on YouTube

**128** Videos released **UP** from 35 videos in 2020

**205,768** Video views

## Charles County Government Unscripted Podcast



**23** Audio episodes released **UP** from 17 in 2020

**2,831** "Listens" of episodes **UP** from 1,700 in 2020



## Citizen Engagement

**14** New Citizen Ambassadors from the 2nd cohort of Citizens Academy

## Citizen Requests

From Citizen Response Office

**5,820** Received in 2021 vs. 4,739 received in 2020

**34%** Were COVID-19 inquiries in 2021 vs. 72% 2020

# CCGTV Broadcast Upgrades



- ➔ Invested \$400,000 in broadcast and studio upgrades to provide improved access to virtual and hybrid meetings for all Board and Commissions.
- ➔ Installed technology to provide live closed captioning for all Board and Commission meetings
- ➔ Upgraded technology improvements include CCGTV programming and Board and Commission meetings streaming online, on mobile devices, on demand, and through Apple TV and Roku devices.



# Charles County Government Partner Agencies



## Department of Health

The Charles County Department of Health is a state agency that operates locally under the direction of a public health officer. The Board of Commissioners convenes as the Board of Health twice annually, and at other times as needed, to administer public health policy directives. The public health officer oversees services and programs, administers state benefits, and ensures public health guidance is followed. For more information on public health programs and services, visit [www.charlescountyhealth.org](http://www.charlescountyhealth.org).



## Public Schools and Board of Education

The Charles County Board of Commissioners authorizes the county budget transfer of nearly half of annual General Fund revenues to the Charles County Public School System annually. The Board of Education is an elected body of nine members that establishes educational policy, guides fiscal policy, provides overall direction, and governs the work of Charles County Public Schools. The superintendent is appointed by the Board of Education to manage the day-to-day operations of the school system, including student instruction and support, staffing, transportation, food service, and school facilities. Brief highlights about public education start on page 40. For comprehensive information about Charles County Public Schools, visit the website at [www.cbboe.com](http://www.cbboe.com).



## State's Attorney's Office

The State's Attorney's Office (SAO) is led by its chief elected official, the state's attorney, who enforces criminal laws through prosecution within Charles County. The SAO reviews cases, determines applicable charges, and presents cases in District and Circuit Court. The Board of Commissioners determines and provides funding for the SAO. For more information, visit [www.ccsao.us](http://www.ccsao.us).



## Sheriff's Office

The sheriff is an independently elected official who is responsible for all law enforcement operations and corrections, including the county's Detention Center. The Charles County Board of Commissioners authorizes the county budget transfer of nearly one-quarter of its annual budget to the Sheriff's Office, which oversees the fiscal and policy decisions regarding law enforcement priorities, programs, and services provided to county residents and businesses. A brief overview of law enforcement initiatives is available on pg. 15. For more information on how law enforcement and corrections operate in Charles County, visit the Charles County Sheriff's Office website at [www.ccsso.us](http://www.ccsso.us).



## Volunteer Fire and Emergency Medical Services

Charles County provides for emergency services in a variety of ways. Fire services are 100 percent volunteer through 14 independently operated fire departments and one dive rescue department located strategically in the county. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are provided through a combination of volunteer and career EMS organizations. There are three EMS-only volunteer stations in addition to 11 others housed within fire stations to provide volunteer EMS services. Charles County Government provides for career EMS staffing as a division of the Department of Emergency Services (DES). The Charles County Hazardous Materials Team is also housed within DES. For additional information on volunteer operations, visit [www.ccvfireems.org](http://www.ccvfireems.org).

Get to know  
our new public  
schools Superintendent  
**Dr. Maria V. Navarro, Ed.D.**

Listen to "Charles County Unscripted"  
the county's official podcast.



[www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/Podcasts](http://www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/Podcasts)

# Fiduciary Responsibility

**Did you know?** Charles County Government is responsible for collecting payments and fees, and administering funds for these public programs and services.



## Emergency Services

9-1-1 Calls and Emergency Response



## Public Works

Water/Sewer, Landfill, Recycling, Stormwater Management, and Maintenance



## Transportation

County Road Maintenance and Public Transit



## Economic Development

Business Attraction and Retention



## Housing Authority

Housing Assistance for Low- and Moderate-Income Households



## Infrastructure

Broadband Expansion, Wastewater Treatment, and Supplying Potable Water



## Parks and Recreation

Sports, Camps, Recreation Centers, and Public Parks



## Community Services

Programs and Support for Seniors, Families, and Children



## Animal Shelter

Temporary Housing, Care, and Adoption of Pets



## Planning and Growth

Permits, Inspections, Development Process, and Historic Preservation



## Tourism

Promoting Local Attractions and Travel to Charles County



# Fiscal 2022 Budget

July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

## Approved General Fund Budget \$450,350,300 ↑3.9% over last year

On Tuesday, May 18, 2021, the Board of County Commissioners adopted a balanced General Fund budget of \$450,350,300. The general fund is the largest operating fund of Charles County Government, and is used to account for financial transactions associated with government services, which are not legally required to be accounted for in a special fund, or are not part of self-supporting operations, which are called enterprise funds.



**EDUCATION**  
\$215,748,700 • 48.0%  
Board of Education Total: \$200,686,400



**SHERIFF'S OFFICE**  
\$100,865,700 • 22.4%



**COUNTY GOVERNMENT**  
\$71,718,600 • 15.9%



**DEBT SERVICE**  
\$32,575,300 • 7.2%



**OTHER AGENCIES**  
\$16,209,100 • 3.6%  
State's Attorney, Health Department, Circuit Court,  
Election Board, Other



**MISCELLANEOUS**  
\$13,232,900 • 2.9%  
Retiree Fringe, Central Services, Contingency,  
Capital Project Transfer



## The Real Property Tax Rate

The real property tax rate is \$1.141 for County Government and \$0.064 for Fire and Rescue per \$100 of assessed value. The Fire and Rescue funds are used to pay for facilities and capital assets used by the Charles County Volunteer Fire and EMS Associations and are governed by the Board of Fire and Rescue. The board reviews the financing of the fire departments and rescue squads in Charles County and makes appropriate recommendations on the formula for distribution of fire tax revenues, purchase of equipment, and facility needs. The Fire Department is an all-volunteer service and EMS volunteers supplement paid EMS staff in Charles County. For more information on its operations, visit [www.ccvfireems.org](http://www.ccvfireems.org).

# Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Overview

July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

## OPERATING BUDGET

Charles County Government’s budget represents the allocation of resources based upon the delivery of essential programs and services.

### OUR BUDGET APPROACH

- ✓ Maintain core services
- ✓ Keep current property tax and income tax rates
- ✓ Demonstrate fiscal responsibility
- ✓ Minimize use of cash reserves
- ✓ Invest in employee compensation

The budget process also aligns spending with the strategic priorities established by the Board of Commissioners’ goals and objectives for 2019 to 2022 ([www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/Our-County/Goals-and-Objectives](http://www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/Our-County/Goals-and-Objectives)). The goals include:

1. Economic Development and Supportive Services
2. Institutional Governance and Policy
3. Environment
4. Education
5. Quality of Life

Each year, the County Administrator and fiscal leaders develop the budget process by:

- Estimating revenues from state and local taxes, federal and state grants, and user fees and charges;
- Evaluating budget requests from Charles County’s Board of Education, the Sheriff, Public Libraries, States’ Attorney, Courts, College of Southern Maryland, and other local agencies; and the county’s Executive Leadership Team (ELT); and
- Proposing a balanced budget for the board to review.

The Board of County Commissioners receives public comments, makes changes based upon community input, and approves the final budget by the end of May.



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

## BUDGET TIMELINE

### OPERATING

**OCTOBER TO  
DECEMBER  
2020**

Elected officials and agencies **prepare operating budget request forms and performance measurements**, and return to the Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services.

The Board of Education and College of Southern Maryland **submit operating budget requests**.

**FEBRUARY 2021**

**MARCH TO  
APRIL 2021**

Series of **work sessions** are held to review enterprise funds, county fees and charges, general fund revenue outlook, and all other budgets.

**Public Hearing** is held for the constant yield tax rate, operating budget, and capital budget.

**APRIL 2021**

**MAY 2021**

Final series of **work sessions** are held for the general fund, special revenue fund, and enterprise funds budgets. Final review of all budgets, and impact of Commissioner changes are evaluated.

**Formal budget adoption** — General fund tax rates and budget adoption of all other funds.

Approved **budget book** prepared.

**MAY TO  
JULY 2021**



# BUDGET TIMELINE

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT

### CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM BUDGET

The \$706.3 million, five-year fiscal 2022-2026 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funds one-time expenditures that pay for community assets.

The Board of Commissioners reviews the CIP annually to designate funds for land preservation and construction and/or renovations of infrastructure. Government projects are supported by general fund revenues and bonds and cover schools, transportation, land preservation, and parks.

Enterprise projects are supported by user fees and cover stormwater, water and sewer, landfill, and environmental services related projects.



#### Public Schools

- Major renovation of older schools
- Full-day kindergarten additions
- Maintenance of existing schools
- Construction of new elementary school
- Planning for new middle school

#### College of Southern Maryland

- Building renovation
- Wastewater treatment plant replacement

#### Parks

- Waldorf Park development
- Popes Creek Waterfront
- Restrooms at Mallows Bay Park
- Synthetic turf fields

#### Government Facilities

- New animal shelter

#### Infrastructure improvements

- Radio communication system upgrade
- Land preservation
- Drainage improvements
- Water and sewer projects

#### SEPTEMBER TO OCTOBER 2020

County departments and agencies **prepare CIP requests**. Documentation is returned to the Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services. The Board of Education submits CIP requests.

#### OCTOBER 2020

Preliminary Board of Education **work session** for capital budget request review with the Board of County Commissioners and BOE to meet State deadline submission.

#### NOVEMBER TO DECEMBER 2020

**Review** of CIP with the County Administrator and departments.

#### MARCH TO APRIL 2021

Series of **work sessions** are held for CIP budget review, and Commissioner proposed changes.

#### APRIL 2021

**Public Hearing** with opportunity for residents to be heard on the proposed fiscal 2022-2026 CIP.

#### MAY 2021

Final **work session** is held for budget recap and final review of the CIP budget.

#### MAY 2021

**Formal budget adoption** — pending finalization of Governor's signing or vetoing State Bills.

# Fiscal 2022 Budget Highlights

The Board of Commissioners approved new investments within the budget to support the county’s need for increased services as the population grows.



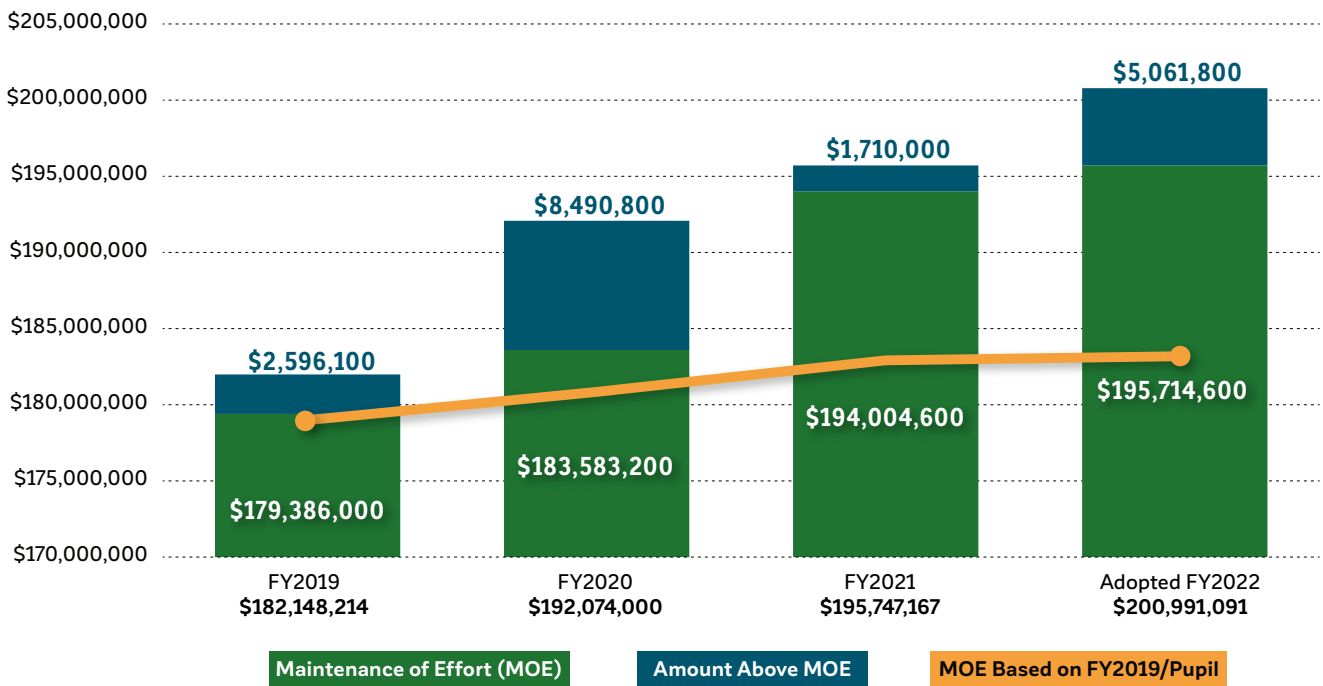
## FUNDING FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Board of Commissioners allocated \$5 million more to Charles County Board of Education than fiscal 2021, and consistently exceeds the Maintenance of Effort requirement (based upon enrollment).

The Board of Education is an elected body of nine members that approves how funds are prioritized based upon the superintendent’s proposed budget, to include instructional needs, staff compensation, and operations including food service, transportation, and facilities maintenance. The Board of Commissioners receives a briefing on the Board of Education’s budget and approves spending by category in June each year. For more information, visit [www.ccboe.com](http://www.ccboe.com) and search for “budget.”

## Board of Education & Maintenance of Effort Funding

Totals include one-time additional funding provided through the Cable TV/I-Net Fund



# Fiscal 2022 Budget Highlights



## NEW SERVICES FOR COUNTY GOVERNMENT

**Emergency Medical Services:** Full year funding for new Waldorf-based crew to serve increasing residential population in northern Charles County.

**Transportation:** Six-month pilot program offering free service to riders on VanGO, launching in January 2022.



## FUNDING FOR SHERIFF'S OFFICE

The Board of Commissioners increased the allocation of funds to the Sheriff's Office by \$4.5 million. The Board of Commissioners approves the total budget, new positions, and capital purchases. It also provides for mandated increases per county code in employee compensation for sworn deputies. The sworn deputies are legally tied to the state police pay scale. When the state police pay scale changes, the Sheriff's Office sworn pay scale changes with it. In fiscal 2022, the Board of Commissioners approved:

- Two new sworn officers
- New position to assist with employee mental health
- New network administrator to assist with the upcoming body worn camera implementation

The sheriff is the chief elected official who is responsible for the county's law enforcement and corrections and determines how to spend all funds within the department's operating budget. For more information, visit [www.ccsso.us](http://www.ccsso.us).



## ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR OTHER LOCAL AGENCY OPERATIONS

The Board of Commissioners provided new funding to the State's Attorney's Office and investments in criminal justice reform through new positions and programs, including:

- Six additional attorneys for the State's Attorney's Office
- Funding for a pre-trial services program
- New coordinator position for Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC). The CJCC identifies issues in the criminal justice system and recommends solutions; promotes system-wide accountability; proposes meaningful actions; and facilitates cooperation that will improve public safety, align resources, and delivery coordinated justice-related services.



# Federal Funding Support During COVID-19

## CARES ACT FUNDING

Through the Coronavirus Relief Fund, the **CARES Act** provides for payments to state, local, and tribal governments navigating the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak. As part of Maryland’s CARES Act funding, \$14.2 million in federal funding was provided to Charles County to reimburse for expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency through Dec. 30, 2021. The county also received \$1.4 million from our local Health Department’s allocation. Funds have been fully expended as of June 30, 2021 and were used towards:

- Public health expenses
- Payroll expenditures related to mitigating or responding to the pandemic
- Expansion of telework capabilities for public employees
- Support for distance learning
- Paid sick and paid medical leave to public employees
- Care of homeless population
- Rent relief
- Small business support
- Grants to non-profit organizations

## AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT

Charles County will receive \$31.7 million through the **American Rescue Plan Act of 2021**. The treasury guidance requires the county to spend funds that are not obligated by December 31, 2024 and requires obligated funds to be spent by December 31, 2026. The plan allocates the majority of funding towards infrastructure. The plan may evolve over time and is currently allocated towards:

- Stormwater management
- Broadband
- Reclaimed water filtration upgrades
- Public safety equipment (ambulance and additional portable radios for fire service)
- Small business support (grants and business training/outreach)
- Grants to non-profit organizations

Additionally, the county has received more than \$17 million through the CARES Act for specific programs such as transit funding (\$7.5 million), rental assistance (\$6.8 million), and other programs such as aging, housing choice voucher program administrative fees, tourism, economic development, and non-profit assistance. This brings the total amount of COVID-19 funding awarded to the county to \$64.5 million.

# \$64.5 million

COVID relief funds received to support our Charles County Community

**CARES Act/Other**  
\$32.8 million

Funds allocated towards public support — health, employment, education, housing, small business support, and more.

**American Rescue Plan Act**  
\$31.7 million

Funds allocated towards infrastructure — stormwater, broadband, public safety, small business support, and more.

# Economic Recovery from COVID-19

## Charles County Economic Development COVID Relief Grants for local businesses

**\$6,077,448**

Total dollar amount of grants disbursed to Charles County Businesses

**776**

Grant applications received and reviewed

**722**

Grant applications approved and processed

**504**

Businesses who received grants

**45%**

Minority Owned businesses

**41%**

Total grant dollars to minority owned businesses



## ECONOMY SUPPORT

As the COVID-19 crisis reached the community in March 2020, the Economic Development Department (EDD) focused on the immediate needs to address this unprecedented threat to our economy. Recognizing that measures to slow the spread of the virus would also slow or halt commerce, the EDD team took action to help businesses, and the department has continued to devote a necessary percentage of resources and human capital to programs to ensure the best chance for an economic recovery and continued economic growth in Charles County.

The EDD joined forces with the Charles County Chamber of Commerce to offer a series of free webinars focused on the needs of businesses. Topics covered in these weekly, online sessions included Using Social Media as a Digital Storefront, Effective Online Marketing, Online Team Building and Communication, Hosting Successful Virtual Events, Cashflow Management, Mental Health Care, Good Cyber Hygiene, and Financial Resources.

When the CARES Act was passed with funding that would flow to counties, the EDD submitted a request to use a piece of the funding for grants to local business. That led to the development of the COVID Small Business Relief Grant program that was launched in early June 2020. The EDD disbursed more than \$5.9 million to 468 Charles County businesses.

## RECOVERY TASK FORCE

The department made plans for long-range efforts to ensure economic stability post-COVID. A subcommittee of the Economic Development Advisory Board (EDAB) called the Recovery Task Force was created with members from the public and private sectors meeting online – weekly to start, later biweekly. Initial discussions identified immediate business needs as expressed by the private sector members of the task force. Public sector representatives from EDD, the Department of Planning and Growth Management, the Department of Health, and others took the lead on developing initiatives to address those needs. Outcomes have included relaxed temporary sign regulations, a shared PPE purchased program managed by the Health Department, and a “Who to Call” list with contact information for those assisting businesses. The task force submitted its final report to Charles County Government with recommendations for measures that will support business operations through the COVID crisis and beyond. The EDAB has created the Business Outreach Committee to continue the work of the task force related to the recommendations.

**Goal 1**

**Economic Development and Supportive Services**

Charles County encourages economic development and supportive services by creating an environment for commercial investment through the development of essential business infrastructure, programs for retention and expansion of existing businesses, recruitment of new businesses that support job growth in key industries, and attracting new visitors to support a growing local economy and tax base.

**Commercial Development**

Strengthen commercial development opportunities that support the local economy.

- International Trade
- Commercial Tax Base Expansion
- Business Attraction
- Opportunity Zone Enhancements

**Industry Diversification**

Expand industries that strengthen the tax base, support job growth, and attract visitors.

- Research and Development
- Sustainable Natural Resource Based Industries
- Tourism and Entertainment Industry

**Infrastructure/Services**

Enhance infrastructure that supports small businesses, public education, workforce development, and job growth.

- Broadband Access
- Water and Sewer
- Transportation Network
- Business Support
- Workforce Development

**Goal 1: Economic Development and Supportive Services**

**COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

The county is cultivating projects that represent estimated investments of \$378 million, upon completion. This could result in a commercial tax base increase of at least 3 percent over the next five to seven years.

**Attracting Businesses and Organizations**

Several new businesses and healthcare organizations now call Charles County home. A new **Amazon Last-Mile Distribution Center**, as well as **MedStar Shah** medical buildings are open. The College of Southern Maryland **Velocity Center** is open for meetings and events with a business tenant as well, the **Energetics Technology Center**. The **Waldorf Station**, a mixed-use project located at the intersection of U.S. Route 301 and Maryland Route 5, is staged to begin construction.

The 30,000-square-foot **Maryland Technology Center** is currently under construction.

The U.S. Bomb Technicians Associations (USBTA) will be a tenant and will receive a total of \$300,000 in the next two years in county funding for interior fit out and equipment. USBTA will continue to hold events in Indian Head and the Velocity Center, generating direct spending and showcasing the Town of Indian Head and the Velocity Center to companies in the energetics and robots research and development sectors.

**Changing Land Uses for Business Development**

In 2021, the Board of County Commissioners adopted an amendment to the 2016 Comprehensive Plan to redesignate certain properties around the Maryland Airport from the watershed conservation land use district to an employment-supporting land use district. The adoption of the amendment

- continued on pg 19

Amazon



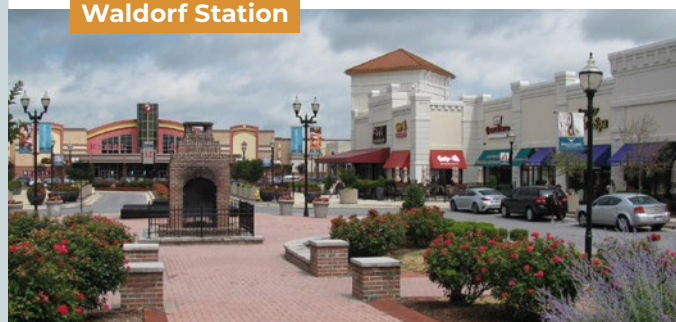
MedStar Shah



Velocity Center



Waldorf Station



MD Technology Ctr





will allow the county to pursue zoning text and map amendments to change the zoning for this area to allow for airport-supporting commercial activity in close proximity to the airport. The Comprehensive Plan amendment was approved by the County Commissioners on October 19, 2021.

The County Commissioners also approved the Zoning Text Amendment 21-164 Business Park Zone at the Sept. 28 meeting, which encourages and promotes economic vitality. It also enhances the community's appearance and fosters flexibility and innovation of design for businesses in this zone.

In addition, the Agricultural-related Uses Zoning Text Amendment was passed earlier in 2021. Charles County is considered an example to other local jurisdictions based on its unique approach to agribusiness and agritourism. It expanded agricultural operations to encourage agribusiness growth and expansion. The county also enacted a zoning text amendment for on- and off-farm craft beverage production.

### Business Support During COVID-19

Local businesses faced hardships throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. In support of local businesses, the county approved and disbursed more than 686 COVID-19 grants, totaling almost \$6 million; 40 percent of these grants went to minority-owned businesses. The county also disbursed COVID-19 loans:

**3 Business Development Loans totaling \$30,000**

**11 Business Relief Loans totaling \$55,000**

**2 Business Development Loans totaling \$70,000**

Charles County also convened the COVID-19 Recovery Task Force and presented the final report to Board of Commissioners; and created the Business Outreach Committee to continue work of the task force, engage local businesses, and raise awareness of assistance programs.

### Rehabilitating Blighted Properties

The proposed legislation for a Commercial Real Property Improvement and Rehabilitation Tax Credit was presented at the Oct. 26 Commissioners meeting and public hearing held on Dec. 15. On Dec. 15, the County Commissioners provided a public hearing on Bill 2021-11 Commercial Real Property Improvement and Rehabilitation Tax Credit and adopted the bill. This is a new program to incentivize the rehabilitation of blighted properties. It encourages reuse and rehabilitation by providing property tax credits related to investment in current commercial properties.

# Thank You!

## Quotes from businesses who received CARES Act funded grants

“This will be very helpful to stay strong in this crazy situation we are experiencing.”

— *Child care center owner*

“I am so appreciative of the County's support of small business.”

— *Real estate business owner*

“We appreciate your support!”

— *Medical Practice owner*

“Oh my, miracles do happen. I am in utter shock and did not expect this to happen! Thank you, thank you, thank you so much... we just might end up pulling through this after all.”

— *Retail shop owner*

“Thanks for all your efforts to assist Charles County Businesses.”

— *Restaurant owner*

“That is absolutely fantastic. I thank GOD for blessings that your organization is blessing the many small businesses of our community with. It is very much needed and appreciated. I am indeed truly grateful!”

— *Catering business*

“I appreciate all your hard work during these super challenging times.”

— *Event planning business owner*

“This past year has been hard for many of us. Now, more than ever, it is important to take a moment to reflect on what we're thankful for. We know you and your team have been working hard, so businesses like ours get much needed support. We are grateful for you and your team and would like to take this opportunity to say thank you... for all that you do, today and every day.”

— *Restaurant owner*

Goal 1: Economic Development and Supportive Services

**INDUSTRY DIVERSIFICATION**

**Attracting Tourism Interest and Dollars**

Charles County continues to work to encourage tourists to enjoy everything that is unique to the county, while supporting local businesses, increasing overnight visits, and generating economic impact. In 2020, the estimated number of visitors to Charles County totaled more than 380,000 and more than 340,000 visitors stayed in the county overnight. In 2021, the Welcome Center in Newburg received more than 98,000 visitors.

The county was highlighted by FOX5DC's Field Trip series, which focused on Maryland's seafood industry. The segments feature local restaurant Captain Billy's, two local watermen Billy Rice and Billy Kilinski, and the Maryland Crab and Oyster Trail. The county was also highlighted for FOX5DC's "5 Must Stops" segment, which featured eight county attractions, four local restaurants, and six community officials and organizations. The county also hosted several travel writers/ social influencers to produce paid search campaigns. These articles featured an array of county attractions to include 19 places of interest.

Charles County partnered with the Maryland Office of Tourism to promote the regional African American



*Charles County*  
Legends, Lore and Room to Explore

**Tourism Adjusted Sales and Use Taxes**

**Fiscal Year:**

**2020 = \$6.4M**  
**2019 = \$7.1M**

*% Change -10.1%*



**\$161.1 million**  
**Tourism Industry Sales**



**\$29.3 million**  
**Hotel Sales**



**730 thousand**  
**Visitors**

heritage guide during International Underground Railroad Month in September. The guide highlights the profound history of African Americans in Southern Maryland and was promoted through FOX5DC, reaching more than 59,000 viewers. This initiative brought a larger awareness to tourism assets within Charles County and encouraged increased travel to the area during the pandemic.

The county hosted Charles County Restaurant Week, which featured 21 county small businesses. The advertising initiatives included a variety of marketing channels that were displayed around the county and on digital platforms reaching approximately more than a million impressions. Additionally, the county produced a "Meet the Locals" video campaign. This campaign utilized the voices of local business owners to promote tourism and generate local revenue for Charles County.

In February, the county worked in conjunction with Patuxent Brewing Company to proclaim the month "FeBREWary" in honor of Maryland's craft beer month. In conjunction with this proclamation, Patuxent Brewing Company launched "Sunken Sips" a new IPA inspired by the "Ghost Fleet" shipwrecks at Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary. The beverage label incorporates a QR code that links back to the county tourism website, [www.ExploreCharlesCounty.com](http://www.ExploreCharlesCounty.com) so that customers can learn about the history of Mallows Bay. This was brought to life through a collaboration with the county, the brewery, and business owner of Shop 53 and label designer, Shannon Wang.

**April 2021 • Food Network**  
**Celebrity Chef Robert Irvine Took**  
**Over Grille No. 13**

**June 2021 • Southern**  
**Maryland Welcomes Families**  
**Featured in Recreation News**

**July 2021 • 35th Annual Music & Sound**  
**Awards Keith Grasso Receives National**  
**Lifetime Achievement Award**

**March 2021 • The Crazy Tourist Blog: 15**  
**Best Lakes in MD, featuring Wheatley**  
**Lake, Gilbert Run Regional Park**

**August 2020 • WJZ-TV (Baltimore)**  
**featured Patuxent Brewing Co.**  
**during Black Business Month**

**June 2020 • CBS News featured Mallows**  
**Bay Shipwrecks in small Maryland bay**  
**gives rise to a "wildlife mecca"**



**LEGENDS, LORE AND**  
**STORIES GALORE**

[ExploreCharlesCounty.com/See-Do/Press/In-the-News](http://ExploreCharlesCounty.com/See-Do/Press/In-the-News)

## Goal 1: Economic Development and Supportive Services

# INFRASTRUCTURE/SERVICES

### Expanding Broadband Access

Charles County has continued to make strides in the deployment of high-speed internet to our unserved residents, largely in rural areas of the county. In 2020, the county developed a Broadband Strategic Plan which defined three types of unserved areas, including:

#### Category 1

Unserved per the guidelines outlined by the Federal Communications Commission, no existing broadband infrastructure in the area

#### Category 2

“Pockets” in areas where broadband infrastructure exists but has not been extended due to area not meeting cable provider’s density requirements

#### Category 3

Long driveways where the cost of extending to the home is a barrier for service

The county continued its efforts with broadband partner, ThinkBig Networks, LLC, and broke ground on the Nanjemoy/Cobb Neck (NCN) Broadband Buildout. Construction has progressed concurrently throughout both project areas, and ThinkBig lit its first Nanjemoy customer on November 15, 2021 (pictured). Per the grant requirements, the full project must be completed by August 2023.

In addition to the NCN Broadband Buildout, the county has been awarded more than \$600,000 in state funding to bring service to four areas in the county in Category 2 neighborhoods through the Expansion of Existing Broadband Networks Grant. The county worked with Comcast to identify qualifying areas close to their existing infrastructure. Through this project, 151 residences are scheduled to receive access to high-speed internet by December 2022.

On November 30, 2021, Charles County Government launched a pilot broadband grant program designed to assist Category 3 Charles County residents and businesses with funding for the construction costs of long driveway “service drops.” Additionally, this grant program provides an opportunity to assess the number of Category 3 properties and to determine future funding needs.

Overall, there are opportunities for broadband expansion in each of the three category areas that the county is continuing to work towards in the future.



[www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/NCNBroadband](http://www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/NCNBroadband)  
Frequently Asked Questions • Easement Details • Project Updates



**INFRASTRUCTURE/SERVICES**

# Managing Stormwater

Completed during Fiscal 2021 by staff, contract inspectors, and maintenance contractors



Inspected **4,990** stormwater basins and /or inlets



Removed **319** tons of trash and debris from stormwater basins



Repaired **25** stormwater basins

Swept **1,156** miles of roadway



Re-lined **1,052** feet of deteriorating corrugated metal stormwater pipes to extend life expectancy



Inspected, cleaned, and repaired

**341** stormwater management ponds



Mechanically grouted **895** feet of failing reinforced concrete stormwater pipes to extend life expectancy



Vacuumed **46** stormwater basins, and...

Cleaned **77** stormwater pipes



Applied **744** stormwater management basin markers — “No Dumping” and “Only Rain in the Drain” — on curb inlet storm drains in multiple neighborhoods throughout Charles County

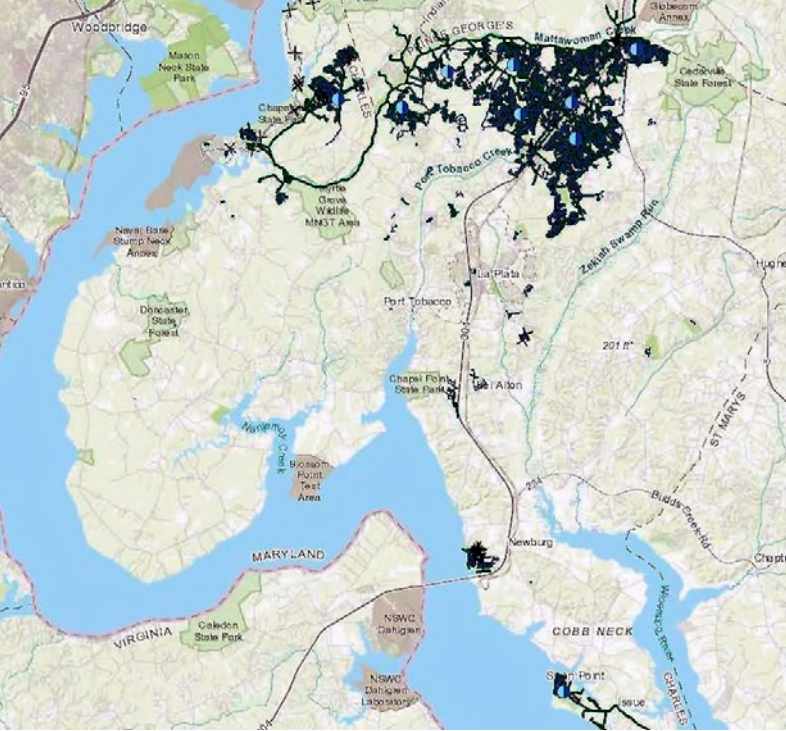


Removed **142** tons of trash and debris with mechanical sweeper



In fiscal 2021, Charles County received record rainfall totals which forced staff and contractors to repair dozens of failing stormwater pipes and sinkholes.

The details shown here are a direct result of our ongoing **Stormwater Proactive Maintenance inspection program** via the Watershed Restoration and Protection funding. Over the last eight years this program has grown to ensure that stormwater infrastructure is properly maintained and in excellent working condition. By proactively inspecting our stormwater infrastructure yearly, the county saved money and has significantly reduced the cost of emergency and catastrophic failures.



## Protecting Water and Sewer Infrastructure

The county maintains more than 500 miles of sanitary sewer mains and more than 450 miles of potable water mains.

The county has deployed state-of-the-art, high resolution, survey grade, **geographical information system (GPS)** (pictured above) equipment to capture accurate GPS location coordinates of county infrastructure. In fiscal 2021, more than 1,800 assets were captured with this system, increasing the accuracy of our GPS allowing more efficient locating of assets in the future.

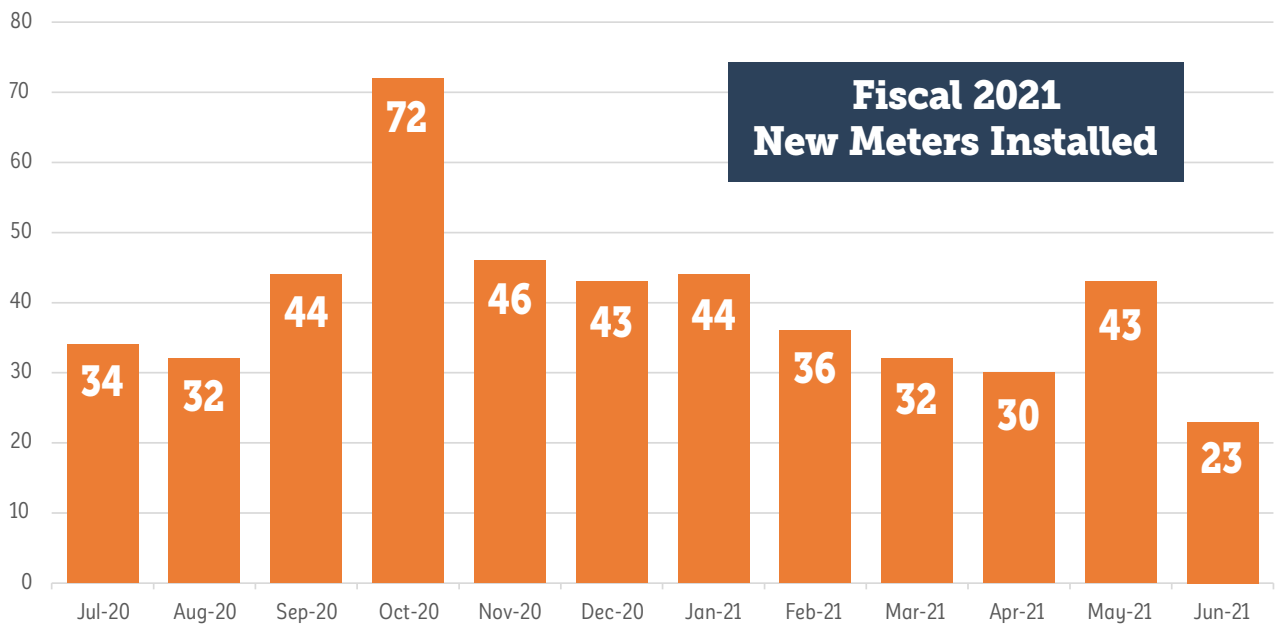
The county monitors 223 grease interceptors and 43 oil separators for proper periodic maintenance to ensure the county's sewer assets are protected.



The county also works with local businesses to protect water and sewer systems. Through the pretreatment program, the county conducted 176 commercial inspections in fiscal 2021 (see chart). These inspections ensure the proper equipment is installed at restaurants, food handlers, and automotive business to protect the county's sewer infrastructure and wastewater treatment plants.

The county also offers **hydrant meter rentals** (pictured above) to businesses with a need to access bulk water. There are currently 83 businesses participating in this program, which provides safe and metered access to large volumes of water to support business needs.

One of the sewer projects that the county is in the final phases of construction is the **Piney Branch sewer interceptor upgrade**. The upgrade will provide the necessary sanitary sewer capacity in support of the ultimate build-out of the development district. Construction of the project has an anticipated completion timeframe of summer 2022.





Goal 1: Economic Development and Supportive Services

# INFRASTRUCTURE/ SERVICES

## Helping Residents Reach Their Next Destination

Our local public transit system, **VanGO**, serves all of Charles County linking communities to medical facilities, retail, offices, schools, and other popular destinations, providing **more than 400,000 trips annually**. VanGO has direct connections to transit systems operated by Prince George’s, St. Mary’s, and Calvert County’s, as well as park and ride facilities providing links to commuter buses to Washington, DC.

All the VanGO fixed route buses are equipped with **bicycle racks**, making transit more accessible to patrons going to or from destinations a little beyond the service area.



VanGO operates an extensive specialized, door-to-door service for elderly and disabled residents unable to use the fixed route service. **More than 50,000 trips are provided annually**, with many patrons using **wheelchairs** or other mobility aids. VanGO drivers can provide door-to-door assistance to make the boarding and alighting process easier.

This vital service allows residents to access services, employment, and recreational opportunities. **More than 1,100 citizens** are certified to utilize this service.

## Fare Free Pilot Program

On January 3, 2022, VanGO started the six-month pilot program to offer free service for all riders. VanGO riders are able to board buses without paying a fare. The pilot program is to help those impacted by the pandemic and for older adults and people with disabilities. The program is a way to increase ridership while offering a free fare as a post-pandemic relief.



Most VanGO patrons use the service to get to work and for educational opportunities, and the patrons using the specialized, door-to-door service are disabled and on fixed incomes. The free fares will lessen riders’ financial burden and speed boarding.

The Department of Planning and Growth Management Transit Division will monitor the ridership data and evaluate its options moving forward during this six-month pilot program.

This pilot program is funded with several Federal Transit Administration grants intended to assist public transit agencies in maintaining services while recovering from the losses of farebox revenues. These grants are over a multi-year period, and the elimination of fares will not affect the county budget during this pilot program.



Visit [www.Go-VanGO.com](http://www.Go-VanGO.com) to learn more about Charles County’s public transit system, and the services we offer:

- Find My Bus — Double Map App
- System Map — Plan Your Trip
- Specialized Services
- Schedules, Fares, Alerts, and Notices

Listen to the Inside Your County Government podcast featuring Chief of Transportation, Jeff Barnett, as he chats about VanGO.

[Podcast.CharlesCountyMD.gov/209287/1623124](https://www.charlescountymd.gov/podcast/209287/1623124)





## Keeping Roads Safe

The county is responsible for maintaining and repairing all county roads, which are named roads, while the State Highway Administration is responsible for all numbered roads, such as Maryland Route 6. In addition to maintaining and repairing roads throughout the year, the county works to clear roads and keep residents and visitors safe during the winter months.

**In fiscal 2021, numerous road additions and improvements were completed in Charles County.**

Major roads that were paved with asphalt were Mount Victoria Road, Cracklingtown Road, and parts of Billingsley Road and Poorhouse Road.

A few safety improvements included applying slurry seal on the hills and curves of Billingsley Road to improve skid resistance which reduces vehicle accidents. There were also raised reflective pavement markers installed on the center line of Mount Victoria Road, Billingsley Road, and Poorhouse Road to assist motorists at night.

County staff and contract forces mobilized for seven winter weather events that totaled up to 8.5 inches of snow and ice and used 4,000 tons of salt to treat road surfaces for the season, which is a 50 percent reduction in salt compared to the amount used a few years ago.

**21** New roads were added

**33** Miles of roadway were resurfaced

*Incl: asphalt overlay, slurry seal, modified*

**9** Roads received overlay

**22** Roads were slurry sealed

**14** Roads were modified sealed

**25** Roads were crack sealed

**45** Roads were deep patched

**35** Miles of roadway were line striped

*(Approximate)*



## Moving Forward with Rapid Transit Options

Significant progress was made during the 2021 Session of the Maryland Legislature with the passing of House Bill 414, which requires the Maryland Department of Transportation to provide \$5 million per year (for five years) to complete an Environmental Impact Statement for the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit project, pending Federal matching funds.

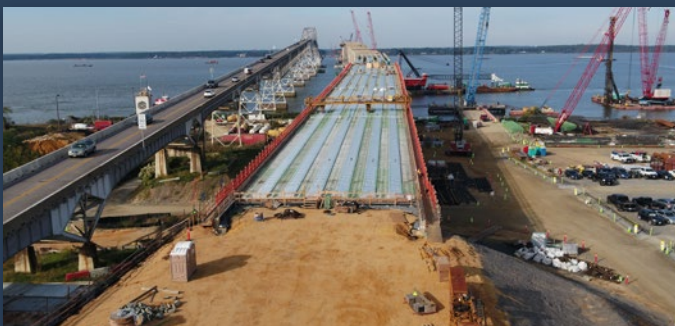
# Governor Harry W. Nice Memorial/ Senator Thomas “Mac” Middleton Bridge



## THE MARYLAND TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (MDTA) IS REPLACING THE EXISTING NICE/ MIDDLETON BRIDGE WITH A NEW BRIDGE THAT WILL:

- **Double the vehicle capacity** with four 12-foot-wide lanes, replacing the old bridge's two 11-foot-wide lanes
- **Improve safety** by installing a barrier-separated median between east and westbound lanes, adding two-foot shoulders and other improvements that meet current safety standards
- Eliminate lane-shifting safety issues at toll booths by replacing them with **all-electronic tolling**
- **Enable tall ships to pass** beneath its 135-foot clearance

Photos courtesy of Maryland Transportation Authority







Construction started in July 2020 and the new bridge is scheduled to open in early 2023. Under MDTA's supervision, the \$463 million design-build job is being performed by Skanska, Corman and McLean (SCM), a joint venture comprised of firms with local ties. The existing bridge demolition is scheduled for 2023 and 2024.



**FOLLOW THE BRIDGE PROGRESS AT:  
[MDTA.Maryland.gov/NiceMiddletonBridge/Home](https://MDTA.Maryland.gov/NiceMiddletonBridge/Home)**





## Goal 2

### Institutional Governance and Policy

Charles County operates an accountable and transparent government that is responsive to the needs and priorities of its community. Government staff deliver effective and efficient services that are responsibly managed and inclusive, equitable, and accessible to everyone.

#### Operational Excellence

Charles County will promote operational excellence through effective management, efficient and equitable service delivery, and stakeholder engagement with diverse constituencies inside and outside of county government.

- Smart City / County Concept
- Streamline Services / Comprehensive Zoning Review
- Diversity / Cultural Competency
- County Branding (Image/ Identity)
- Employee Engagement
- Citizen Engagement
- Automated Technology / Cyber Security
- Equitable Program Funding
- Information and Data Programming
- Form of Government from Code Home Rule to Charter

#### Public Policy

Support transparent governance and policy decisions, responsible resource management, and accountability for results.

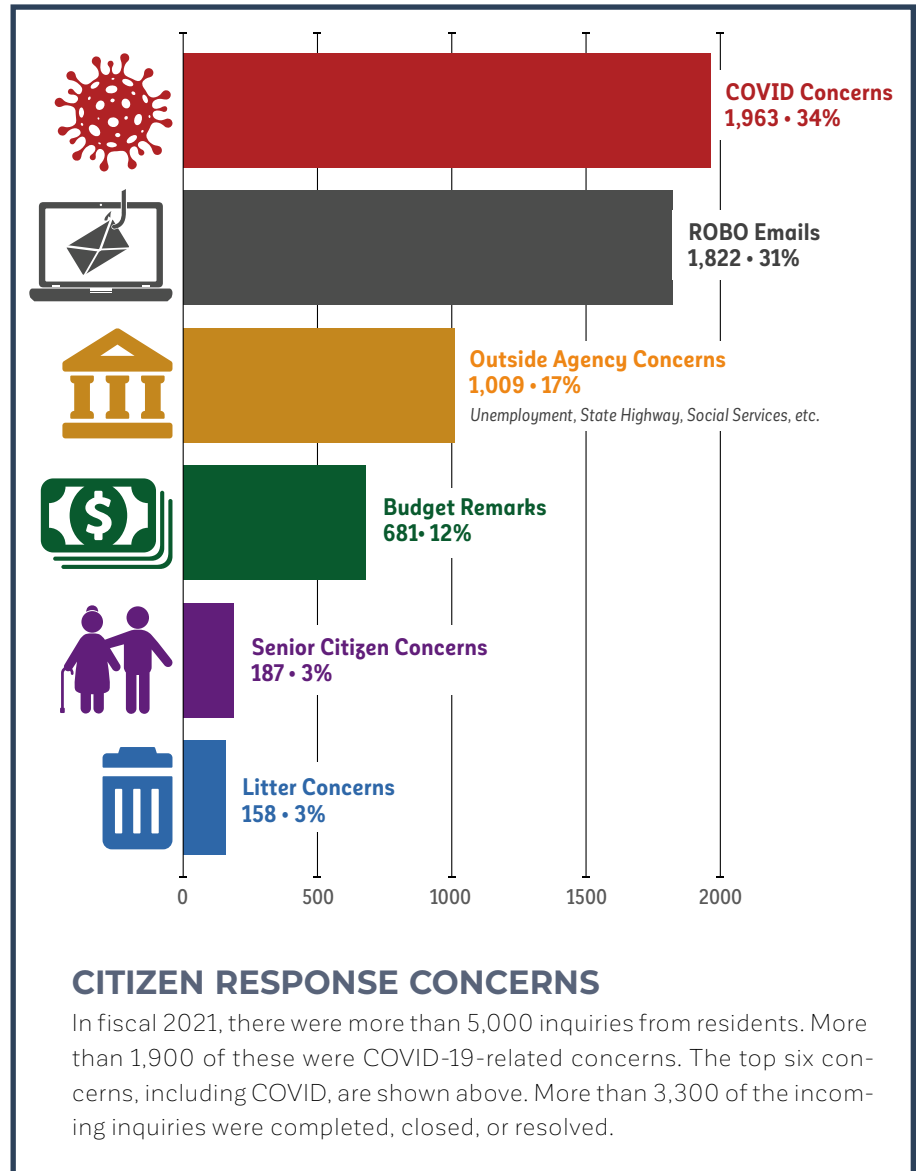
- Legislation, Governance Leadership
- Resource Stewardship (Asset Management, Fiscal Responsibility)
- Buy Local (Minority Business Enterprise)

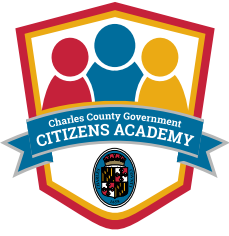
## Goal 2: Institutional Governance and Policy OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

### Responding to Resident Concerns

The county handles resident input, questions, and concerns through its Citizen Response Office. Residents can contact the office for streamlined communications and for timely responses by calling 301-645-0550 or completing the online contact form on the county's website at [www.CharlesCountyMD.gov](http://www.CharlesCountyMD.gov).

In fiscal 2021, the Board of County Commissioners approved funding for a commercial software platform, which will upgrade the current 12-year-old in-house database used to coordinate the citizen response cases. The County Commissioners also approved acquisition of a new Boards and Commissions software, which will offer residents a central, more comprehensive, searchable portal for easier access. It also has an e-comment feature. Residents will be able to submit comments or sign up to speak before any scheduled meeting in a one step process. This provides our residents an easier method to get involved, and provide input to county leaders.





## Expanding Engagement with the Community

The **Citizens Academy** program was designed to provide residents with a better understanding of Charles County Government operations through a 10-week program in which participants had the opportunity to hear from directors and staff from departments and participate in interactive discussions and activities. Each cohort is tasked with a class project: helping to find a novel solution to an issue in Charles County that affects government operations.

Along with educating engaged citizens, the Citizens Academy program recognizes the value of having knowledgeable citizen ambassadors in the community to help other residents understand and access services, and to provide County Government valuable feedback from the perspective of residents.

After a pause in the program due to social distancing concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic, the fall 2021 Cohort of Citizens Academy met from September through November 2021. This cohort included 14 residents, who applied to participate for a variety of personal and professional reasons. The cohort was selected by a panel of County Government employees in order to ensure a diverse class community.

The fall 2021 program included presentations from five County Government partner agencies, providing the cohort with a holistic view of how County Government shares resources. The fall 2021 class project focused on the issue of littering across the county. Participants identified what they felt were the four most relevant contributing issues that led to littering, and what novel approaches would be taken by this class specifically and what approaches could be taken by government operations. Their suggestions were shared with County Commissioners at their graduation in November.

# get Connected to Charles County Government

In addition to providing opportunities for individuals to become community ambassadors, the county also understands that building a digital reputation is essential to branding the county as a trusted source of information. The county provides new website platforms for County Government, tourism, and parks and recreation; social media pages on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Nextdoor, and YouTube; the Inside Your County Government podcast; and a county newsletter. More information is available on our main county website at [www.CharlesCountyMD.gov](http://www.CharlesCountyMD.gov). Charles County encourages residents to connect digitally on these platforms with their County Government and stay engaged in their community.

## THIS IS WHAT WE DO

Charles County Government offers a wide variety of positions. There are many jobs within our departments that allow staff to develop new skills, as well as grow in their career.

The Media Services Division produces a series of videos — “This is What We Do” — featuring our own employees. Viewers can watch the videos to learn more about the many faces of County Government, hear our employees speak about what they do, their passion for their positions, and how their roles impact our community.



Visit our YouTube channel and search for “This is What We Do” for videos showcasing County Government employees in action.

[www.YouTube.com/user/CCGTVCommissioners](http://www.YouTube.com/user/CCGTVCommissioners)



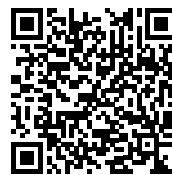
Goal 2: Institutional Governance and Policy  
**OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE**



### Ensuring Equitable Processes

The County Commissioners remain dedicated to working with partner agencies and organizations to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion in the county's policies and practices, and support a thriving business community.

With the direction of the County Commissioners and collaboration with the Economic Development Department, there was a disparity study completed within the county. As a part of this study, the county's Small Local Business Enterprise (SLBE) Program and a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Program for county procurement were reviewed. The study's findings allow Charles County Government to introduce race and gender conscious procurement policies and processes to make doing business with the county even more accessible to small local businesses, as well as woman- and minority-owned businesses. Implementation of the study's recommendations is underway.



View the disparity study results:

[MeetCharlesCounty.com/  
charles-county-disparity-study/](https://MeetCharlesCounty.com/charles-county-disparity-study/)

SLBE and MBE programs details:

[MeetCharlesCounty.com/  
local-minority-business-programs/](https://MeetCharlesCounty.com/local-minority-business-programs/)

The Charles County Board of County Commissioners is pleased to have approved Resolution 2021-24 Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in December 2021. The resolution highlights the importance of intentional consideration of diversity, equity, and inclusion in every facet of the work of public servants; creating equitable opportunities for all residents; embracing diversity; and addressing disparities.

As a part of this resolution, County Commissioners requested county staff to research and develop an equity impact assessment that shall be used as a tool for assessing the actual or anticipated effect of proposed policies, institutional practices, programs, plans, and budgetary decisions considered by the Board of Commissioners.



## Creating a More Efficient Permit Process

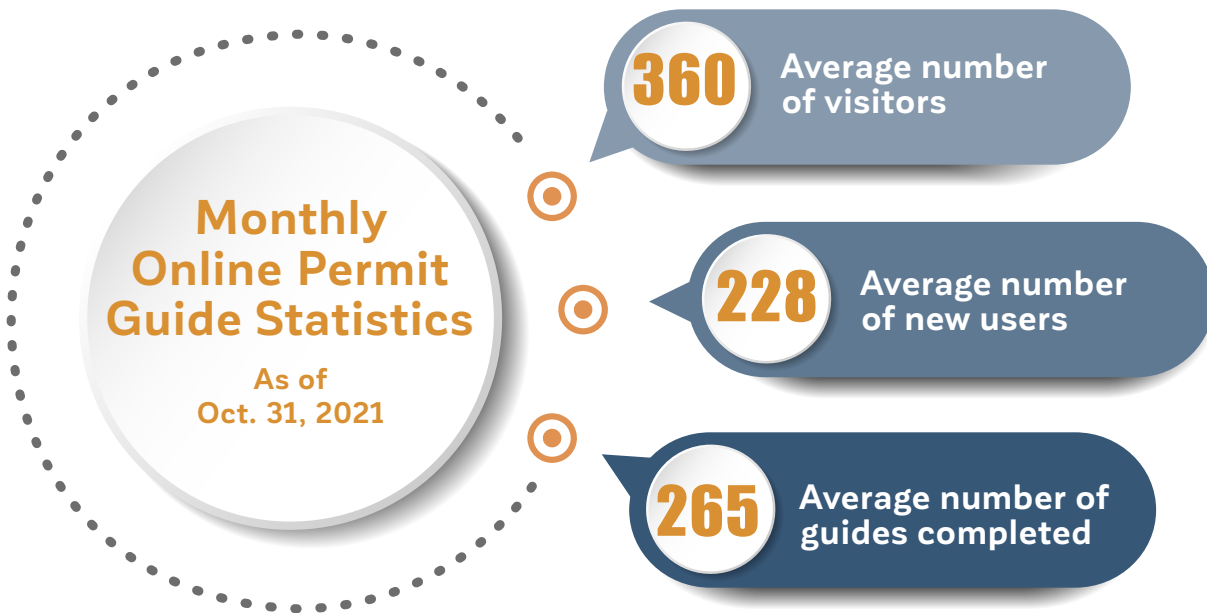
The county focused on analyzing the commercial and residential permitting process in 2020 and on ensuring that obtaining a permit is more efficient and customer friendly in 2021. Two of the changes with the biggest impact to residents included reduced permit plan review timelines and the introduction of the online permit guide system for residential permits.

“ Residential review timelines were **reduced by almost half**, going from 14 calendar days to six business days per review and commercial permit review timelines were reduced by two days per review. These efficiencies save residents valuable time when obtaining a building permit. ”



The new **Online Permit Guide system** is another key resource that can assist customers in navigating the permitting process. The county developed a commercial permits guide in 2020 and a guide on the most common residential permits in 2021. These guides detail the permitting process and set the customers' expectations by outlining the steps needed to obtain a building permit based on the project's location and specific project details. The online permit guide is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and will save the customer from making multiple phone calls or visits to the county building for permitting information.

With the new online guide, the permit applicant enters an address and answers a series of questions about the project. The software then generates a **customized guide** that lists the requirements for that permit type and the documents that must be submitted throughout the permitting process. Getting the new system up and running was a time-intensive project. The county will continue to build guides for the less common project types in the coming year.



**22% Increase**  
in the total number of permits issued in 2021

Overall, the county has seen a 22 percent increase in the total number of permits issued in 2021. The county remains dedicated to the continued analysis of permitting services, in order to keep up with the increased demand for permits. The most-commonly run guides are for residential decks and residential shed/pole barns.

## Goal 2: Institutional Governance and Policy

# OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

### Maintaining Codes, Permits, and Inspection Services

Charles County participates in the Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO) nationwide analysis of Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule. ISO is an independent statistical, rating, and advisory organization that serves the insurance industry and rates the communities primarily based on adopted building codes, permitting process, plan review, and inspection programs. The flood plain and stormwater management programs are also considered. The class rating range is 1 to 10, with 1 being the highest achievable level. To obtain a Class 1 rating, a score of 93 must be obtained (see below).

The county issues a large variety of permits each year. In 2021, the county issued a permit for one of the largest wood framed buildings in the State of Maryland. The four-story, approximately 193,623-square-foot building is under construction and will be utilized for independent living, assisted living, and memory care.

The county worked with the Charles County Board of Education on the permitting and construction of a three-story addition and renovation to the Benjamin Stoddert Middle School. The first phase of construction, three-story addition, and

associated infrastructure was completed by start of in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year.

The county completed **more than 9,100 infrastructure inspections**, as well as constructed, inspected, and placed into service more than four miles of water transmission mains and almost three miles of sanitary sewer transmission mains.

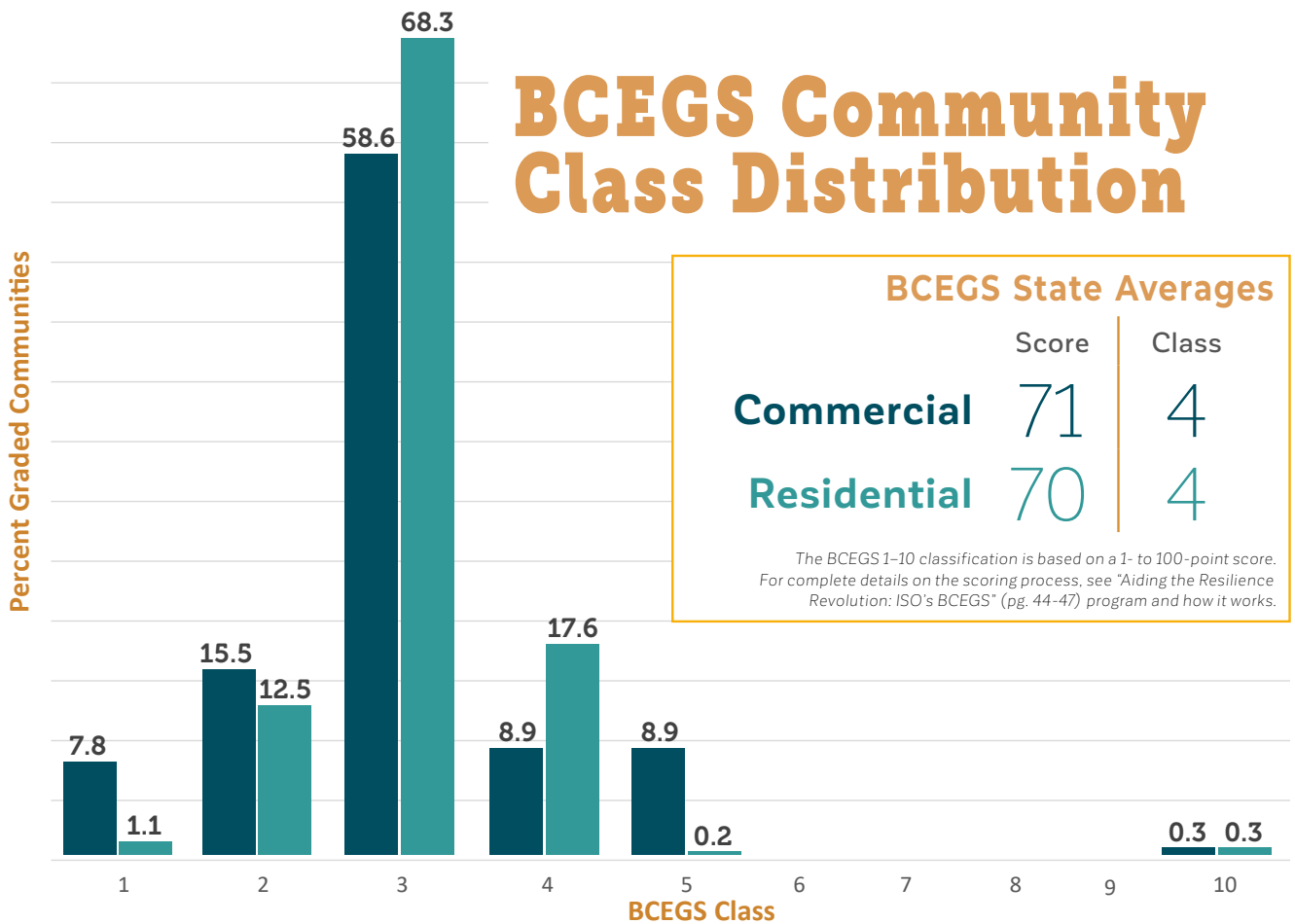
#### THERE WERE MORE THAN:

**2,400** zoning and nuisance inspections completed

**125** zoning violations and

**216** nuisance violation cases put into compliance.

**3,500+** stormwater management maintenance inspections completed.



## Updating Payment Options for Property Taxes and Water and Sewer Bills

The county has researched and plans to deploy improvements to the electronic payment platforms for county property taxes and water and sewer quarterly bills.

The tax payment processing will provide savings to the county and **reduce the convenience fees** charged to customers. It will be integrated with the county's financial system to decline payments that are escrowed, reduce administrative time, and allow the county to return funds promptly when necessary. This updated platform is planned to be launched in the first quarter of the new calendar year 2022.

The water and sewer payment processor change will also be effective in the first quarter of the new calendar year 2022. The research conducted to seek an **improved customer experience** and back-end administrative functions included multiple vendors and demonstrations of their products. Customers will be seeing more flexible options to suit their needs. New features include, but not limited to: Pay-by-Text, Apple/Google Wallet, and Recurring Payment Option.

The current e-Billing of the county only delivers the original quarterly invoice, but with the new system, customers will **receive quarterly invoices** plus a penalty notice and shut-off notice electronically. To further increase the benefits to our customer base, the county will look to begin securely collecting a primary mobile phone number contact for text reminders.



## Office Upgrades & Vehicle Repairs

To accommodate the Information Technology Division needs during COVID-19, the county renovated the existing space. The new space includes eight new cubicle offices and two framed offices for security purposes.

County staff also renovated the south region offices in Bel Alton, as well as replaced the cooling tower at the Sheriff's Headquarters with a new and more energy-efficient system.

The county has 617 tagged vehicles (cars, trucks, trailers) and 624 non-tagged vehicles (skid loaders, lawn mowers, etc.). County staff make repairs and follow a preventative maintenance program, as well as maintain supplies and materials for all employees.

## Improved Options for Paying Property Taxes and Water and Sewer Bills

- ✓ Pay-by-Text
- ✓ Apple/Google Wallet
- ✓ Recurring Payment Option





## **PUBLIC POLICY**

“ Charles County Government implemented a thoughtful and innovative approach to planning for the impacts of climate change that prepare us well for the future... to balance growth while preserving our rural character and ecologically sensitive areas as we move forward. ”



# Leading the way on **Climate Resiliency**

In 2021, the Charles County Board of Commissioners appointed the Board of Directors for the newly established **Climate Resiliency Authority**, a non-profit, government instrumentality financing organization.

The Resiliency Authority builds upon climate preparedness efforts including professional education for county employees, planning efforts to include our Climate Resiliency Plan and Nuisance and Urban Flood Plan, and projects to transition our energy consumption from fossil fuels to renewables. Some of the 'lines of effort' the Authority is working on include the Private Stormwater Improvement Prioritization Project and preparing to assist with the Morgantown Power Plant Redevelopment.

To further climate resiliency internally, there were more than 20 employees who completed the state's **Climate Leadership Academy** and 83 staff positions were designated for mandatory climate competencies.

**Charles County earned recognition** from both the National Association of Counties and Maryland Association of Counties for our Climate Change Preparedness Program. This is a whole-of-government approach to addressing an increasingly acute community challenge. The program focuses on mitigation by reducing our carbon footprint while lowering fixed expenses and attracting outside investment. It also works to increase the county's ability to adapt to a changing climate by building unprecedented competency for climate-smart decision-making among its workforce and reorganizing to most efficiently address the problem.

The county also approved the **Community Stormwater Management Action Plan** to support climate resiliency efforts. There was \$11 million designated for stormwater infrastructure improvements, as well as grants received for the Westdale Stream Relocation and Restoration Project, Military Installation Resilience Review in Indian Head, and to identify Zekiah Watershed urban flooding solutions.

In partnership with SMECO, Charles County expanded electronic vehicle charging stations for use in the community. The county also sponsored the Chesapeake Conservancy Internship Program for flood mapping project with Morgan State University students.

The county entered into an **Energy Savings Performance Contract** in 2020 to implement energy efficiency retrofit projects, which will upgrade lighting, implement water conservation measures, and HVAC upgrades at more than 30 county-owned buildings. Significant progress on these upgrades was made in 2021. Funds that were borrowed for these projects will be repaid with the energy savings. The county will benefit from the long-term, lower cost of these measures with the added bonus of using less energy.

## Goal 3

### Environment

Charles County is protecting the environment by carefully managing its natural resources; conserving its forested, agricultural, and rural lands; ensuring clean waterways and shoreline; and responsibly managing its solid waste. Charles County is integrating climate change management practices, investing in renewable energy sources, and replacing infrastructure that will ensure a clean and sustainable water supply.

#### Conservation Programs

Conserve natural resource assets through sustainable forestry and agricultural/rural land preservation. Plan and implement climate change best management practices throughout county government operations.

- Forest Conservation
- Agriculture Land Preservation
- Rural Legacy
- Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (Aquaculture, Agriculture, Forest)
- Transferable Development Rights
- Climate Change Best Management Practices

#### Natural Resource Management

Manage natural resources effectively by investing in renewable energy, reducing stormwater runoff and expanding recycling.

- Expand Solar Energy
- Provide Incentives
- Rainwater Collection
- Expand Commercial Recycling
- Reduce Impervious Surface

#### Environmental Management

Ensure clean water through effective wastewater treatment and stormwater management.

- Wastewater Treatment
- Clean Water Supply
- Storm Water Management

## Goal 3: Environment

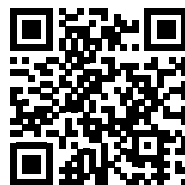
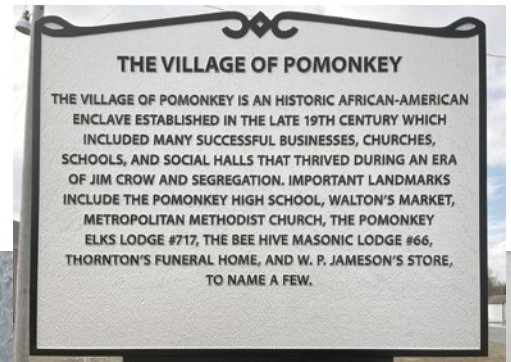
# CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

### Preserving Land

Conserving natural land helps protect water resources, maintain habitats for wildlife, and reduce air and water pollution. Through the Rural Legacy Program, Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program, and the purchase and transfer of development rights in calendar year 2021, more than **1,700 acres of forest and farmland are preserved in Charles County**. These conservation easement acquisitions represent a \$3.7 million investment in the conservation of our most valuable landscapes. In November, a second Rural Legacy Area was approved by the state's Board of Public Works. It encompasses 64,720 acres in western Charles County and protects sensitive areas of the Nanjemoy and Mattawoman Creek watersheds.

### Preserving History

It is also vital to preserve the county's rich history. The county has completed the **Pomonkey National Register of Historic Places** nomination, which recognizes the historic significance of an early 20th century African American community in western Charles County. The nomination was approved by the State of Maryland in October 2021 and is now pending approval by the United States Department of Interior. The recently nominated **Hughesville Commercial and Tobacco Waterhouse District** is expected to be approved by the Department of the Interior soon.



Watch the Your Charles County News show to hear stories from those who grew up in Pomonkey and the significance of the historical marker for the Village of Pomonkey.

[Youtu.be/xzzRtkaUEss](https://youtu.be/xzzRtkaUEss)



## Goal 3: Environment

# NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

## Protecting the Watershed

As part of the public outreach for the **Watershed Protection and Restoration (WPR) Program**, partnerships within the community were built to increase awareness of water pollution and to protect water quality. The storm drain stenciling program allows residents to volunteer to stencil storm drains with messages that remind residents and businesses that anything that goes into the storm drain goes into the nearest stream or river. In 2021, 25 storm drains were stenciled in the Glen Eagles community and 61 drains in the Scotland Heights subdivision.

The county has a visual watershed model that provides hands-on experience on how watersheds function and how activities on land can cause water pollution downstream. The model is shown at the Charles County Fair, local schools, and during the Citizens Academy program to provide education and awareness of the watershed.



Charles County continued their partnership with the Chesapeake Bay Trust to administer grants funded by the Stormwater Remediation Fee. The **Outreach and Restoration Grant** has supported the WPR Program since 2015 by providing funds for on-the-ground, community-based restoration projects that engage residents and benefit Charles County's rivers, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay. The award amounts are approximately \$50,000 annually, to:

- Develop an outdoor education pavilion area focused on environmental health with an adjacent rain garden at Craik Elementary School with the Nanjemoy-Potomac Environmental Coalition to develop a reusable bag design with students' artwork — Defensores de la Cuenca en Condado — for tree planting and other watershed stewardship activities
- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay for meadow planting and workshop at Serenity Farm
- Alice Ferguson Foundation to start Charles County Adopt-A-Stream Program



Charles County Government provides a variety of programs and services to address litter control, recycling, and disposal needs in the county.

Residents can get involved in efforts to keep Charles County clean and beautiful by volunteering for a community cleanup. The Charles County **Community Cleanup** in May was held at 17 locations in the county and collected 6.91 tons of litter. Residents can organize their own cleanup at [www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/cleanup](http://www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/cleanup).

The **Adopt-a-Road program** encourages residents and businesses to help combat litter by "adopting" a county road. Volunteer groups conducted 135 cleanings in fiscal 2021. These combined efforts removed nearly 200 tons of litter from county roadways.

**Household hazardous waste (HHW)** events collected 29 tons of household items that are toxic, flammable, corrosive, or reactive. Improper disposal of HHW can contaminate ground and surface waters, posing a direct threat to human health and the environment.

There were nine paper shredding events in 2021 with more than 28 tons collected. The county held two **Composting and Rain Barrel workshops** with 88 geobins distributed and three rain barrel events with 135 rain barrels distributed. These workshops provide residents an opportunity to learn eco-friendly practices and continue these efforts at their own household.

**In fiscal 2021,  
the County collected:**

**9,640 tons**  
**CURBSIDE RECYCLING**

**3,000 tons**  
**CURBSIDE YARD WASTE**

**23,341 tons**  
**RECYCLABLE MATERIALS**

Properly disposed of by residents at the four county-operated recycling centers

**120,000 tons**  
**TRASH ACCEPTED**  
At the Charles County Landfill

Goal 3: Environment

## ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

### Protecting County Water Supply

Charles County Government treats wastewater at the county’s wastewater treatment plants and ensures effluent treated water meets National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits. The county works to provide Charles County residents with clean and safe drinking and potable water. There are seven wastewater treatment plants, including Mattawoman, Mount Carmel, Swan Point, Bel Alton, Cliffton, Breeze Farm, and Cuckold Creek. The largest is the Mattawoman Wastewater Treatment Plant, averaging 14.3 million gallons per day.

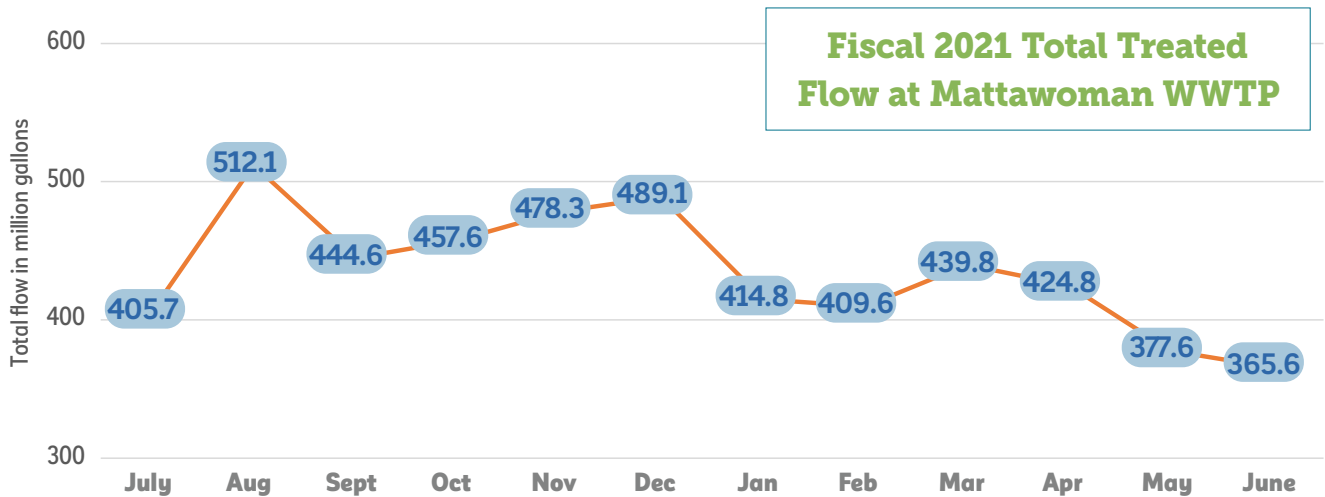
The second largest WWTP is Swan Point WWTP, total flow in million gallons treated (for fiscal 2021) was: 51.6 million gallons. Average daily flow at Swan Point was: 0.14 MGD.

The largest water system that the Operations Team is managing is the Waldorf Water System. Total water produced for Waldorf for fiscal 2021 was 2.1 billion gallons. Average flow for the Waldorf Water System was: 5.85 MGD. The county

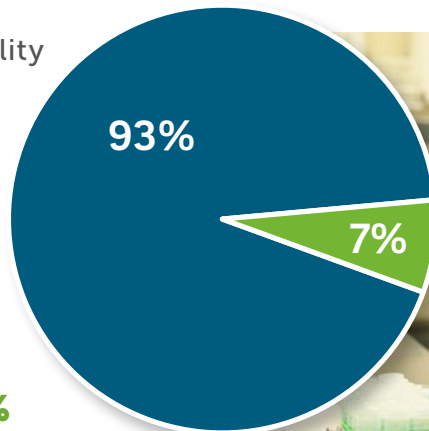
also manages other small water systems, such as Swan Point, Mount Carmel, Bel Alton, Chapel Point, Cliffton, and several others.

The Mattawoman WWTP houses the **Mattawoman Water Quality Lab**. The lab collects data throughout the year to ensure safety in the county’s water supply. In 2021, the lab provided analytical data from approximately 27,000 individual analyses that supported operations in both wastewater and drinking water. Of this total, about 93 percent of the test support wastewater, and 7 percent support drinking water.

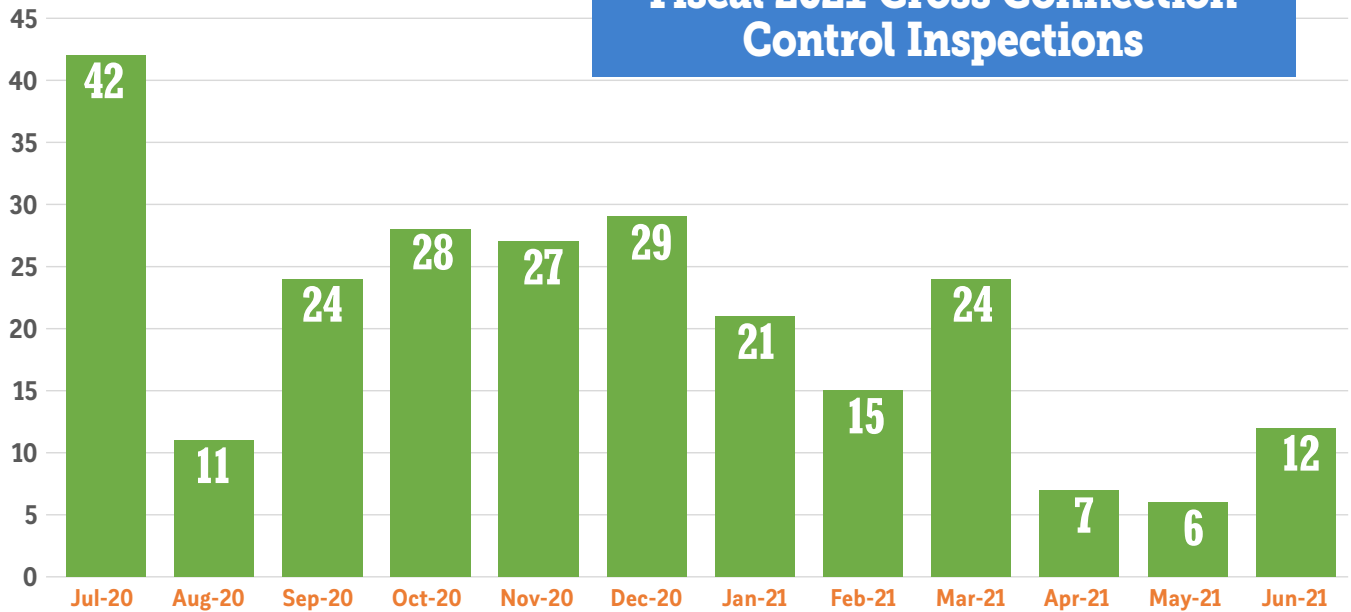
In 2021, there were 479 new water meters installed representing new residential units. There were more than 17,700 Miss Utility water and sewer main location requests in fiscal 2021, with zero at-fault damages. This perfect record is attributed to the skill of the county staff who properly mark our infrastructure.



The Mattawoman Water Quality Lab provided analytical data from almost **27,000** individual analyses that supported operations in both wastewater and drinking water. Of this total, about **93%** of the test support wastewater, and **7%** support drinking water.



## Fiscal 2021 Cross Connection Control Inspections



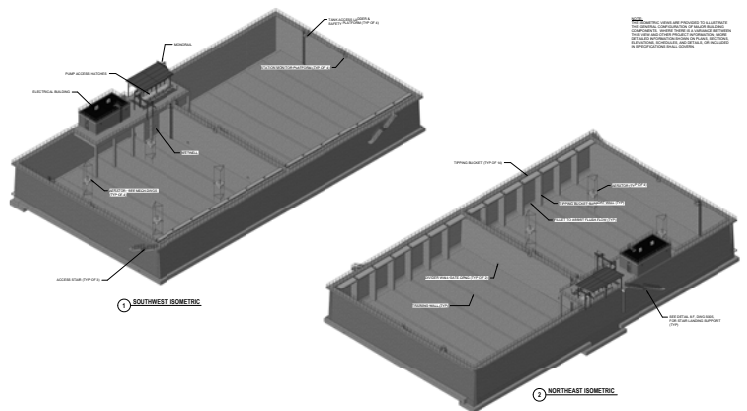
The county also provides **cross connection control inspections** to ensure backflow devices and assemblies are properly installed to protect the county's drinking water system. The county conducted 246 residential and commercial inspections in fiscal 2021. Backflow devices prevent cross connections from contaminating our drinking water supply. All assemblies are required to be tested annually by specially trained plumbers. In fiscal 2021, the county received 2,277 test reports indicating compliance with these requirements. The county has modernized test reporting, and more than 90 percent of the test reports were submitted online.

Dual-check valves are devices to prevent water that has flowed into a customer's residence from flowing backwards into the county water supply, protecting the county system. The county manages a program that overhauls approximately 2,000 dual-checks annually, meeting the maintenance requirements of the manufacturers.

The county is continuing work on infiltration and inflow projects to reduce groundwater intrusion and eliminate rainwater from entering the county's public sewer system. Groundwater and rainwater in the system reduces the capacity of the pipe, can cause sewer overflows, increases operational costs, and ultimately hampers the treatment processes at the Mattawoman Wastewater Treatment Plant. Pinefield area repairs are scheduled to be completed in winter 2021-2022. Upcoming repair areas include Ryans Woods and Hampshire Subdivisions.

The county is also working to replace aged process equipment at the Clifton Wastewater Treatment Plant, which was originally constructed in the 1970s and is rated to treat 70,000 gallons per day. The upgrade will improve treatment reliability and operability. Construction is planned to start in early 2022.

There is also a project to construct an 11.3-million-gallon concrete flow equalization tank and flow distribution chamber with associated equipment at the Mattawoman Wastewater Treatment Plant. The flow equalization tank and distribution chamber will store excess wet weather flow surges and regulate the daily flow to downstream processes. Construction is expected to be completed by spring 2023.





**Goal 4  
Education**

Charles County will ensure funding is prioritized to provide accessible, high-quality public education for children and youth and that training and advanced education opportunities are available to meet the needs of our future workforce.

**Board of Education**

Ensure adequate funding and school seats are available to provide high-quality public education.

- Funding and Formal Collaboration (Board of Education and Board of Commissioners)

**Education Advisory Board/  
Committee**

Collaborate on capital project planning, legislation and policy, and broadband infrastructure priorities.

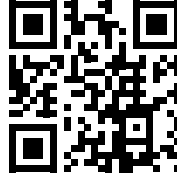
**Human Resource  
Development (County)**

Prepare employees for retention, advancement, and leadership in county government.

Goal 4: Education

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

The Charles County Board of Commissioners authorizes the county budget transfer of nearly half of annual revenues to the Board of Education of Charles County annually. In order to further support the Charles County Public Schools (CCPS), the County Commissioners allocated COVID-19 funds for additional cleaning, maintenance, distance learning, daycare, and food distribution of more than \$850,000 in fiscal 2021.



Visit [www.CCBOE.com](http://www.CCBOE.com) to learn more about our public schools.



**FEEDING SCHOOL CHILDREN**

CCPS Food and Nutrition Services expanded mobile meal delivery to neighborhood sites in January 2021 through mid-April, when CCPS entered into Phase 4 of its re-opening plan. From March 2020 to August 12, 2021, more than 1.5 million school meals were served.

Of that number, more than 103,000 meals were served via the Mobile Meals program from January to April 2021; other meals were available for curbside pickup at select schools around the county.

Meals were available to any Charles County child who was 18 or younger. The U.S. Department of Agriculture extended the free meal program through the end of the 2021-2022 school year, allowing all students a free breakfast and lunch daily if they choose.

**In fiscal 2021,  
Charles County Government  
exceeded the Board of  
Education's Maintenance of  
Effort by \$3.9 million and  
maintained funding to College  
of Southern Maryland and  
provided one-time funds  
for Velocity Center and  
other special projects  
as requested.**



## PROVIDING DISTANCE LEARNING

CCPS students and staff began distance learning in spring 2020 after the school closures extended past the initial two weeks. By the start of the 2020-2021 school year, CCPS went completely virtual with all students receiving a CCPS-issued learning device (a tablet or laptop) for distance learning. Classes were moved exclusively to the Zoom platform. At the start of the 2021-2022 school year, almost all CCPS students returned for in-person learning. A small percentage of elementary- and middle-school students continued to access classes online with Proximity Learning. High school students enrolled in CCPS's established virtual high school program, Virtual Academy, continued to attend classes online.



## IN-PERSON GRADUATION

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) celebrated the Class of 2021 during in-person graduation ceremonies at Regency Furniture Stadium in May and June. CCPS partnered with Regency Furniture Stadium and the Charles County Government to provide the nearly 2,100 graduating seniors with the ability to celebrate in person. The Class of 2021 earned \$157 million in scholarship offers. CCPS plans to host its Class of 2022 high school graduation ceremonies at Regency Furniture Stadium.

# Modernizing Schools

**Eva Turner Elementary School** has been modernized and modified to meet current educational program requirements. The upgrades include those made to mechanical and electrical systems to meet current standards and codes. The building opened for students in August 2021.

All existing spaces of **Benjamin Stoddert Middle School** are being modernized and modified to meet current educational requirements. The three-story academic addition, new administration area, new media center, and new kitchen were opened to students and staff at the start of the 2021-2022 school year. Renovation of the remaining areas of the existing building is scheduled to be completed in November 2022.

A project at **Dr. Gustavus Brown Elementary School** will create enclosed classrooms and corridors for the open spaces. The lighting will be adjusted, as will switching HVAC and other systems to accommodate the new classrooms. A new roofing system will be added. The project should wrap up in August 2022. Dr. Brown staff and students are currently in the Transition School located next to John Hanson Middle School in Waldorf.



The College of Southern Maryland (CSM) exists to promote social and economic mobility for its students through high-quality, low cost, and relevant instructional programs. The college meets this task everyday by collaborating with governments, businesses, and community partners to build coalitions and meaningful partnerships that benefit all students.

CSM launched its 2021-2024 Strategic Plan and introduced four clear goals. These goals include: improving student progress and completion; ensuring equity in all programs and services; building and sustaining the regional workforce pipeline; and fostering and sustaining a high-performing employee culture. To begin the work toward CSM's vision to be the "region's first choice for accessible, inclusive, and innovative education that transforms communities," the college accomplished the following toward its goals in 2021:

After 17 months of restricted or remote operations in response to the COVID-19 crisis, **CSM reopened its doors on Aug. 23** to welcome the return of the Hawks. The college is currently offering five different modes of learning. Flexible options include face-to-face, real-time technology, web-base, hy-flex, and hybrid.

CSM started the **Focus to Finish program** in the fall 2021 semester to offer classes in seven week course formats. Instead of taking all courses in a given semester simultaneously for four months, the Focus to Finish program allows students take half of their classes in the first seven week session and the other half in the second seven week session. This change allows students more opportunities to enroll (rolling admissions) in classes each year.

**Maintaining a safe working and learning environment** is part of CSM's community social contract. To ensure common safety on campuses in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, CSM announced in 2021 that it will require all employees and students to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, except individuals with approved exemptions, starting January 18, 2022.

During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, CSM took several **measures to help students** through this difficult time, especially in support of students' mental, emotional, and socio-economic needs. These efforts included significantly increasing the availability and variety of food for students in need, increasing the number and availability of counselors, providing free technology, and creating Wi-Fi cafes at CSM campuses to assist those with broadband issues.

CSM partnered with local churches to hold 14 **Mobile Hawk Feeders** from May 2020 to August 2021 and distributed a total 13,290 pounds of food to 333 students in need. In November 2021, CSM announced the opening of walk-in **Hawk Pantries** at three campuses. The new Hawk Pantry program is supported by local churches, CSM food drives, the Maryland Food Bank, and the recent launch of Farming 4 Hunger's Market Garden Demonstration at the Prince Frederick Campus to provide fresh and pre-packaged food for students with food insecurities.

In 2021, CSM **increased the number of transfer agreements** offered to students who want to continue their education at a four-year college or university. CSM now offers more than 200 transfer agreements with more than 60 partnering universities nationwide and in Paris, France. The college joined five other Maryland community colleges to form the Maryland Education Alliance (MEA) to further boost students' opportunities to earn associate degrees or certificates across the state.

Thanks to the **Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF) monies**, CSM was able to substantially assist students by providing direct support for academic expenses, expanding student mental health services, and ensuring future access to higher education regardless of disruptive circumstances. The student direct support took several forms to include tuition, books, food, and emergency funds (for housing, computers, internet, and more). The college has upgraded 37 classrooms to accommodate hy-flex learning and supported nearly 300 professors in learning new skills. The CSM Foundation continued to support students impacted by the pandemic. By November 2021, an additional \$193,000 was awarded to 364 students.



## CHRISTIAN CARSTON PLANS TO WORK TOWARD EQUITY IN HEALTHCARE

*My experience with CSM has been a phenomenal one.*

For Christian Carston, of Waldorf, his choice to study nursing at CSM was motivated in part by a desire to recommit to his education, as well as his determination to work in a field where he can ensure communities with people of color have equal access to quality health care — a mission inspired by CSM’s Nursing Pathway instructors.

“After taking a few years off from attending school out-of-state, I found my way to the College of Southern Maryland to complete my degree,” shared Carston. “CSM has afforded me the opportunity to become a more focused student while managing my other responsibilities outside of education. My experience with CSM has been a phenomenal one. I truly appreciate the community at CSM. From the staff to the professors, whenever I have needed assistance, there was always at least one person willing to lend a helping hand.”

Construction progress continues for the CSM’s new **Center for Health Science Building** at the college’s Regional Hughesville Campus. The Center for Health Sciences will be the second building on CSM’s Regional Hughesville Campus and will serve as a central, convenient location for the college’s health programs and instruction. Consistent with the college’s vision, the CSM nursing program strives to be the region’s first choice for accessible, inclusive, and innovative nursing education. The program is dedicated to decreasing healthcare disparities through the development of a strong, diverse nursing workforce and is proud of the diversity in its nursing program which is consistent with the demographics of the Southern Maryland area and exceeds national data regarding the nursing workforce.

CSM was proud to partner with county governments and regional businesses to have the tri-county region recognized as **ACT® Work Ready Community in 2021**. The Work Ready Community designation develops a strong workforce pipeline and certifies to businesses looking to grow or expand that Southern Maryland boasts a well-prepared and capable workforce that can meet their emerging staffing needs. It instills confidence that the region is a place where companies can grow and thrive, in turn creating jobs and fueling Southern Maryland’s economic engine. Listen to the podcast “Getting Southern Maryland Back to Work” at: [Podcast.CharlesCountyMD.gov/209287/8133055](https://Podcast.CharlesCountyMD.gov/209287/8133055).

The **Nonprofit Institute** at CSM’s work during the pandemic and in 2021 helped to redefine relationships and collaboration for the region’s nonprofits. Listen to the podcast “Nonprofit Institute” at: [Podcast.CharlesCountyMD.gov/209287/8758765](https://Podcast.CharlesCountyMD.gov/209287/8758765).

## Velocity Center

The college’s role in the economic revitalization of the Town of Indian Head received national recognition when the **CSM Velocity Center**, and related efforts to strengthen the region, took home a silver award from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) in the real estate and reuse category. The center became fully operational in 2021 and is home to resources for the broader community. The project has indirectly delivered 60 jobs to Indian Head and \$6 million dollars in enhanced commercial tax base to the town and county.



Watch the Velocity Center Video: [Youtu.be/THfrcxwEws](https://youtu.be/THfrcxwEws)



Visit [www.CSMD.edu](https://www.CSMD.edu) to learn more about Charles County’s community college.

## Goal 4: Education

# EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD/COMMITTEE



The County Commissioners approved updates to the **School Allocation Policy**, and directed staff to form the **School Funding Task Force**. The Task Force would monitor the pace of development and identify funding sources for schools. The task force is comprised of staff from the County Government, the Towns of La Plata and Indian Head, and the Board of Education. Task force members coordinate on capital projects such as school construction, security, and school renovations, as well as on legislation such as the school redistricting process.

Over the last several months, the committee has been gathering data on growth trends based on location, grade level, and dwelling type. The goal is to clearly define the demand for additional school capacity and assess the estimated costs to meet those needs. The task force will also be examining funding options, their benefits and challenges, and reporting to the County Commissioners on their findings in 2022.

There is also CCPS representation on the **Rural Broadband Task Force**, as student internet access is an important component of this effort. The county continues to allocate Public, Educational, and Governmental Access Channel (PEG) funding each year, which benefits CCPS with broadcast programming and fiber extensions.

## Providing School Seat Allocations

The Charles County Board of Commissioners is responsible for developing, revising, and enforcing the county's School Seat Allocation Policy, which regulates the location and amount of development activity that occurs in the county. In December 2020, the County Commissioners adopted a revision to the county's School Seat Allocation Policy. The policy updates ranged from minor changes that promote economic development, to more significant changes that promote mixed-use development (residential mixed with commercial, office, and retail), and developments that incorporate affordable housing. These changes included an annual cap on these priority development types to protect schools from overcrowding.

## School Allocation Eligibility Waiting List

The School Allocation Eligibility Waiting List (*opposite page*), that was presented to the Charles County Commissioners and Board of Education at their joint meeting on May 4, 2021, depicts how long projects have been waiting for school allocations. The amount of time that some of these projects have waited and could not record lots and build any houses ranges from one or two years to 27 years. To make the policy and process more predictable, the Sunset Provision was implemented, which allows projects that have remained on the School Allocation Eligibility Waiting List for six years to obtain school allocations and move forward with their project. On the sixth anniversary date of the initial/original approval of the preliminary subdivision plan or site development plan, the development project is granted 50 percent of the remaining allocations for the subject project based on the school allocation eligibility waiting list. On the seventh anniversary of the initial/original development project approval, the remaining allocations shall be granted. Additionally, it gives greater predictability to not only Charles County Government staff, but also the Board of Education staff to plan for the future of the school system.

## Priority Development Project

Another significant change to the school allocation policy was the implementation of the Priority Development Project (PDP) Allocation type. The PDP Allocation type was created to incentivize Mixed-Use and Affordable Housing in the Development District, as well as to encourage development in the Waldorf Central or Acton Urban Center Zoning districts. The implementation of this policy allows the urban area of Waldorf to still experience growth but do so in smart ways. Instead of sprawling development, this policy encourages vertical development. As mentioned previously, there is an annual cap on these PDP Allocations. This allows for the Charles County Board of Education to have time to plan for new capacity where necessary, by having a clear building schedule for each development project.

# 2021 SCHOOL ADEQUATE PUBLIC FACILITIES ELIGIBILITY LIST (DRAFT)

## Working Together to Plan for Public Education Needs

Neighborhood	Lots Approved	Remaining Allocations (Buildable Lots)	Date of Approval	AVAILABLE SCHOOL SEATS						Available to Allocate Lowest seat # = allocation
				Elementary School		Middle School		High School		
Number represents available capacity for school based on 110% State-rated capacity										
<b>Hunters Brooke</b> <i>No. of students projected based on the Hunters Brooke remaining available lots:</i>	319	61	3/7/1994	Gail Bailey	99 12	Smallwood	148 7	Lackey	508 9	99
<b>Falcon Ridge</b> <i>No. of students projected based on the Falcon Ridge remaining available lots:</i>	184	108	2/3/1999	Gail Bailey	99 22	Smallwood	148 12	Lackey	508 16	99
Brookwood Est., Sec II	146	101	09/24/2003	Diggs	49	Henson	0	McDonough	253	0
Scotland Heights	449	241	06/21/2004	Berry	131	Davis	191	North Point	0	0
Bryans Village	189	41	10/18/2004	Parks	105	Henson	0	Lackey	508	0
<b>Ironsides Escape</b> <i>No. of students projected based on the Ironsides Escape remaining available lots:</i>	21	2	12/12/2005	Mt. Hope	114 0.4	Smallwood	148 0.2	Lackey	508 0.3	114
Key Pointe Woods	26	14	11/19/2007	Parks	105	Henson	0	Lackey	508	0
Bryans Green	128	96	05/03/2010	Parks	105	Henson	0	Lackey	508	0
Fishers Grant	40	20	10/18/2010	Mitchell	21	Somers	0	La Plata	129	0
Fishers Grant, Rev #1	32	12	09/10/2012	Mitchell	21	Somers	0	La Plata	129	0
Chandlers Town Ph. 3	37	17	10/21/2012	Gail Bailey	99	Somers	0	McDonough	253	0
Piney Branch Estates	49	41	08/19/2013	Matula	172	Somers	0	St. Charles	243	0
Chandlers Town, Rev #4	1	1	01/27/2014	Gail Bailey	99	Somers	0	McDonough	253	0
Settle Woods	2	2	07/21/2014	Diggs	49	Henson	0	McDonough	253	0
Potomac Chase	176	176	08/18/2014	Parks	105	Henson	0	Lackey	508	0
Henson Landing	5	5	09/04/2014	Mt. Hope	114	Somers	0	Lackey	508	0
Autumn Woods	2	2	09/29/2014	Matula	172	Somers	0	La Plata	129	0
Myers Estates, Parcel A	11	11	06/08/2015	Parks	105	Henson	0	Lackey	508	0
Shepherds Creek	35	35	10/19/2015	Billingsley	146	Somers	0	McDonough	253	0
Westwood Townes	58	55	01/11/2016	Berry	131	Davis	191	North Point	0	0
<b>Swan Point</b> <i>No. of students projected based on the Swan Point remaining available lots:</i>	274	120	08/05/2016	Higdon	128 24	Piccowaxen	159 13	La Plata	129 18	128
Cambridge Meadows	16	16	08/22/2016	Martin	36	Somers	0	St. Charles	243	0
Fischer's Grant, Rev #4	63	63	09/12/2016	Mitchell	21	Somers	0	La Plata	129	0
South Hampton Square	37	37	02/27/2017	Parks	105	Henson	0	Lackey	508	0
Sunstone Grove	73	73	9/11/2017	Berry	131	Mattawoman	0	Westlake	208	0
Woods Edge	64	64	3/25/2019	Barnhart	48	Mattawoman	0	Westlake	208	0
<b>Brookestone</b> <i>No. of students projected based on the Brookestone remaining available lots:</i>	88	60	9/23/2019	Ryon	67 13	Hanson	25 7	Thomas Stone	415 8	25
<b>Milton Hill</b> <i>No. of students projected based on the Milton Hill remaining available lots:</i>	2	2	8/26/2020	Higdon	128 0.4	Piccowaxen	159 0.2	La Plata	129 0.3	128
Linden Grove, Rev #3	8	8	3/15/2021	Diggs	49	Henson	0	McDonough	253	0
Sunstone Preserve	113	113	4/5/2021	Berry	131	Mattawoman	0	Westlake	208	0
<b>Garland</b> <i>No. of students projected based Garland on the remaining available lots:</i>	3	3	4/19/2021	Craik	78 0	Henson	0 0	McDonough	253 0	0



Goal 4: Education

# HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

## INVESTING IN COUNTY EMPLOYEES

Charles County Government is committed to recruiting and retaining the best and brightest employees. A career with Charles County Government means you will work in a high performance organization with a team of more than 700 talented, skilled, and dedicated professionals who are invested in serving our residents and our community. We offer competitive benefits such as paid leave, tuition reimbursement, defined benefit retirement plan, and deferred compensation. We provide professional development opportunities and award-winning wellness initiatives.

**Continuing education and trainings provide great opportunities for innovation and growth for county employees.**

### LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Each year, county employees can participate in the county's Leadership Academy, which strengthens communication, leadership, supervisory skills for staff in supervisory roles, and those planning for promotions in the future. Upon graduating from the program, participants have the tools and resources needed to become more effective leaders. The Leadership Academy currently has 139 participants, and 165 employees have completed the academy since its inception in 2016.

Externally, nine county employees completed the National Association of Counties' High Performance Leadership Academy cohort in fiscal 2021 and there are 10 enrolled for fiscal 2022.

### DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

The county is also including diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training to begin in fiscal 2022 for the executive leadership team and the senior leadership team. Training classes include emotional intelligence, stereotypes and biases, understanding your organization, and future of your organization through DEI.

### JOB SHADOWING

The county is exploring a job shadowing program for employees seeking career growth. It would provide unique mentoring opportunities, as well as expanding knowledge in areas that can improve county efficiencies. County Commissioners also approved funds to implement an online learning management system for employees to begin in fiscal 2022.

 TEAMWORK	 COLLABORATION	 SUPPORT
 GUIDANCE	 LEADERSHIP	 COACHING
 MOTIVATION	 RESPECT	 MENTORING



Together we can cultivate an environment that normalizes conversation about diversity, equity, and inclusion. Options are available to employees to reach out directly to the DEI office to ask a question, report an issue, or request information.

## Conversations and Education

- DIALOGUE & DONUTS Meets monthly
- DEI TRAINING COURSES Available upon request.



Charles County Government is committed to cultivating a work culture that strives to be welcoming, inclusive, and equitable to all. We are accountable for treating everyone with dignity and respect. We embrace the power of diversity by creating opportunities for everyone to be included, heard, and valued in our community.

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Charles County Government filled the chief equity officer position during summer 2020. This position is responsible for cultivating an environment that normalizes, organizes, and operationalizes diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout County Government. The chief equity officer spent several months collaborating with staff to aid in the development of the organization's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) statement. Additionally, the chief equity officer evaluated demographic data to determine the focus for future DEI programs, policies, and initiatives. Finally, the chief equity officer presented a 3-year strategic equity plan to the Board of Charles County Commissioners in March 2021.

The equity strategic plan includes developing and implementing training that focuses on awareness and understanding of equity-related concepts. Effective fiscal 2022, all executive and senior leadership staff will participate in mandatory equity training. Equity training will be made available for the general workforce as well. Furthermore, conversations about race and equity are prioritized through a monthly program, "Dialogue and Donuts," which is open to all staff. The chief equity officer established anonymous equity reporting tools for the workforce to encourage staff to share their concerns. As the organization continues to solidify the importance of understanding concepts related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, oversight groups will be created and perform regular policy reviews to ensure accountability and evaluate opportunities for adjustments to ensure equitable outcomes for all populations.



**Goal 5  
Quality of Life**

Charles County works to sustain a high quality of life throughout both suburban and rural areas by protecting and preserving historical, natural, and recreational assets throughout the county. The county also works to ensure the safety and resilience of the community by proactively responding to safety concerns and being prepared for emergency response and recovery; providing active and passive parks and recreational amenities that support a healthy and thriving community; and promoting affordable and workforce housing availability for all who desire to live in Charles County.

**Public Safety**

Ensure the county is prepared to respond to both immediate and emerging issues regarding public safety and emergency response.

- Collaboration (Sheriff's Dept./Fire/EMS)

**Healthcare**

Accessible and Affordable Healthcare, Collaborate with Non-profits, Collaborate with Health Department (Opioid Prevention, Treatment, Enforcement)

**Recreation and Entertainment**

Provide for recreational amenities, leisure activities and entertainment that foster connections throughout the community and attract visitors to enjoy the historical, cultural, and natural resources the county offers.

- Parks and Amenities
- Stadium
- Agritourism
- Festivals
- Popes Creek

**Affordable/Workforce Housing**

Support policies and programs that promote safe, equitable, and accessible housing for residents that need affordable workforce housing options within Charles County.

- Housing Authority Committee
- Equitable Housing

**Goal 5: Quality of Life**

**PUBLIC SAFETY (EMERGENCY SERVICES)**

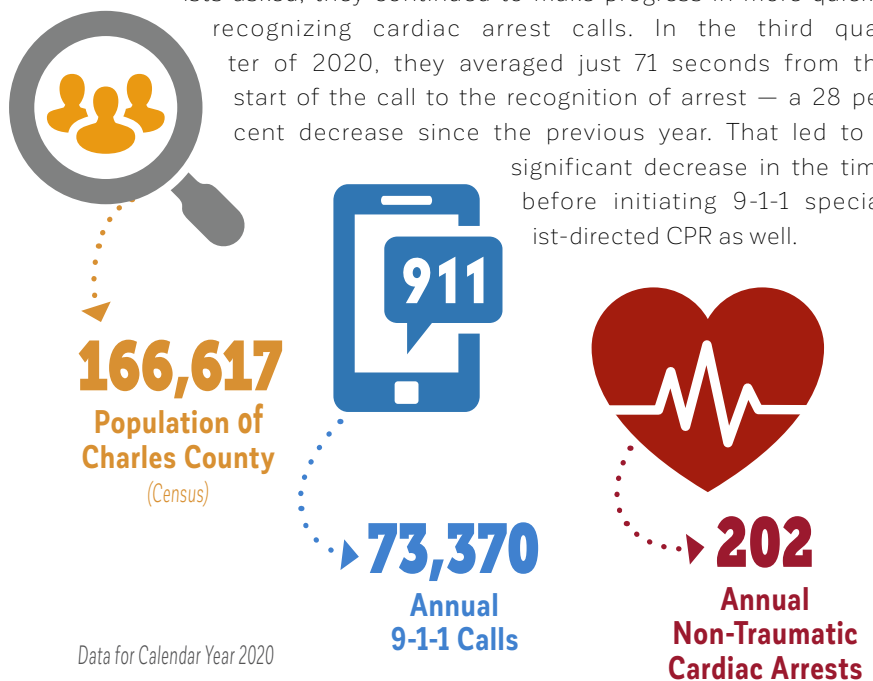
**Improving 9-1-1 Services for Residents**

Charles County continues to work to provide timely service to our residents facing emergency situations. The county utilizes **NextGen 9-1-1**, which routes 9-1-1 calls based on GPS coordinates. This service helps route calls to the correct 9-1-1 center and provides the option for callers to text 9-1-1 when they cannot call.

On Wednesday, Nov. 17, County Commissioners adopted **Bill 2021-09: Multiple-Line Telephone Systems**. The legislation adds Chapter 283 of the Code of Charles County, to ensure that any person using a multiple-line telephone system may direct dial 9-1-1 without dialing any other number or set of numbers. This law will implement Annotated Code of Maryland, Public Safety Article Section 1-314, known as "Kari's Law."

Every time a 9-1-1 specialist in Charles County answers a 9-1-1 call for cardiac arrest is an opportunity to make a difference by providing **life-saving telephone cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) instructions**. The county's leaders recognized that taking a CPR recertification course every two years was not preparing its 9-1-1 specialists to confidently, consistently, and quickly recognize every cardiac arrest and immediately coach callers to start chest compressions. Recognizing this, the county began utilizing a quality improvement program called the Resuscitation Quality Improvement-Telecommunicator (RQI-T), designed to measure and improve 9-1-1 specialist competency and performance.

With RQI-T, 9-1-1 specialists participated in quarterly cognitive learning activities online. RQI-T also helps Charles County measure and evaluate its performance on actual cardiac arrest calls. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on what questions 9-1-1 specialists asked, they continued to make progress in more quickly recognizing cardiac arrest calls. In the third quarter of 2020, they averaged just 71 seconds from the start of the call to the recognition of arrest — a 28 percent decrease since the previous year. That led to a significant decrease in the time before initiating 9-1-1 specialist-directed CPR as well.



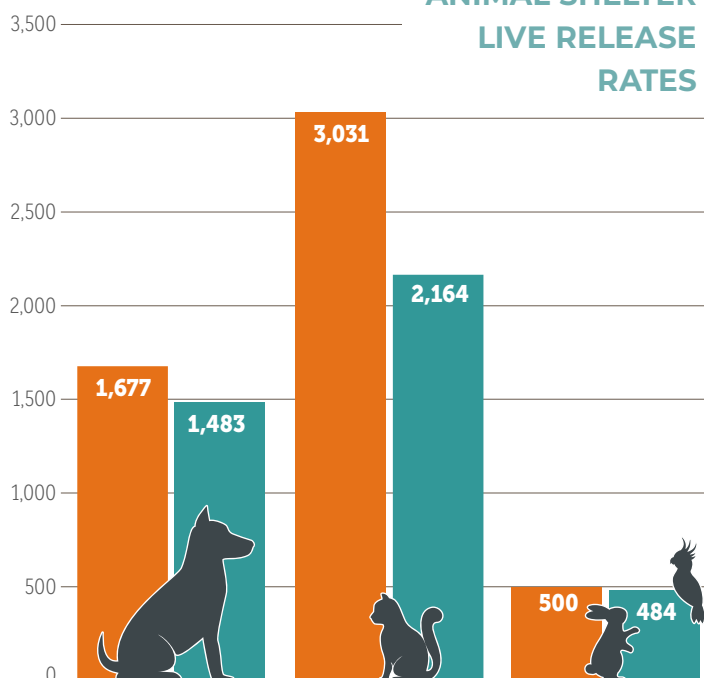


## Protecting the Public Through Animal Control

In fiscal 2021, the county responded to more than 5,800 calls for animal control service. Most of those calls were for public nuisance complaints — animals at-large, barking dogs, chickens in neighborhoods, and stray animal impoundments. More than 500 of these calls were for animals in distress and cruelty complaints with an additional 300 calls for vicious animal and bite complaints that generated more than 400 follow-up responses.

The Tri-County Animal Shelter provides temporary shelter for the animals from Charles and St. Mary's Counties. Lost, stray, and unwanted animals are housed there waiting to be reclaimed by their owners or placed for adoption and rescue. The shelter strives to provide low-cost adoption programs and promotes the importance of spaying and neutering dogs and cats in order to reduce the number of homeless and unwanted animals in the community. The shelter promotes responsible pet ownership throughout the communities it serves. Residents can visit the shelter at 6707 Animal Shelter Road in Hughesville or view animals available for adoption online at [www.CharlesCountyMD.gov](http://www.CharlesCountyMD.gov).

### FISCAL 2021 ANIMAL SHELTER LIVE RELEASE RATES



	Intake	Live Release	% Released
<b>Dogs</b>	1,677	1,483	88%
<b>Cats</b>	3,031	2,164	71%
<b>Other</b>	500	484	97%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>5,208</b>	<b>4,131</b>	<b>79%</b>

## Continuing Inspections to Protect Public Health

The Charles County Department of Health works to promote, protect, and improve the health and safety of the Charles County community. The department licenses food service facilities, public swimming pools, septage haulers, refuse haulers, large outdoor music festivals, campgrounds, and pet stores that sell exotic birds. In addition to these duties, staff conduct percolation testing, building permit review, site plan review, record plat review, inspections of department licensed facilities, issues well permits, conducts water testing and beach testing, investigates animal bites for rabies risk mitigation, and permits and inspects the installation of onsite septic systems. The department also administers local grant funding through the Bay Restoration Fund for the installation of nitrogen reduction technology on septic systems. In fiscal 2021, the division:

Responded to **311** non-compliance complaints related to COVID  
with 19 COVID prevention mandates

Completed **572** routine food service facility inspections

Inspected & licensed **119** temporary food service facilities

Investigated **94** environmental complaints

Investigated **378** animal bite reports

Completed **198** percolation tests

Issued **266** well construction permits

Issued **392** septic permits

### Other Public Safety Functions

The Sheriff is the chief elected official who is responsible for the county's law enforcement and corrections. For more information on the Charles County Sheriff's Office, visit [www.ccsso.us](http://www.ccsso.us).

The Fire Department is an all-volunteer service and EMS volunteers supplement paid EMS staff in Charles County. For more information on its operations, visit [www.ccvfireems.org](http://www.ccvfireems.org).

Goal 5: Quality of Life

**HEALTHCARE**

**Promoting Healthy Lifestyles**

In an effort to addressing diabetes prevention in the county, the Department of Health implemented a Healthy Charles County Facebook page, children's cooking classes, virtual exercise programs, weekly and monthly group walks highlighting different county parks, and free access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

**Providing Assistance to Opioid Epidemic**

The county participates in the Opioid Fatality Review Team bi-monthly meetings with other local partner organizations and High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program with federal partners for collaboration and assistance with the opioid epidemic. The county has Narcan kits in county ambulances and county-maintained automated external defibrillators (AED).

The county-wide Drug Take Back Program provides drop-off locations at local pharmacies for unwanted or expired prescriptions and over-the-counter medications. In its fifth year of collections, the program collected 1,859.85 pounds for fiscal 2021. The program provides a safe alternative to keeping medications away from children, potential addicts, and county wastewater systems.



**COVID-19 Vaccinations for Older Population**

County staff assisted with the vaccination of older adults by scheduling senior appointments, hosting and staffing vaccine clinics at senior centers and other accessible community locations. In partnership with private and public health partners, seniors received assistance in scheduling 4,348 vaccinations through all the public clinics, which translated to more than 2,100 older residents being fully vaccinated. Many of these seniors would not have been able to get transportation to mass vaccination clinics or would not have been able to register independently on the website.

**Diabetes Prevention Education**

In fiscal 2021, the Department of Health held diabetes prevention programs, which were year-long lifestyle change programs focused on preventing type 2 diabetes. Additional information is available online at: [www.CharlesCountyHealth.org/Education-2/Diabetes/](http://www.CharlesCountyHealth.org/Education-2/Diabetes/)



**7 Programs • 2 online & 5 in-person**  
**102 Registered Participants**

**In 2021  
 the Dept. of  
 Health offered,  
 completed, or  
 distributed:**

- 9 Free Fitness Classes for Kids** (99 attendees)
- 66 Farmers Market Vouchers** (\$15)
- 1,159 New Social Media Followers** (Since June 2021)
- 8 Free Cooking Classes** (130 participants)
- 204 Free Fruit and Vegetable Boxes** Distributed
- 100 VanGO Vouchers** for Prevention Programs Attendees

## Goal 5: Quality of Life

# RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

### Supporting Recreational Opportunities for All Ages

Charles County provides offers activities and programs for all ages in the areas of aquatics, therapeutics, community centers, gymnastics, sports, summer camp programs, fitness classes, arts and crafts classes, personal enrichment classes, and special events. Throughout COVID-19 and even during the closure of some of our facilities, the programs and activities continued with modifications including moving programs outdoors to our parks or in a virtual format.

**RecAssist**, a Commissioner-funded, annual scholarship fund, provides eligible individuals with a \$150 program credit and a free **RecPass** giving them access to swimming pool and community center drop-ins. This provides equitable service opportunities for residents who benefit from recreational programs and services. In 2021, there were 72 RecAssist participants.



In 2021, the plans for a new **mobile recreation vehicle** were developed, funded, and approved. The vehicle will go into the community to provide recreational outreach by bringing programs and activities to our residents, rather than residents coming to county facilities or parks. The vehicle is planned to be ready for service later in 2022.



Throughout the year, the county organizes and directs the **sports programs**. Leagues are offered year-round for both youth and sports enthusiasts including soccer, basketball, volleyball, and numerous instructional clinics for other sports. In 2021, there were more than 9,300 participants.

There were limited operations for **county pools** due to COVID-19, but in June 2021, all six county pools opened to the public for daily admission swimming and limited water aerobics and swim lesson classes. There was an increased demand for these services with the closure of College of Southern Maryland swimming pool. There were more than 18,500 daily swim admissions and more than 1,100 swim lesson participants.

**Summer camps** returned in 2021 for limited capacity with in-person camps that were both indoors and outdoors. There were more than 2,200 youth that participated in summer camps throughout the 10 weeks. Camps included: Day Camp, Campnastics, Camp Co-Op, Adventure, Lego, Jr. Chefs, Art, STEM Wacky Science, Instructional Sports, and more.



### Supporting our Seniors' Quality of Life

Charles County plans and provides comprehensive services for older and disabled adults, and their family caregivers. This is critical to their quality of life, to ensure they have safe, affordable ways to enjoy recreation, fitness, and healthy lifestyles.

County staff also expanded access to programs and services to a larger, previously underserved population of older adults by planning alternative, innovative programming and new community outreach events, such as food distributions (pictured), drive-through activities, and expanded social media outreach and programming.



## Goal 5: Quality of Life

# RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

### Providing Parks and Open Spaces

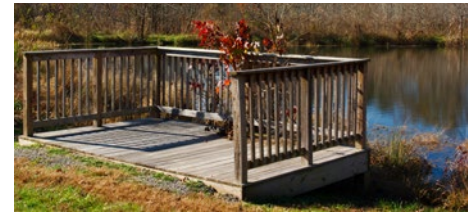
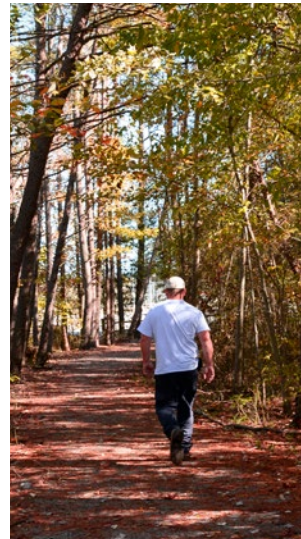
Charles County has 18 county parks, a natural resource area, two sports complexes, and the White Plains Golf Course. County staff manage park operations and facilities throughout the year, including snow removal in the county-owned parking lots, sidewalks, and steps.

Charles County Government develops and updates a five-year open space/park acquisition and development plan, which is designed to provide quality outdoor recreational facilities. Charles County's open space priorities include providing active and passive outdoor recreation opportunities for our residents; preserving natural heritage areas; and protecting sensitive and unique environmental features of the county.

In fiscal 2021, **Project Open Space** acquisitions included the Waldorf parking lot for the Waldorf Senior and Recreation Center; and the Popes Creek Waterfront Phase II. The county also is seeking acquisition of the Gilligan's Pier property and Godwin/Hungerford property, as well as development of the La Plata Farm Park. All of these would preserve open spaces in the county, protect wildlife, and provide additional outdoor opportunities for residents.

The Waldorf Park is in the design phase and is planned to include 215 acres of basketball courts, tennis courts, pickleball courts, playground, picnic shelter, restrooms, and six to eight athletic fields. There will also be a new outdoor basketball court at Bensville Park in White Plains. The county will also have two new synthetic, multi-purpose athletic fields, one at Laurel Springs Regional Park and one at White Plains Regional Park. Each field will be striped in different colors to accommodate five different sports to include soccer, football, boys and girls Lacrosse, and field hockey.

There are a variety of park projects to enhance public spaces and facilities, and one of these yearly projects includes the county maintaining and revitalizing playgrounds for youth in the community. In fiscal 2021, playgrounds at Gilbert Run Park, Laurel Springs Regional Park, Ruth B. Swann Park, and Bensville Park were revitalized, which included the addition of new equipment, fencing, and more park amenities for patrons to enjoy.



Goal 5: Quality of Life

**AFFORDABLE/WORKFORCE HOUSING**



**Expanding Affordable Housing**

Charles County Government reopened the **Housing Choice Voucher wait list** for the second time in 14 months, providing affordable housing opportunities for up to 800 households with a priority on economic and social needs and for the elderly, disabled, and veteran residents. The decreased number of total applications received by the housing authority, and the significantly decreased number of those applying who were elderly, disabled, or veteran households, is a positive indicator of increased housing stability for county residents.

Working to promote equity and bridge the wealth gap, the county assisted eight local families to move from renting through Housing Choice Voucher to **homeownership**. Interested candidates must have a successful history of participation in the rental program and be able to obtain a mortgage loan from a lender in order to purchase their home. The county also provided the Settlement Expense Loan Program for five first-time homebuyers, which provides assistance to low- to moderate-income, first-time homebuyers.

The county also utilized \$50,000 United States Department of Agriculture grant funds to **preserve housing** and fund essential home improvements for low-income, rural homeowners. These funds provide much needed assistance for some of the county's most vulnerable homeowners.

**Evaluating Current Housing Barriers**

The county is evaluating the creation of a **Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit Program**. In December 2020, the County Commissioners approved changes to the county's school allocation policy/regulations which include an affordable housing component with a minimum of 25 percent affordable/workforce housing.

Charles County is also considering code amendments to remove barriers and promote greater housing diversity, including improvements to the regulations for accessory dwelling units.

**ASSISTING RESIDENTS WITH HOUSING NEEDS DURING COVID-19**

Charles County awarded and administered nearly **\$7 million in state and federal housing assistance** funds, to prevent evictions and support local tenants and landlords affected by COVID-19 through two Community Development Block Grants and the Emergency Rental Assistance Program.

More than 700 households were assisted due to these efforts.

2020-2021 COVID-RELATED RENTAL ASSISTANCE SUMMARY			
Grant Name	Total Grant Award*	Amount Spent/Obligated	Households Served
<b>Community Development Block Grant CV-1</b>	\$200,000 - \$50,000 • DHCD transfer to SMTCCAC = \$150,000		
Provider: United Way	\$150,000	\$150,000	27
Provider: Tri-County	\$50,000	\$50,000	133
<b>Community Development Block Grant CV-2</b>	\$750,000 • 3.3% Admin to CCG		
Provider: MASSB	\$725,000	\$575,000.00 (79%)	67
<b>Emergency Rental Assistance Program</b>	\$5,897,393 • 3.3% Admin to CCG		
Provider: United Way	\$1,230,000	\$1,230,000 (100%)	113
Provider: Lifestyles	\$1,916,700	\$1,631,700.00 (85%)	175
Provider: SMTCCAC	\$2,353,300	\$1,703,000.00 (72%)	274
Provider: Legal Aid Bureau	\$200,000	\$35,493.25 (17.7%)	97
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>\$6,847,393</b>	<b>\$5,375,193.25</b>	<b>886</b>

\*Total award amount includes approved budgets for all allowable grant activities within grant period, including budgeted administrative costs to deliver services. Surplus administrative allowance is shifted to provide additional rental assistance to eligible residents.

# GARE AND CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## Racial Equity and Advance Opportunities

GARE (Government Alliance on Race & Equity) is a national network of governments working together to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all. The work of GARE is outcomes based with an emphasis on improving outcomes for all members of the community. GARE provides in-depth training to jurisdictions embarking on equity work. GARE’s process for achieving equity employs a national best practice of normalize, organize, and operationalize.

**Normalize** conversations around equity using a shared framework for definitions and analysis.

**Organize** the internal infrastructure and put measures and structures in place to ensure the government has a solid foundation to support equity work.

**Operationalize** to make data-driven decisions with an equity lens as part of everyone’s job, including policy and legislative work, programming, and service delivery.

The training includes results-based accountability, use of the racial equity tool kit, communications, and understanding the government’s role in achieving equity within our communities.

Charles County has been an active participant in the GARE training since 2019. Our first cohort included five Charles County Government leaders — County Administration, Emergency Services, Community Services, Planning and Growth Management, and Human Resources. The county’s second cohort consists of eight representatives strategically selected due to the impact their work has on the community we serve. The training for cohort two started in September 2021. Members of the both groups work closely to support success in this body of work.

“

**Racial Equity Means ...**

Closing the gaps so that race does not predict one’s success, while also improving outcomes for all.

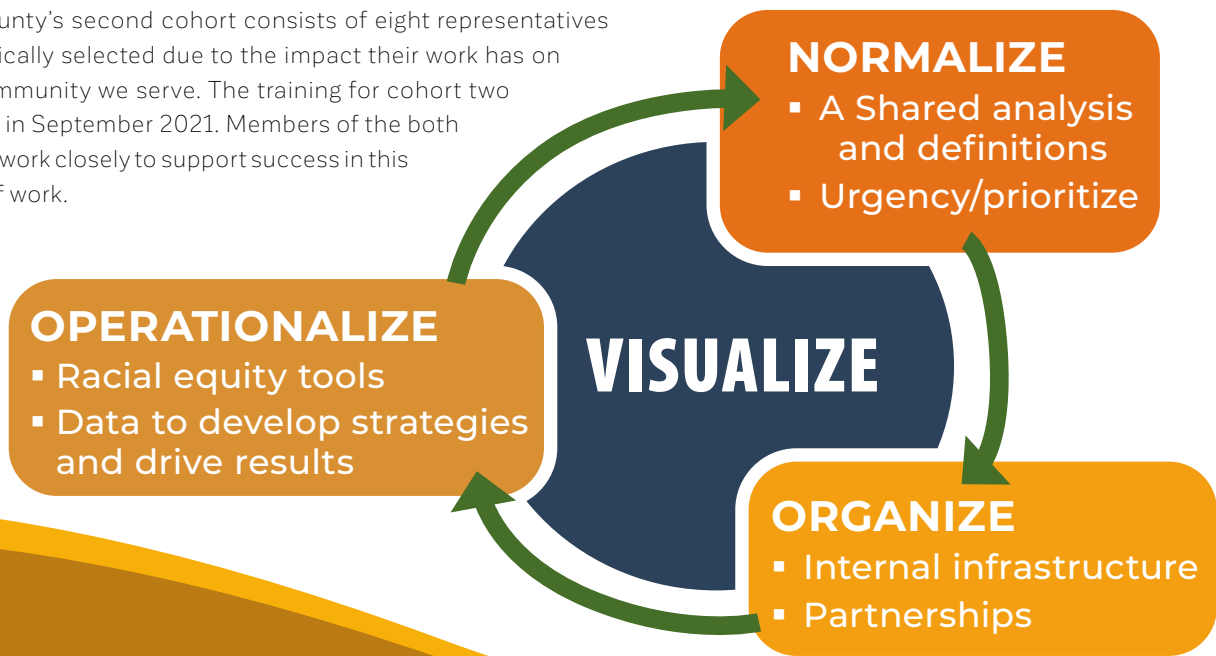
**To Close the Gaps ...**

We center communities of color to target improvements for those most burdened by racial inequity.

**Moving Beyond “Services” ...**

To transform policies, institutions, and structures.

”





# CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

## Charles County Receives Three NACo Awards

Charles County Government is the recipient of three National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Awards, recognizing the county's: Climate Change Preparedness Program, the Nanjemoy/ Cobb Neck Broadband Buildout Program, and the Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary.

The NACo Achievement Award Program recognizes innovative county government programs throughout the nation.

"It is a great honor that Charles County has been recognized by NACo for working to protect our environment, helping our infrastructure become more resilient, and increasing broadband connectivity throughout our community," said County Administrator Mark Belton. "This recognizes the diligent work of Charles County employees, even during a pandemic, as outstanding public servants providing quality services to residents. National recognition like this for a relatively small jurisdiction shows that we are 'punching above our weight' as a county government organization."

Charles County received an award for the **Climate Change Preparedness Program**, which is a whole-of-government approach to addressing an increasingly acute community challenge. The program focuses on mitigation by reducing our carbon footprint, as well as increasing the county's ability to adapt to a changing climate.

The second award was for the **Nanjemoy/Cobb Neck Broadband Buildout Project**, which is a multi-million-dollar endeavor to construct and operate a 90-mile fiber optic network for two large, unserved rural areas in the county. The buildout will provide the connectivity for more than 1,400 residences and businesses and is expected to be completed in August 2023.

The third award was for the **Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary**, which is the first national marine sanctuary designated since 2000. This sanctuary designation is vital in preserving the county's unique history, protecting abundant wildlife for future generations, and helping to spur an increase in tourism and boost the local economy.

NACo is passionate about advancing excellence in public service to help people and places thrive across America. The NACo Achievement Awards honor counties which are innovatively working to strengthen services for their residents.

## County Retains AAA Bond Rating

For the fifth consecutive year, all three major national bond rating agencies have reaffirmed the county's AAA bond rating. Bond rating experts met with county leaders to review the health and stability of the county based on budget management, external audits, financial management, and economic development. Top bond ratings are earned by demonstrating the strength of the county's financial position and economic stability. This allows the county to maintain low interest rates when repaying bonds. Charles County issued \$70 million general obligation bonds in November 2021 to fund improvements in schools, general government facilities, roads, stormwater, and water and sewer projects.

## County Recognized for Excellence in Budget Presentation and Financial Reporting

For the past 26 years, the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has presented a Distinguished Budget Presentation Award to Charles County, Maryland for its annual budget. To receive this award, a governmental unit must publish a budget document that meets program criteria as a policy document, as an operations guide, as a financial plan, and as a communications device. The county has also been awarded a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial reporting for the past 19 years. The goal of this award is to encourage and assist state and local governments to go beyond the minimum requirements of generally accepted accounting principles to prepare annual comprehensive financial reports that evidence the spirit of transparency and full disclosure. The awards are valid for a period of one year only. We believe our documents will continue to conform to program requirements, and we will be submitting them to GFOA to determine their eligibility for another award.

# GET CONNECTED TO CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

## CharlesCountyMD.gov



### 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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