

Fiscal Year 2014

ANNUAL REPORT

To the Citizens of Charles County



WHAT'S INSIDE

Commissioner Initiatives

- Candice Quinn Kelly, President. 3
- Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq.,
Vice President (District 3) 4
- Ken Robinson (District 1) 5
- Debra M. Davis, Esq. (District 2) 6
- Bobby Rucci (District 4) 7

- Economic Development 8
- Tourism 10
- Educational Achievements. 12
- Recreational Opportunities 16
- Quality of Life 18
- Safe Communities 20
- Public Health 24
- Planning and Smart Growth 26
- Roads and Water Supply 30
- Safe and Affordable Housing. 32
- Environmental Awareness 34
- Transportation. 36
- Government Efficiency and
Accountability 37
- Financial Stewardship 38
- Operating and Capital Budgets 39



Front Cover:
Popes Creek Rail Trail.
The project involves the acquisition of the abandoned Popes Creek Railroad corridor, which will aid in protecting tidal marsh areas, wetlands, and forested land along the historic Popes Creek Branch railroad corridor.

CHARLES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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

The Charles County Commissioners are responsible for:

- 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.

Regular Board Meetings

Meetings of the Charles County Commissioners are scheduled each week and held in the County Government Building at 200 Baltimore Street in La Plata. The meetings are aired on the Charles County Government website, www.CharlesCountyMD.gov, as well as on CCGTV, Charles County's local government cable television station broadcast on Comcast channel 95 and Verizon channel 10.

Advisory Committees, Boards, and Commissions

The Charles County Commissioners appoint more than 65 commissions, boards, committees, and task forces, which advise them on topics ranging from land use and development to housing. Through this system, civic-minded citizens can get involved in county government. The county, in turn, benefits from the knowledge, experience, and advice of its own citizens. Vacancies are announced in the local media, on www.CharlesCountyMD.gov, and on CCGTV.

GET CONNECTED! To Charles County Government



www.CharlesCountyMD.gov



Mission Statement

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.

Vision Statement

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.



CANDICE QUINN KELLY

Commissioner President

Point-In-Time Homeless Survey

On Friday, Dec. 20, Charles County Commissioner President Candice Quinn Kelly and Commissioner Ken Robinson joined county and state elected officials, law enforcement and military personnel; veterans service organizations; survey coordinators; and volunteers at the "We All Count" Point-in Time kick-off event. The annual Point-in-Time survey is a count of every sheltered (living in shelters and/or transitional housing) and unsheltered (living on the street, in a vehicle, and/or hand-built structure) individual throughout Southern Maryland. The January 2014 survey focused on getting an accurate count of homeless veterans.

"One day those who served our country bravely will no longer be without a place to live, because 'We All Count,'" said Commissioner President Kelly.

The Point-in-Time survey is conducted biennially, and provides agencies with data on the homeless population. Results can lead to funding for local agencies to assist the homeless population, including veterans. Annually more than 1,000 individuals and families experience homelessness in the Southern Maryland region.



Rural Housing Initiative

The Rural Housing Initiative (RHI), a program administered by the Department of Community Services Housing Authority, provides financial assistance to low- and moderate-income residents for home repairs and indoor plumbing installation. In fiscal 2014, the Housing Authority's widespread promotion for the RHI program resulted in outreach to more than 700 citizens and responses to more than 200 citizen inquiries.



To help further outreach efforts, Commissioner President Candice Quinn Kelly, with approval of the full Board of Commissioners, helped to create and initiate a new fee-for-service program. Kicking off in January 2014, this program reached out to local nonprofit organizations and other social service agencies for their assistance in reaching citizens who may benefit from this assistance. As a champion of the RHI program, Commissioner Kelly is a strong proponent for innovative ways to help Charles County residents with home repair and indoor plumbing needs.



REUBEN B. COLLINS, II, ESQ.

Commissioner Vice President • District 3

Summer Youth Employment

The Summer Youth Employment program is administered by the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland. The Department of Community Services serves as the pass through for the monies allocated to the program, which matches identified youth to an employer based on their interests and a completed skill assessment. In addition to job matching, youth learn financial management, appropriate work attire, work attitude, and other job/life skills to better develop them for their future. The identified youth are often challenged in high school, have legal involvement, may be teen parents or are experiencing other risk factors as identified by Tri-County Council.



Fiscal 2014 was the second year the County Commissioners contributed \$30,000 in financial support to the program. The Tri-County Council Summer Youth Employment Program enrolled 27 youth, of which 25 maintained employment during the 6-8 week summer program time

frame. The average pay was \$9 per hour, with youth working 30–35 hours per week. Four youth were hired on by their employers following the program's ending. Due to increased demand for the program, the Commissioners approved \$50,000 for the FY15 budget.



Waldorf Beautification Project

Commissioner Reuben B. Collins, II, set forth a goal to raise awareness of the need to beautify Waldorf, as the gateway to Charles County and home to one of the county's oldest communities. The Waldorf Beautification Project was established to meet this goal. The project gives businesses, homeowners associations, neighborhood representatives, civic and charitable organizations, students, elected officials, and interested citizens an opportunity to join together to make a difference.

In fiscal 2014, the Waldorf Beautification Project featured a spring kickoff event announcing plans to start a litter prevention campaign and expand recycling efforts. Other successful community improvement initiatives included a student poster contest, the Autumn Colors of Waldorf Photo Contest, and placement of signs reminding citizens of the project's slogan, "With Pride, We Prosper ... Help Keep It Clean!"



KEN ROBINSON

Commissioner • District 1

CSM Hughesville Campus

The County Commissioners provided funding, along with the state, to support the College of Southern Maryland (CSM) locating a fourth campus – a regional campus – in Hughesville. The campus will be situated across the Route 5 bypass from the Harley-Davidson motorcycle dealership. CSM began working with an architect on the master plan for the first building, a 40,000-square-foot Center for Trades and Energy Building, which outgrew its leased 18,000-square-foot facility in Waldorf.

Commissioner Ken Robinson (District 1) voiced strong support for CSM’s purchase of 74 acres of land in Hughesville as the campus site, which will include specialized offerings and programs to serve the region in a more cost-effective and convenient way. In addition to campuses in La Plata, Leonardtown, and Prince Frederick, CSM also runs the Center for Trades and Energy Training (CTET) in Waldorf, the Center for Transportation



Training in La Plata, and partners with the University of Maryland, University College in operating the UMUC-CSM Waldorf Center for Higher Education.



Popes Creek Rail Trail

Charles County was awarded a \$1 million federal grant to preserve 220 acres of the Popes Creek watershed. The grant is a result of a partnership between the County Commissioners, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and the Trust for Public Lands.

The Popes Creek Rail Trail project involves the acquisition of the abandoned Popes Creek Railroad corridor and several adjacent properties. The project allows for future recreational trail development, access to Potomac River waterfront, and protection of important coastal wetlands and forests along Popes Creek. Once completed, the trail will highlight several aspects of Popes Creek’s history, including its Native American presence and placement along John Wilkes Booth’s escape route following President Lincoln’s assassination.



DEBRA M. DAVIS, ESQ.

Commissioner • District 2

Western Charles County Business Roundtable

On Sept. 5, 2013, a group of concerned citizens and officials gathered at the Village Green Pavilion in Indian Head for the Western Charles County Business Roundtable. The event came about in response to feedback from western Charles County business owners. Those present discussed their shared vision for western Charles County in 10 years, including: a vibrant airport with 6,000-foot runway, new terminal, and restaurant with tourist display; a thriving business area in close proximity to the waterfront and naval base; a main street community with shops, restaurants, Black Box Theater, and other arts amenities; and recreational assets such as the Indian Head Rail Trail, Potomac River, and Mattawoman Creek.

The Western Charles County Business Roundtable discussions were energizing, productive, and generated an atmosphere of collaboration and community pride. Following the event, the Department of Economic Development submitted a written report to the County Commissioners recommending a two-pronged follow-up approach – one focusing on Bryans Road and another on the Town of Indian Head. The Bryans Road plan includes supporting and facilitating the Maryland Airport expansion to enhance commerce and create an inviting “front door” for visitors arriving to the community by air. The Town of Indian Head plan starts with a meeting to identify the town’s goals and objectives and develop a county government support strategy.

Bond Rating Presentation

Each year, county officials travel to New York City to meet with bond rating experts and review the health and stability of the county based on budget management, external audits, financial management, and economic development. In fiscal 2014, the three major bond rating agencies affirmed high ratings for the county’s general obligation bonds.

Following the bond rating presentation last year, Commissioner Debra M. Davis, Esq. (District 2), who

The Charles County Board of Commissioners

In conjunction with
The Western Charles County Business Association

Invite you to a:

Western Charles County BUSINESS ROUNDTABLE

To facilitate business opportunities and partnerships.

- What kind of economic activity do we want in Western Charles County?
- How do we create an atmosphere for business opportunities?

Commissioner Debra M. Davis, Esq., District 2, has invited key business leaders to work to develop a SWOT Analysis.
Identifying the economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

**Thursday
Sept. 5, 2013
From 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

**Indian Head Pavilion
100 Walter Thomas Road
Indian Head, MD**



Lunch will be provided.

The favor of a reply is requested.
Please RSVP to Ms. Kenberly Stephens at 301-645-0552
or by email at JohnsonK@CharlesCounty.org

Sponsored by the Charles County Board of Commissioners
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helped present the comprehensive summary of the county’s economic profile, said, “After participating in the three rigorous presentations with top financial analysts, it is gratifying to receive such high ratings, which show that we continue to move in the right direction and display the confidence that Wall Street has in Charles County.”

Bond proceeds are used to fund various capital projects for the Board of Education, water and sewer system, stormwater system, and road maintenance.



BOBBY RUCCI
 Commissioner • District 4

Charles County Community Drug Forum

Southern Maryland has seen an increase in heroin/opiate overdoses and heroin-related deaths. On May 27, the County Commissioners convened the Charles County Community Drug Forum "A Time to Listen" at La Plata High School. Citizens shared their experiences, thoughts, and recommendations on drug abuse in Charles County. Elected officials and representatives of public advocacy organizations listened to feedback from citizens to use in creating a countywide anti-drug initiative that addresses unmet prevention and treatment needs.

Commissioner Bobby Rucci (District 4) said, "I wanted to act and begin something positive to impact this crisis. ... We're losing young lives and can't afford to wait any longer."

The event was an opportunity for the public to become part of creating solutions to improve the health of the community. The County Commissioners held the forum to acknowledge the devastation of this disease and to demonstrate their commitment to understanding and responding to this community issue.

Stormwater Drainage Improvements

The Department of Planning and Growth Management's Capital Services Division manages the county's Drainage Improvement Program to correct drainage issues in communities recorded as experiencing serious drainage problems. In the past year, county staff worked on drainage improvement projects in several neighborhoods, including Carrington and Pinefield in Waldorf.

The Carrington neighborhood was experiencing issues related to the accumulation of trash and debris coupled with fallen trees, which contributed to poor drainage in open- and closed-section stormwater conveyance systems. Remediation costs are estimated at \$435,000. In the Pinefield subdivision, flooding occurs routinely in streets during heavy rain events. The department performed a study to identify major problem areas in the community. Estimated construction costs are \$2.8 million.

A time to listen...
COMMUNITY DRUG FORUM

Drug abuse is on the rise nationwide, and Charles County is no exception to this disturbing trend. We have many resources in our community dedicated to fighting drug abuse, including an active health department, law enforcement agencies, and educational system. Yet, there are areas where we could do more.

Tonight we are seeking your input on what's working and where we need to improve. We will listen to your concerns and develop a "system of care" in response to those needs. Tonight is about your voice and our ears.

From this Community Drug Forum, we will develop an action plan to benefit the entire community.

You are not alone.
Together we stand.
Together we find a solution.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Helping Small, Local, and Minority Businesses

The Small Local Business Enterprise (SLBE) program provides an innovative approach to create business opportunities for small, local, and minority-owned businesses, and increase their participation in county procurement. Since the program's inception in 2012, more than 1,000 eligible firms were contacted; policies, procedures, and implementation guidelines were developed; county staff trained; and information/resource seminars conducted. The Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services' Purchasing Division marketed the program using print and television advertising, social media, business community events, and relationships with organizations such as the Southern Maryland Black Chamber of Commerce, the Governor's Office of Minority Affairs, SMECO Supplier Diversity Program, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, the regional Minority Business Opportunities Task Force (MBOT), and the Department of Economic Development.

Fifty-four new businesses registered with the SLBE program in fiscal 2014. The division provided these businesses with information about the county procurement processes. Forty-nine existing SLBE firms were recertified. SLBE firms are reviewed annually to verify that they continue to meet eligibility requirements. The county spent \$2.8 million on goods and services from SLBE firms in fiscal 2014.

The Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) program continued to promote the development and encouragement of minority business participation in the county's procurement process by reaching out to new MBE firms. Staff participated regularly as keynote speakers at events, and as exhibitors at conferences, workshops, seminars, resource fairs, and trade shows. The division registered 64 new MBE firms, bringing the total number of registered firms to 351. Outreach to uncertified minority-owned firms increased by identifying existing MBE firms registered already as vendors with the county, but not registered as MBEs. Minority firms were encouraged to become certified with the Maryland Department of Transportation's Minority Business Enterprise Program.

The division created a directory of registered Charles County Government MBE firms, and placed the directory on the county website under the "Procurement Opportunities" section. The MBE directory listing serves as the official public record of registered MBE firms for use by county staff. Prime contractors use the directory to solicit MBE firms as subcontractors. The county experienced a 28.2 percent MBE participation rate for contracts awarded in fiscal 2014.





2013 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT
Charles County, Maryland
Health and Technology
A Prescription for Economic Growth

Supporting a Thriving Business Climate

In fiscal 2014, Charles County continued laying the foundation necessary to build the county's commercial tax base. Serving as the first point of contact for local businesses and those seeking to locate in Charles County, the Department of Economic Development continues to create the building blocks necessary to successfully market Charles County as a premier business location. The department developed a general brochure and a retail collateral piece to aid in Charles County's business attraction efforts as well as a marketing strategy and plan for a top-notch, competitive marketing effort to be launched in fiscal 2015. The department conducted a review of development incentives used throughout the region and the nation, and established programs to enhance the county's competitive position.

In addition to Charles County's business attraction efforts, the department worked to enhance the current business climate so local companies can grow and prosper. The annual Economic Development Summit focused on the growth of the health sector in Charles County. Special attention was given to western Charles County in

conjunction with the Town of Indian Head and others along the MD Route 210 corridor. The department laid the foundation for an ongoing Business Visitation Program, which is ready to begin implementation. The program will survey existing businesses in cooperation with county-based business organizations, enabling local businesses to vocalize concerns regarding Charles County's business climate. The program will enable staff to analyze issues and take appropriate action.

The department responded to numerous requests for information, and started creating long range projections regarding the Gross County Product, a measure of the county's economic health. An interactive geographic information systems (GIS) site location tool was added to the department's website. The tool allows users to easily find available Charles County commercial business locations via user-defined site parameters. Also, the department assumed responsibility for the Disadvantaged Business Loan Fund, and created the Targeted Industries Incentive Loan Fund.

TOURISM

Making Charles County a Tourist Destination

The Tourism Destination Plan study recognizes the importance of the tourism, leisure, and hospitality industry as an economic engine. This industry contributes to the economy by supporting jobs and creating visitor spending. Recent tourism economic statistics identify Charles County as an economic generator. Tourism in Charles County generated 3,199 jobs and \$187.8 million in industry sales. The tourism and consumer sales tax revenue generated \$6.9 million and \$8.8 million, respectively. In addition, tourism and hospitality assets in the admission and amusement category generated \$832,625 and room taxes generated \$987,960.*

celebrate *Charles!*

The Tourism Strategic Plan includes three marketing campaigns on state, regional, and local levels. The Maryland marketing creative features the theme “Maryland. Land of . . .” theme. It is featured in print and web advertisements targeting national and international travelers. “Destination Southern Maryland – Where Time & Tide Meet” is the regional marketing campaign created for the Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium. This marketing effort is used by Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary’s counties to target heritage/byway travelers.

The third campaign highlighted in the Tourism Strategic Plan is “Celebrate Charles!” which continued into its third year. The Celebrate Charles! campaign focuses on local citizens, emphasizing events and activities taking place in Charles County. Celebrate Charles! signature events included: A Fun-Filled Fourth family-friendly event on Independence Day, FallFest highlighting local farms and cultural arts, March From Benedict historical event, and Restaurant Week. Approximately 10,000 people attended these signature series events, which build awareness of and appreciation for Charles County’s attractions and facilities.

**Figures are from the Tourism Economic Satellite Account: The Economic Impact of Tourism in Maryland 2012; and Office of the Comptroller, FY 2013*



Crain Memorial Welcome Center Staff

Welcoming Visitors and Travelers

The Crain Memorial Welcome Center in Newburg offers travel assistance to more than 30,000 citizens each year. The center is one of the assets managed by the Tourism Office. The Crain Memorial Welcome Center is open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and offers valuable travel assistance as visitors enter Charles County and the state of Maryland. Travel counselors provide information and services for a positive trip experience. Citizens and travelers enjoy visual displays at the Charles County Museum, such as the oldest elevator (1939) removed from the original Physicians Memorial Hospital building, which is now part of the University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center campus on Garrett Avenue in La Plata. Visitors also enjoy energy displays including a wind turbine and electric vehicle charging station.



Port Tobacco Market Day



*Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at
Historic Port Tobacco Courthouse*

Highlighting Historical and Cultural Amenities

More than 800 tourism-related events take place each year in Charles County, ranging from weekly farmers markets, summer concert series, live plays, and church concerts, to culinary series, sports tournaments, birding, fishing tournaments, hiking, biking, fairs, festivals, bazaars, and flea markets. These events are advertised on the tourism e-calendar on the Charles County website (www.CharlesCountyMD.gov) and on the Southern Maryland region's heritage area e-calendar.

The County Commissioners entered into an agreement with the Society for the Restoration of Port Tobacco (SRPT) to maintain the Port Tobacco Courthouse, and Burch House (Catslide). Staff and society members offer visitors a guided tour themed around the history of Port Tobacco and highlighting the courthouse, Burch House (Catslide), and Stagg Hall. The Port Tobacco Historic Village is available to rent for special events such as community and corporate meetings, conferences, conventions, weddings, and family reunions. Special events hosted in the village include Port Tobacco Market Days, SRPT Membership Drives, the Charles County Holiday Trail, and the University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center Foundation annual wine tasting. The Port Tobacco Historic Village is open Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and is managed by the Tourism Office.



The Tourism Office worked to expand Charles County's cultural arts presence by promoting the arts in county attraction and events. Charles County Government Television produced television commercials highlighting the Celebrate Charles! event series, Indian Head Rail Trail, Crain Memorial Welcome Center, and Port Tobacco Historic District Market Days. The commercials aired on Comcast channel 95, Verizon channel 10, College of Southern Maryland Public Television, YouTube, and aired on the big screen at Regency Furniture Stadium during Southern Maryland Blue Crabs home games. Three cultural arts and tourism assets received county grants: the Charles County Arts Alliance, Mattawoman Creek Art Center, and the Maryland Veterans Memorial Museum at Charles County.

EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Opening Doors to Higher Education

With more than 27,000 annual enrollments, the College of Southern Maryland (CSM) is an open-admission, comprehensive, regional community college committed to fostering academic excellence and enhancing the lives of Southern Maryland residents. During fiscal 2014, the college received reaccreditation from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, and CSM's Medical Laboratory Technology associate degree program earned accreditation from the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences.

With campuses in La Plata, Leonardtown and Prince Frederick, CSM approved the conceptual design and master plan in May for the college's new Regional Campus to be located on 74 acres in Hughesville. The campus will provide offerings and programs to serve the entire region in a more cost-effective and convenient way. The master plan, as designed and presented by Grimm + Parker Architects, will create a sense of community and includes five phases of growth. The first phase will be the construction of a Center for Trades and Energy Training, which has outgrown its currently leased 18,000-square-foot facility in Waldorf. To meet the growing needs of students and these programs, the college is planning a 40,000-square-foot facility at the Regional Campus.

CSM opened its second building during the fall 2013 semester at its Prince Frederick Campus where the Center for Nuclear Energy Training is housed while construction on the Community Education Building at the La Plata Campus nears completion for a fall 2014 semester opening.

Additional facilities for CSM include the Center for Transportation Training in Charles County, and accelerated learning options at the Waldorf Center for Higher Education. CSM is a leader among Maryland community colleges in offering courses that meet the busy schedules of working adults with flexible learning options, including web-based courses, self-paced courses, web-hybrid blended courses, and mini-sessions.

Students choose CSM for its career-focused, transferable programs of study, outstanding and experienced faculty, great support services and connections for success, and its value. Students can save more than \$29,000 when they complete their freshman- and sophomore-level classes at CSM. With more than 28 formal articulation agreements with four-year colleges and universities as well as hundreds of schools that accept CSM credits, students can transfer easily from CSM to a partnering university while saving thousands of dollars on tuition, fees, housing, and transportation. The college signed articulations most recently with Howard University and St. Mary's College of Maryland. CSM students transferred successfully, both in-state and out-of-state, to 441 different colleges and universities in 45 states and the District of Columbia in the last year. Destinations include Maryland's universities and other highly regarded schools across the nation.





CSM is the first-choice provider of workforce development in Southern Maryland. More than 22,000 enrollees started, maintained credentials, and/or advanced in a career during the past three years. CSM is one of 14 organizations that has been awarded by the Alliance for Workplace Excellence (AWE) for its commitment not only to workplace excellence, health and wellness, and EcoLeadership, but also as a leading practitioner in diversity and inclusion. CSM has been an AWE Winner since 2002 and is one of 14 companies in 2014 that were recipients of all categories recognized by the AWE – the Workplace Excellence Seal of Approval, the Health and Wellness Trailblazer Award, the EcoLeadership Award, and the Diversity Champion Award.

CSM's community institutes address critical individual and community needs within the region. With funding from the Charles County Commissioners, the college coordinates the efforts of the Diversity Institute, and with support from the Charles County and St. Mary's County Commissioners, the college coordinates the Nonprofit Institute.

During FY2014, the college launched inaugural seasons for women's Cross Country and men's lacrosse, competing at the National Junior College Athletic Association Division I level. Among season highlights, the women's soccer team ranked sixth in the country, finishing the season 17-3-0 as Maryland Junior College Athletic Conference Champions, Region XX Champions, and District L Champions.

For information about the College of Southern Maryland, visit www.csmd.edu

EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Offering Places to Read and Learn

The Charles County Public Library showed strong attendance and usage growth in fiscal 2014, with more than 500,000 people visiting the library system. The libraries offer free public computers with high-speed Internet connections as well as free Wi-Fi. The Charles County Public Library offered more than 1,000 programs to people of all ages. Customers took advantage of free computer classes or one-on-one computer instruction to help them with their job skills. Customers borrowed more than 700,000 books, DVDs, and other items.

With the addition of the newest library, Waldorf West, the Charles County Public Library expanded its services to include rooms for small groups, quiet study rooms, and a business center, in addition to the larger meeting facilities. Meeting room usage is in high demand; almost 60,000 people used the space for meetings, training, classes, group projects, or tutoring help.

The Charles County Public Library continued to improve technology to better serve customers, including replacement of a 10-year-old integrated library system. The change to Polaris improved library catalog and circulation speed and ease of use. The library introduced newer digital services such as Zinio and downloadable e-books. The busiest branch, Waldorf West, uses Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology for more efficient library materials checkout.

Early literacy skills remain a high priority for the Charles County Public Library. Story times, Paws to Read, and other programs promote reading in children. The library continued its partnership with The Judy Centers and the Promise Resource Center. As part of the federal government's "Race to the Top" initiative, the library started a Parent Café at the P.D. Brown Library branch, along with special programs.



The summer reading program emphasized STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) to supplement the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) initiatives in the school system. With a grant from the American Library Association and The Best Buy Children’s Foundation, the library purchased makerspace kits to introduce teens to the world of circuitry and to promote digital literacy skills. With a grant from Dollar General, teens participated in the successful Battle of the Books program. The Charles County Arts Alliance awarded the library a grant, which funded a variety of performers to provide quality programs for families.

With a grant from the State of Maryland and financial support from the Citizens for Charles County Public Library, an underused area of P.D. Brown Library was converted into a café. With an exciting, more modern look, the café area will include a coffee machine and healthy snacks. This project will be outfitted with comfortable seating and ample outlets for charging mobile devices.

The Charles County Public Library continues to meet its mission “to acquire and make available information, books, and other library materials that most closely match the needs of our service community, the residents of Charles County.” The Library consists of four library branches located in La Plata, Indian Head, and two libraries in Waldorf. An outreach van visits day care facilities, senior centers, and the homebound.



RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Supporting Public Parks and Open Spaces

Charles County, working in conjunction with the Trust for Public Land, secured funding for two significant park acquisition projects: 149-acre Port Tobacco Park and 220-acre Popes Creek Rail Trail (*pictured*). Through this effort, the federal government's Coastal Wetlands Conservation Project awarded \$1.6 million and the Maryland Program Open Space awarded \$808,000 to acquire these two land parcels. The projects resulted from a partnership between Charles County, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the Trust for Public Land, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

In addition to providing additional opportunities for outdoor recreation (future hiking/biking trails and kayak access are planned), these acquisitions will permanently protect 220 acres (Popes Creek) of tidal marsh, wetlands, and forested land along the historic Popes Creek Branch railroad corridor. The Port Tobacco acquisition will permanently protect 150 acres of wetland, forested uplands, and cleared fields. This property will protect habitat at the boundary of the freshwater and estuarine wetlands, and allow restoration of upland forest to increase rainfall run-off filtration and buffer the adjacent marshland. This area will also offer new public access to the Port Tobacco River and enhance existing heritage tourism efforts at historic Port Tobacco Village.

Both acquisitions are consistent with local, state, and federal plans: Charles County's Land Preservation Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP); Port Tobacco Village Plan; Maryland's LPPRP, Maryland State Wildlife Action Plan; Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail; Maryland's Scenic Byways program; Southern Maryland's Potomac Heritage Bicycle Route; Maryland's Non-game and Endangered Species Conservation Act; and the State of Maryland Green Infrastructure: Potomac River Water Trails.



Youth Triathlon Event



Summer Camp Program

Offering Youth and Family Activities

The Department of Community Services' Recreation Division provides quality sports, recreation and leisure activities for citizens of all ages. The Recreation Division consists of aquatics, community centers, trips and tours, gymnastics, indoor sports, and a summer camp program.

With a focus on youth and family activities, the community centers, recreation centers, and pools continued to expand program offerings and increase participation throughout our afterschool programs, aquatic programs, drop-in programs, summer camps, gymnastics, and other leisure and fitness activities. Participation in indoor sports programs such as basketball, indoor soccer, and volleyball increased through league expansions. The Recreation Division improved special event programming for children, including the Tot Olympics, Youth Triathlon, Princess Party, Pirate Party, and Superhero Day.

The Recreation Division broadened community outreach by participating in the Charles County Fair, Early Childhood Day, Safe Summer Campaign, Military Appreciation Campaign, and Charles County Special Olympics Spring Games. The division continued its involvement and collaboration with the Partnership for a Healthier Charles County; Charles County Advocacy Council for Children, Youth, and Families; Special Olympics Charles County; Charles County Public Schools; and the Charles County Vision 2020 Program.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Serving Our Youngest Citizens

The Charles County Advocacy Council for Children, Youth & Families (Local Management Board) develops a comprehensive array of human services for Charles County children, youth, and families, and monitors and evaluates contracts provided by county government and private agencies. Through grants from the Governor's Office for Children, Department of Juvenile Services, Department of Social Services, and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), the Council assisted more than 2,000 youth and families in fiscal 2014.

In partnership with the Southern Maryland Tri-County Council, the Council facilitated the Summer Youth Employment Program. Through this program, 25 youth maintained employment, working approximately 30-35 hours per week. Four of the participants retained their employment, securing permanent positions at the program's end.

Through a continued partnership with the Charles County Public Schools, the summer mobile meals program entered its fifth year of service to provide youth between the ages of 3-18 with healthy summer meals. During fiscal 2014, the public schools served 9,569 summer lunches to youth in communities identified by MSDE as, "area eligible." This was also the first year using a retrofitted school bus to deliver meals to eligible locations in lower income communities and those communities with a center in walking distance for families. The funding provided through the Council allowed for service at 24 locations throughout Charles County.

The Council utilized the results of a triennial needs assessment to create a strategic plan. The plan focuses on improving areas related to infant mortality, school readiness, stability (homelessness, hunger, and out-of-home placements), and safety (juvenile offense rates and recidivism).



Early Childhood Day



Annual Indian Head Breast Cancer Walk



Members of the Senior Center Walking Club

Serving Senior Citizens

The Department of Community Services' Aging and Senior Programs Division operates four senior centers —located in Waldorf, Indian Head, La Plata, and Nanjemoy — for county residents aged 60 or better. The division also operates the Nanjemoy Community Center, which provides recreation, education, health promotion, and community services for children, youth, and families throughout western Charles County.

Combined attendance at the four senior centers totaled 3,380 registered participants who enjoyed a range of program offerings. Available programs include: health promotion and fitness activities, recreational and leisure activities, educational and personal enrichment programs, daily meal programs, nutrition education, benefits coordination, and supportive services for seniors with physical, socioeconomic, or cognitive needs.

Continuing a longstanding tradition of excellence, the Maryland Association of Senior Centers once again recognized senior center personnel for outstanding and creative programming efforts. Additionally, the senior centers received statewide recognition for multiple programs in the areas of: special events; nutrition, fitness, and health promotion; education; community leadership development; and expressive/creative arts. Despite tough competition from more than 100 senior centers across the state of Maryland, Indian Head Senior Center and Waldorf Senior Center emerged with first place and honorable mention awards for program excellence.



*"Seniors Have Talent" Show
at the Clark Senior Center*

Expanding Resources for Older Adults

The Aging and Senior Programs Division continued to work in collaboration with an interdisciplinary team of professionals to integrate a new senior center within the Waldorf Urban Redevelopment Corridor project. When this redevelopment vision is fully realized, the new, expanded Waldorf Senior Center will serve as a community focal point, uniquely staged to meet the recreational and service needs of senior residents in this most populated section of the county.

The Aging and Senior Programs Division serves as the designated Area Agency on Aging in Charles County, and as the lead agency for Maryland Access Point (MAP), a statewide initiative to create a "no wrong door" for long-term care options counseling and supportive services for aged and disabled adults. Through a combination of federal, state, and county support, the division assisted 4,187 older adults in fiscal 2014, with a year-end total of more than 247,202 units of service to senior citizens, disabled adults, and their family caregivers.

In fiscal 2014, the division partnered with the Charles County Department of Health to provide space and support for the Western Charles Family Medical Clinic at the Nanjemoy Community Center. The clinic provides an array of primary health care and direct health services to persons of all ages in this rural community. The partnership allows for new collaboration between the senior center,

community center, and the clinic for health education programming, including chronic disease self-management programs, health promotion, and fitness opportunities. To further enhance clinic services, the division applied for and received a state grant to support an onsite Patient Navigator. The Patient Navigator assists patients with understanding their diagnoses and treatment options, and assists with coordination of social supports and benefits to ensure patients are well equipped to follow through with health improvements. This includes referrals to the division's MAP program for options counseling and coordination of public benefits, transportation to appointments, help understanding prescription medication protocols, and any other services that will improve patient compliance and lead to more positive health outcomes. Due to the success of this partnership, the State of Maryland renewed and increased the grant funding for the next year.

Additional fiscal 2014 accomplishments include enhancing the service outreach events schedule, and hosting events in the evenings and weekends at places where residents naturally gather, such as libraries, community centers, and churches. These opportunities connect professionals with residents who need support, but may not otherwise be aware of Charles County Government's programs and services.

SAFE COMMUNITIES

Preventing Crime and Protecting Citizens

Sheriff Rex W. Coffey leads the Charles County Sheriff's Office (CCSO), one of the largest employers in Charles County with more than 600 personnel including police officers, corrections officers, and civilians. The CCSO is headquartered in La Plata with district stations in La Plata, Bryans Road, and Waldorf. As a full service law enforcement agency, the CCSO provides police protection and other law enforcement services for the entire county, and operates the Charles County Detention Center.

The CCSO's chief responsibilities are maintaining law and order and restoring peace when public safety is threatened. Backed by a strong alliance with citizens, businesses, and government officials, the CCSO ensures high visibility of its patrol contingent by offering programs that engage citizens in public safety efforts. The CCSO has mutual aid agreements with the Maryland State Police, La Plata Town Police, Charles County Department of Emergency Services, and Calvert and St. Mary's County sheriffs' offices, among others. Mutual aid agreements ensure allied agencies work together to address cross jurisdictional public safety issues. Crime has steadily decreased in Charles County by more than 20 percent in the last five years. In fact, crime is lower today than it was in 1998 when the population was under 100,000 people.

In 2013, the CCSO made history in Maryland by receiving its second back to back perfect assessment report from the Commission on the Accreditation of Law Enforcement

Agencies (CALEA) — the premier credentialing authority for law enforcement agencies worldwide. After an extensive review by outside assessors, CALEA recognized the CCSO with the Gold Standard of Excellence award, designating the agency as one of the best law enforcement agencies in the world. That marked the second time the Agency received the highest CALEA award; in 2010, the Agency was recognized as a Flagship agency and was considered among the premier law enforcement agencies in the country. The award in 2010 marked the first time the CCSO obtained the highest award since being involved in the accreditation process, which started in 2001. The CCSO is accredited every three years.

The CCSO's community crime prevention programs include Crime Solvers, Neighborhood Watch, National Night Out, and Citizens on Patrol. Other community initiatives, such as the officers in schools program and an Explorers post, help young people learn to make good choices. The CCSO helps coordinate a safe driving program for teens, which significantly helped reduce teen traffic fatalities. Each year since 1988, the CCSO earned the Maryland Governor's Crime Prevention Award for its successful programs.

In fiscal 2014, the CCSO raised more than \$30,000 for community outreach programs including Special Olympics Maryland, Shop with a Cop, March of Dimes, United Way, Spring Dell Center, and other charitable causes.



Keeping Neighborhoods Safe

The Department of Planning and Growth Management played an important role in reviewing the County Road Ordinance. Department staff reviewed private road standards to implement the new seven-lot minor subdivision criteria established by state land use legislation.

Most importantly, in the last year, the department participated on the Commissioner-established Neighborhood Traffic Calming Task Force. Citizen members and staff reviewed traffic calming programs in other area locations. Based on research and staff support, the task force presented the Commissioners with recommendations for addressing speed and safety concerns in existing and future county neighborhoods. Staff began drafting amendments to both the Road Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations. Once legislation is approved, Charles County Government will implement a petition program for employing traffic calming in existing neighborhoods in a fiscally prudent manner.

Maintaining Safe Workplaces

The County Commissioners hold safety as a top priority. The Safety Office manages and coordinates all aspects of occupational safety and health for county employees. The Safety Office develops and implements programs that determine risk, exposure, and loss prevention to protect Charles County Government assets, the general public, and public property. Maryland Occupational Safety and Health Administration and Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations are strictly enforced to ensure employees' well-being and the general public is held in the highest regard. Charles County Government remains self-insured for Workers' Compensation, and manages a strict return-to-work program, which saved Charles County considerable work-related injury costs. Charles County Government hosted four successful Red Cross blood drives. The blood drives were open to the public and county employees. The Safety Office worked with the Department of Emergency Services to train more than 15,000 employees and citizens in hands-only CPR.



*Emergency Evacuation Sign
(Charles Street, La Plata)*

Preparing for Emergency Evacuations

The Maryland State Highway Administration's District 5 office placed emergency evacuation route signage on state routes within Charles County, in response to a Department of Emergency Services' request. This action was in keeping with the Coordinated Highways Action Response Team (CHART) Southern Maryland Traffic Management Plan. The evacuation signs will be used to guide and control highway traffic during an emergency evacuation.

The evacuations signs display a blue 18-inch diameter circle with a directional arrow and the words "EVACUATION ROUTE." Route 301 (Crain Highway) routes all evacuation traffic northbound with north-pointing signs. Additionally, signage was placed along the following state routes north and south of Crain Highway: MD Routes 257, 6, 234, 236, 231, 5, 488, 225, 227, 228, 224, 425, and 344.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Making a Commitment to Health Improvement

In 2013, the Charles County Department of Health realized its vision to place a primary care clinic in western Charles County. The Department of Health, in collaboration with Charles County Government and the Maryland Community Health Resources Commission, opened the Western County Family Medical Center in February 2014.



The physician-staffed center focuses on primary care, accepts all insurances, and turns no one away. The Charles County Department of Community Services provided grant funding to place a navigator in the center. The navigator assists clients needing help with appointments and filling out forms. The center is located in the Nanjemoy Community Center and is open Monday through Friday. Charles County residents are encouraged to use the clinic's services since there is a very short wait time for appointments.

In collaboration with Calvert and St. Mary's County health departments, the Charles County Department of Health launched a Healthiest Maryland Business initiative in Southern Maryland. This initiative is a social marketing campaign to engage business owners and leaders to promote wellness in their sphere of influence. This

initiative aims to raise awareness regarding the importance of a healthy workforce, recruit business leaders who will incorporate healthy policies into the workplace, publicly recognize their commitment and success, and improve their bottom line. Interested businesses may contact the Charles County Department of Health for additional information on how to participate in the program.

The Department of Health focused also on reducing the infant mortality rate. Data indicates that infant mortality rates among minorities are much higher than that of non-minorities. The Department of Health applied for a grant to support a program to reduce minority infant mortality. "My Baby and I Matter" is a program aimed at decreasing the number of deaths in babies less than one year of age. The program focuses on maintaining healthy birth outcomes for women of color who are pregnant and currently live in Charles County. Although the program is targeted at minority women, any woman in Charles County who is considering becoming pregnant, currently pregnant, or has a newborn less than one year of age may participate.

A Healthy Choice

As part of the Department of Health's ongoing commitment to wellness and healthy eating, there is now a farmers market on the Department of Health campus. The market is open to the public Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. All of the seasonal fruits, vegetables, and other food items are produced in Charles County. The market coincides with the Department of Health's regular WIC voucher pickup schedule so that it encourages WIC recipients to use food vouchers for fresh, local foods. The market met with great success in its opening season.





Community Needs

This year, University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center (UM CRMC) celebrated the 75th anniversary of its 1939 opening as Physician's Memorial Hospital to provide care for Charles County citizens in response to a devastating tornado. July 2014 marked one year since Civista Medical Center began operating under its new name, University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center, to reflect its affiliation with the University of Maryland Medical Center.

In Fiscal 2014, UM CRMC Received:

2014 Minogue Award for Patient Safety Innovation for its winning submission, *"Improving Sepsis Outcomes Through Coordinated Early Recognition, Assessment and Treatment."* The award is the highest given by the Maryland Patient Safety Center.

2013 Delmarva Foundation Excellence Award for Quality Improvement for hospitals that excel in patient safety and quality improvement.

Top Performer on Key Quality Measures® by The Joint Commission for the second consecutive year, for exemplary performance in using evidence-based clinical processes that are shown to improve care for heart failure, pneumonia and surgical care.

American Heart Association/American Stroke Association awards **Get With The Guidelines® Stroke Gold-Plus Quality Achievement Award** and **Target: Stroke Honor Roll** for implementing quality improvement measures to reduce death and disability for stroke patients.

Workplace Excellence and the **Health & Wellness Seal of Approval** awards from the Alliance for Workplace Excellence for outstanding commitment to overall workplace quality and to employee health and wellness, received for the 10th consecutive year.

To continue growing to meet community needs, UM CRMC expanded its surgical practice to include several general surgeons with subspecialties in colon and breast surgery, as well as a board-certified vascular surgeon. UM Charles Regional Neurology, La Plata's first neurology practice, opened in February 2014. The hospital also successfully recruited several new physicians to community practices in its service area.

Continuing a four-year trend of increases in operating margins, fiscal 2014 was a record year for UM CRMC both in terms of volumes and revenues.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Renovating Health Care Facilities

The Department of Public Works' Buildings and Trades Division completed the Nanjemoy Clinic Rehabilitation Project. The Nanjemoy Clinic, now known as the Western County Family Medical Center, provides primary medical care for adults and children, including preventative health services, immunizations and sick visits. The center fills a need for medical care in the western part of the county.

The renovation project involved renovating approximately 5,000 square feet of dated office space. The project also included: installing tiles in exam rooms, the entrance foyer, and pharmacy floor; replacing office doors with fire-rated certifications; replacing damaged ceiling tiles and lights; adding cabinetry in the lab area; replacing water closets and sinks; moving door locations; adding strip heaters to supplement the existing heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system; and installing interior and exterior signage. Total project cost was \$41,000 – a minimal cost for such an extensive renovation project. The division completing this project saved the county the cost of hiring a general contractor, which would cost an estimated \$100,000 or more, not including an additional \$30,000 in architectural and design fees.

Enhancing Emergency Medical Services

In December 2013, the Charles County Department of Emergency Services Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Division transitioned its operational program, which includes career and volunteer EMS personnel, to the state's new, electronic patient care reporting system – eMEDS. eMEDS is designed to give EMS providers immediate interface between patient care provided on scene via shock resistant tablets to doctors and nurses standing by in the emergency room. Real-time patient data such as vital signs and electrocardiograms (EKGs) can be immediately downloaded from the field to give the most current patient information and provide seamless continuity of medical care. eMEDS allows EMS units complete patient care reports while en route to the hospital. Units get back into service faster and are more readily available to respond to emergencies.



Celebrating History and Growing to Meet Addressing Community Health Needs

With overwhelming support from the County Commissioners, and in collaboration with the Safety Office, the Department of Emergency Services committed to train every county employee and willing citizen in Hands-Only-CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation). Recent studies and changes to the American Heart Association's methodology on Hands-Only-CPR demonstrate that early access to CPR and an automated external defibrillator will improve the survivability of a person in cardiopulmonary arrest by threefold.* Studies also show that bystanders are more likely to perform CPR on a person if Hands-Only-CPR is performed. To date, the department has trained 50 percent of the Charles County Government's workforce and 15,000 Charles County residents in Hands-Only-CPR.

*Data from the American Heart Association, 2013.



PLANNING AND SMART GROWTH

Building a Vibrant Urban Center

With the phased redevelopment of Old Washington Road, Waldorf will become the vibrant, new urban center of Charles County featuring high-density, mixed-use, and transit-oriented development with a walkable downtown and public amenities offering a unique place to live, work, and play. Plans for the 300-acre redevelopment area in Downtown Waldorf are aligned with local, state, and federal goals for sustainable communities and smart growth.

The Charles County Commissioners launched Phase I of the Waldorf Urban Redevelopment Corridor project during a special event including community stakeholders and visitors. With seven years of planning and a \$30 million local commitment for infrastructure and operating

support, Phase I offers 659,000 square feet of new possibilities with plans for a civic campus as the catalyst for private investment, strategic alliances, and community partnerships. The Maryland Stadium Authority began conducting an economic study of the proposed campus that will result in a master plan that is responsive, market-driven, and focused on community benefits: public amenities, employment opportunities, and new revenue.

A downtown Waldorf office will open in fiscal 2015. At this location county officials can meet with community stakeholders, and visitors can explore opportunities for living and working in the area.



PLANNING AND SMART GROWTH

Preserving Agricultural Lands

Fiscal 2014 was a landmark year for Charles County with regard to preserving agricultural and forest land resources through its partnership with the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF). In existence since 1977, MALPF's primary purpose is to preserve sufficient agricultural and forest lands to maintain a viable local base of food and fiber production for the present and future citizens of Maryland. This protection is achieved through the purchase of permanent conservation easements on productive farm and forest properties.

Charles County contributed \$2 million toward this program in fiscal 2014, with funding coming from the county's Capital Improvement Program for land preservation and the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission. This contribution leveraged additional matching funds from MALPF, creating a total budget of \$5 million for Charles County in fiscal 2014. This represents the largest contribution from a single county and the largest total budget for this program compared with any other Maryland county during the same fiscal year.

The county used this funding to obtain contracts to purchase conservation easements on nine Charles County farm and forest properties, permanently preserving 1,091 acres. This was the largest amount of land acquired in a single acquisition cycle for the county since the beginning of its partnership with MALPF in 1980.

Enforcing Property Standards

Charles County Government is authorized to implement "clean and lien" standards for zoning ordinance violations, building code violations, and nuisance violations. The Department of Planning and Growth Management played a major role in addressing property maintenance concerns within Charles County.

With the amended Nuisance Ordinance, nuisance and property maintenance complaints to the Nuisance Abatement Board increased to the point the board raised its meeting frequency to monthly. The Nuisance Abatement Board caseload multiplied more than 400 percent since 2011. The number of clean and Lien properties increased to more than 20 since 2012.

The county adopted the International Property Maintenance Code along with the 2012 International Construction Codes and incorporated these into the Charles County Building Code. This property maintenance standard is used to address property complaints to the Nuisance Abatement Board. The Code is also used to address property maintenance complaints more quickly using the Nuisance Abatement Board instead of a lengthier court process.

The Department of Planning and Growth Management's Codes, Permits, and Inspection Services Division implemented two significant activities to address property standards – an abandoned properties list and a web-based complaint system. The abandoned properties list is a database for property inspection work. The list is beneficial in addressing concerns related to properties abandoned due to foreclosure or similar situations. The division's web-based complaint system allows citizens to e-mail property complaints about maintenance, zoning, or drainage and helps with identifying problem properties and initiating nuisance or zoning violation cases.

Sorghum Field (Rural Farmland in Charles County)



Planning for Future School Construction

The County Commissioners appointed a multi-disciplined committee – the School Adequate Public Facility and Funding Review Committee – to review the current Adequate Public Facility Program as it relates to school capacity and funding sources. Committee membership was comprised of Board of Education members, educators, parents, real estate professionals, developers, and County Commissioners. Following a public outreach meeting, numerous interested party consultations, and a yearlong series of meetings, the committee presented a draft report to the County Commissioners. The recommendations, which covered a series of improvements to current capacity management programs and potential new funding sources to support school expansions and operations, will be considered for implementation in fiscal 2015.

Crafting the County's Vision

The Department of Planning and Growth Management worked the past year on a variety of land use issues. The County Commissioners adopted a planning Tier Map, which under Senate Bill 236, the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Conservation Act, limits the use of areas for septic systems. Prior to adoption of the Tier Map, the Commissioners appointed a working group to review the requirements and make recommendations.

The County Commissioners directed staff to update the Comprehensive Plan to make it consistent with recommendations from the Tier Map Working Group. In response to questions, staff presented changes and additional materials for consideration. The County Attorney's Office recommended sending the Comprehensive Plan to the Planning Commission to review changes the Commissioners initiated in addition to the adopted Tier Map, and to make recommendations based on these changes. Prior to the Comprehensive Plan being sent back to the Planning Commission, the Board of County Commissioners scheduled a Comprehensive Plan review session for September 2014.



Benedict Shoreline

Revitalizing a Historical Treasure

Situated along Charles County's portion of the Patuxent River, the village of Benedict has a unique connection to the War of 1812. It is the location of several significant skirmishes with British soldiers and the site where 4,000 troops landed, marched to Washington, and burned the nation's capital in August 1814. The Department of Planning and Growth Management, in partnership with the Tourism Office, planned a series of village enhancements, programs, and initiatives in 2014 to commemorate Benedict's important role in history. These initiatives were aimed also at improving access to the water and enhancing Charles County's image as a waterfront community.

Construction of the Benedict Riverwalk began in fiscal 2014. With sweeping views of the Patuxent River, the Riverwalk is located near the site of the historic British landing, and will include interpretive signage, landscaping, and street furniture. The Riverwalk is part of the implementation of the Benedict Waterfront Village Revitalization Plan, which the County Commissioners adopted in 2012. The community vision expressed in the plan is to preserve existing community character, build upon heritage themes, and enhance waterfront access and amenities.

A centralized sewage system is a key link in the revitalization efforts for the Village. It will facilitate reduction in the amounts of nitrogen and phosphorus discharged to the Patuxent. The Department of Planning & Growth Management is currently managing the Benedict Central Sewer System project. When completed, the new centralized sewer system will allow private failing sewer septic systems to be taken off line which will remove environmental hazards to the surrounding lands and waterways.

These revitalization efforts and the War of 1812 commemoration will bring greater attention to Benedict's rich historical significance and cultural heritage.

WATER SUPPLY & STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Providing Clean Drinking Water

The Department of Public Works' Utilities Division completed a major upgrade of the Pinefield sewer pump station. The Utilities Division successfully conducted an annual flushing of water hydrants in the Waldorf area water system. This annual maintenance procedure enables the county to provide citizens with safe, clean, potable water. The division, in close coordination with the Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services' Information Technology Division, fully implemented a new maintenance management system, known as INFOR. The system provides increased accountability, supports budgetary decision making, and tracks completion of work. Additionally, the Utilities Division brought 20 of its initial 33 planned supervisory control and data acquisition sites online. This process allows staff to remotely receive information and alarms about conditions at well-water and sewer pump station locations throughout the county.

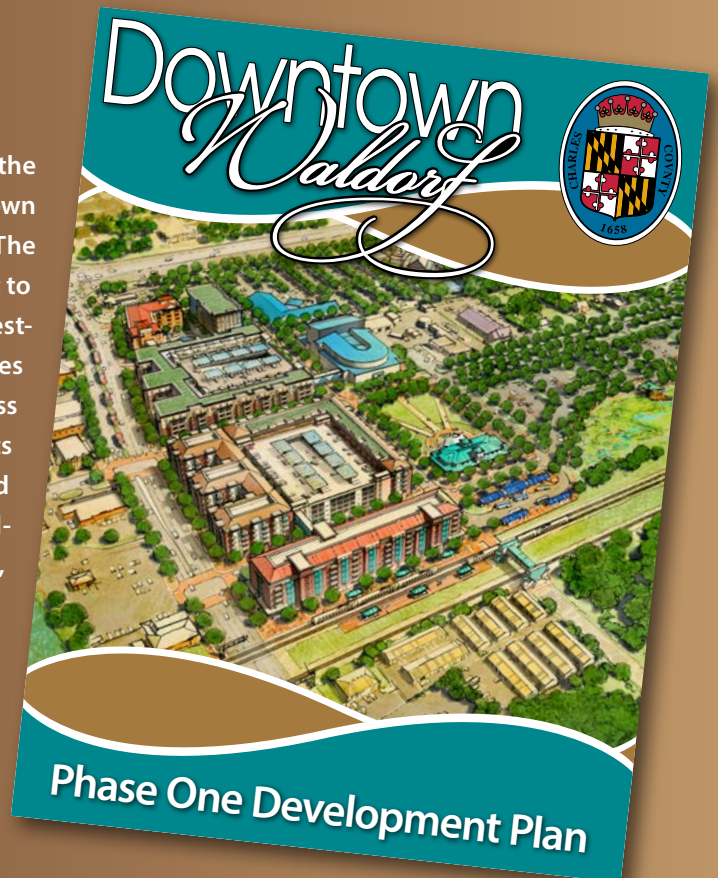
The Utilities Division is centrally located at the Mattawoman Water Reclamation Facility near Mason Springs. The division made significant upgrades to the

facility laboratory, which ensures safe drinking water and supports testing of wastewater processes for Maryland Department of the Environment compliance. The division replaced the truck weight scale, which generates county revenue because vendors at the Mattawoman facility use it frequently. Also, staff completed the second phase of the meter change-out program, which involved installing wireless meter reading capability.

The division improved compliance inspection rates for the cross-connection and pre-treatment programs, which ensure safe drinking water for homes and businesses and reduce organic materials in the wastewater system. Finally, during the winter season, the Utilities Division worked tirelessly to repair water main breaks and sewer line breaks, keeping water and wastewater facilities operating, despite inclement weather. Department employees worked long hours to monitor sewer pump stations, minimize sewer overflows, and provide citizens with a safe water system.

Supporting Community Enhancements

In November 2013, the County Commissioners rolled-out the Phase I Development Plan for Downtown Waldorf, also known as the Waldorf Urban Redevelopment Corridor (WURC). The Phase I Development Plan is envisioned to be the catalyst to initiate the redevelopment of Downtown Waldorf by investing in key water, sewer, stormwater, and roadway upgrades in the Old Washington Road corridor, between MD Business Route 5 and Acton Lane. These infrastructure improvements will remove many of the obstacles property owners and developers face in creating the vibrant, walkable mixed-use community envisioned. Coupled with high-capacity, fixed route transit service (preferred to be light rail), this initiative will re-invent the center of Waldorf as a transit-oriented development where residents can work, shop, and play.





Improving Stormwater Drainage Systems

The Department of Planning and Growth Management’s Capital Services Division manages the county’s Drainage Improvements Program to correct drainage issues in communities recorded as experiencing serious drainage problems. In the past year, county staff worked on drainage improvement projects in Carrington, Pinefield, and Strawberry Hills neighborhoods.

The Carrington neighborhood was experiencing issues related to the accumulation of trash and debris coupled with fallen trees, which contributed to poor drainage in open- and closed-section stormwater conveyance systems. Remediation costs are estimated at \$435,000.

In the Pinefield subdivision, flooding occurs routinely in streets during heavy rain events. The department performed a study to identify major problem areas in the community. Estimated construction costs are \$2.8 million.

Serious drainage problems existed in the Strawberry Hills neighborhood, in the stream to the rear of homes along Heather Drive. The department completed corrective construction in December 2013.

Department staff managed the Old Sycamore Road drain improvements project through funding within the County Safety Improvement/ Existing Roads Program. Old Sycamore Road experienced frequent flooding during rain events at culvert crossings at Fords Run and Oden Run Creeks. Staff implemented improvements to increase the level of service for the stormwater crossings. The department installed culvert pipes sized at 27”x 35” and 32”x 47” at a cost of \$210,000, with a completion date of April 2014.

Working with Communities on Stormwater Management

The Department of Planning and Growth Management works with communities to find solutions for specific stormwater issues. The department managed retrofit improvements for a community stormwater management pond in the Meadowlands subdivision. The Meadowlands Homeowners Association petitioned the county after a Stormwater Management Compliance Program inspection revealed deficiencies with the stormwater management facility. The Capital Services Division coordinated with the community, solicited proposals to complete the improvements, and finished the project. The department included annual maintenance costs within the benefit assessment to ensure county funding will be available to perform periodic maintenance so the newly improved facility remains compliant.

ROADS IMPROVEMENTS

Upgrading Pedestrian Walkways

Working to evaluate pedestrian needs and constructing sidewalks, the Department of Planning and Growth Management's Capital Services Division manages several projects involving hiker/biker trails and sidewalk improvements. In conjunction with the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) and local communities, the division installed sidewalks along SHA-maintained roads and county-maintained roads adjacent to communities. The division managed the design of several sidewalk and intersection improvement projects within SHA's right of way. Projects started for Millbrooke Court to Weymouth Court, Smallwood Drive West/Thoroughbred Court to Middletown Road, and Stavors Road.

The division proposed installation of 941 linear feet of sidewalk and 580 feet of curb and gutter along MD Route 228 from Chestnut Drive to Marsh Hawk Drive. This proposed sidewalk will provide safer accessibility for pedestrians in this area of Charles County. Pedestrians currently use the MD Route 228 shoulder from Chestnut Court to access the existing sidewalk east of Marsh Hawk Drive. Estimated construction costs for this work is \$230,000. SHA will reimburse the county for this work up to \$150,000.

The division proposed installation of 590 linear feet of sidewalk and 390 feet of curb and gutter in the vicinity of the intersection of MD Route 228 and Western Parkway. SHA will complete this project, which includes installing pedestrian crosswalks, ADA-accessible handicap ramps, and push-button pedestrian signals to facilitate a safe crossing of MD Route 228 and connect to the existing hiker/biker trails along Western Parkway. Estimated project cost is \$133,000.

SHA will be performing the installation of 1,743 linear feet of sidewalk along MD Route 210 from Wooster Drive to Ruth B. Swann Drive, at no cost to the county. Upon completion of the project, the county will take over the maintenance. The proposed sidewalk will provide safer accessibility for both pedestrians and the Bryans Road area. Currently, pedestrians use MD Route 210 auxiliary/turn lanes to access Bryans Road Shopping Center and/or Ruth B. Swann Library. Also, VanGO bus service has a stop at the Bryans Road Shopping Center, which is part of the Indian Head/La Plata loop. The estimated project completion date is fall 2014.



Western Parkway Sidewalk Installation



Maintaining Road Safety

The Department of Planning and Growth Management's Capital Services Division strives to provide the citizens of Charles County with cost efficient and safe infrastructure and resources for the betterment of our community. If there is construction underway in Charles County unrelated to commercial or residential development, chances are it is the Capital Services Division at work. In fiscal 2014, the division began and completed a number of traffic signal and roadway projects to improve county road safety.

The division managed the design and construction of the Rosewick/Radio Station Road traffic signal improvements project. The completed traffic signal began full operation in March 2014. Working with the Maryland State Highway Administration, the division completed design work for intersection improvements on MD Route 228 and Western Parkway.

On Western Parkway, the division advanced phases two and three of the Western Parkway road improvement

projects. For phase two, upgrade work continued on Western Parkway, from Acton Lane to Pierce Road. Staff completed design and permitting, and moved into the final land acquisition process. For phase three, division staff are working with a developer to complete design and construction. This project is extending Western Parkway from Pierce Road to MD Route 301 north of Mattawoman Drive. Once completed, the road will form the second and third of three links for a local bypass of MD Route 301 from the northern county line to St. Patrick's Drive in Waldorf.

Efforts continued toward upgrading Mill Hill Road from Davis Road to Devonfield Avenue. The existing road is too narrow to comfortably facilitate large vehicle travel, and does not meet current Charles County Road Ordinance standards. This project will bring this section of Mill Hill Road up to county standards. Estimated construction cost is \$1.2 million.

SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Providing Housing Assistance to Individuals and Families

Charles County's Settlement Expense Loan Program provides up to \$6,000 in settlement expense assistance to first-time home buyers. The department processed nine SELP loans totaling more than \$53,000.

The Housing Authority issued a Request for Proposals for a Housing Stock Study to assess current Charles County housing availability. The study will examine the housing inventory supply and demand when compared to income ranges. Expected study completion is fall 2014.

The Robert J. Fuller House, a 21-bed, men's emergency and transitional living facility owned by Charles County Government, provided more than 5,000 bed nights and assisted 57 men for the year. An on-site vendor manages the Fuller House and provides individualized case management to residents to assist them in obtaining permanent housing.



Another county-owned property, Martha's Place, is a three-bedroom, women's transitional house. A contracted vendor provides supportive living services to women and children experiencing homelessness. Martha's House provided more than 1,500 bed nights and assisted 14 households during the fiscal year.



Rural Housing Initiative

The Charles County Department of Community Services' Housing Authority administers programs to assist low- and moderate-income citizens. In fiscal 2014, the Housing Authority continued outreach efforts to inform citizens about the Rural Housing Initiative (RHI), a program that provides financial assistance for home and indoor plumbing repairs. Widespread promotion resulted in outreach to more than 700 citizens and more than 200 citizen inquiries.

The Housing Authority expanded outreach by creating a new fee-for-service structure. Staff contacted local nonprofit organizations and other social service agencies for assistance in reaching citizens who may benefit from the RHI program. Nominal fees help defray costs incurred by local agencies as they travel to meet with potential customers.

Leveraging Federal and State Housing Funds

The Housing Authority administers programs funded through the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to help homeowners, home buyers, and local homeless shelters. The State Special Loans Program gives low-interest and no-interest loans to eligible homeowners for housing rehabilitation projects or total home replacements. In certain cases, loans may be deferred completely until the property is sold or transferred. Housing rehabilitation such as new plumbing, windows, or doors can be financed. In limited cases, grants pay for indoor plumbing installation in substandard units. In fiscal 2014, the Housing Authority helped settle more than \$380,000 in rehabilitation loans, and forwarded an additional \$104,400 in loan requests to DHCD for approval.

The Housing Authority received more than \$70,000 in funding – a record amount – for the Emergency Solutions Grant Program. The funds were used to manage two emergency and transitional housing facilities and one homelessness prevention program. The Housing Authority received a Community Development Block Grant of \$375,000 for low- and moderate-income home buyers to make down payments. Twenty-five eligible home buyers each received \$15,000.

DHCD awarded the Housing Authority \$100,000 in Neighborhood Conservation Initiative funds to help income-eligible homebuyers with down payments. Three

home buyers received \$15,000 to \$40,000 per household, based on family income, totaling \$70,000 in down payment assistance.

On November 9, 2013, the Charles County Commissioners and the Housing Authority welcomed the DHCD to the College of Southern Maryland to convene a Foreclosure Prevention Workshop. Bank representatives, pro bono attorneys, and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) housing counselors assisted more than 100 local homeowners with loan modifications, lender questions, and other issues involving avoiding foreclosure.

The Housing Authority administers a Housing Choice Voucher Program, funded through HUD. Through this program, the Housing Authority managed the distribution of more than \$9 million in fiscal 2014, providing monthly rental assistance to approximately 810 low-income households and aid to more than 30 new participants.

A small number of Housing Choice Voucher program participants became homeowners under the program. Monthly assistance payments are made towards the homeowner's mortgage. Participants eligible for the homeownership program must have sufficient income that will allow them to obtain mortgage financing through an independent lender.



ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Cleaning up the Potomac

The Potomac River Watershed Clean Up is an annual event occurring simultaneously at 670 sites throughout Washington D.C., Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. Charles County is responsible for 18 of these sites. In April 2014, 378 volunteers removed more than 13 tons of litter from the county's Potomac River watershed. In addition county litter crews, civic groups, scout troops, and students helped to create a litter-free environment by removing 50 tons of litter during the month of April.

The county added Mallows Bay to its list of cleanup sites in 2014. The "Ghost Fleet" of Mallows Bay is the largest collection of sunken vessels in the Western Hemisphere. Constructed during World War I, the remains of more than 100 wooden vessels rest in the shallow bay waters of Mallows Bay and along the shoreline. Fifty-two volunteers collected two tons of litter from the waterway including a hot water heater, crank shaft, hood of a car, two propane tanks, 12 tires, a car distributor cap, and a plastic gun.



Protecting Sensitive Waterways

In fiscal 2014, the Department of Planning and Growth Management conducted an online survey and phone interviews to assess the community's baseline knowledge of stormwater and septic discharge impacts on sensitive waterways. These findings will serve as the foundation for developing an outreach program to better inform the community about ways to keep waterways safe and clean.

The department completed construction of two water quality improvement projects, including expanding an existing Pinefield stormwater pond and installing underground storm chambers in the Bryans Road Village Green. These two projects combined manage stormwater runoff from more than 30 acres of existing impervious surface, so cleaner water will be discharged into Mattawoman Creek. To identify future priority restoration projects, the department initiated watershed assessments, focusing first on the Port Tobacco River Watershed.

Developing a Plan for Alternate Water Sources

Based on the recommendations of the Charles County Water Resources Advisory Committee, Charles County partnered with the Maryland Geological Survey (MGS), to investigate the water production capability from the Patuxent Aquifer within various areas of the Development District. This project included drilling four new groundwater observation wells and associated infrastructure to investigate the usability of the Patuxent Aquifer as a future water source, as well as determining the water quality for consumption. The Maryland Geological Survey (MGS) provided project management services, well installation, pump tests, water quality analysis, aquifer modeling, and a final report.

The Department of Planning and Growth Management managed the construction of the four observation wells, which were completed in November 2013 for \$99,000. The completed MGS final report, and associated findings, will be evaluated to determine if the Patuxent Aquifer is a viable future water source.



Reducing, Reusing, and Recycling Waste

The Department of Public Works' Environmental Resources Division operates two full-time recycling centers, two part-time recycling centers, curbside recycling collection, and recycling collection in all county government buildings. Environmental education presentations and tours of the sanitary landfill and recycling center are available upon request to schools and civic organizations. In addition to these services, educational billboards, banners, flyers, television commercials, promotional items, and newspaper advertisements are used to keep the public abreast of all environmental programs and promote citizen involvement.

The county's curbside recycling tonnage doubled in fiscal 2014 as a result of the new, 95-gallon recycling carts. The Environmental Resources Division saw a seven percent increase in the number of Charles County homes receiving curbside collection. In December 2013, the division collected and diverted to recycling facilities approximately 654 tons of waste destined for the county landfill. This total was an increase from the blue bin collection average of 270 tons collected per month prior to the program's conversion to the larger carts. The division maintained this tonnage increase throughout the remainder of the fiscal year.

Establishing Green Building Standards

In fall 2013, Charles County adopted an updated Floodplain Management Ordinance. This update allows the county to continue property owner participation in the National Flood Insurance Program. The Federal Emergency Management Agency released maps in 2013 addressing new flood elevations throughout Charles County. In order for the maps to be utilized, the Commissioners approved the first comprehensive re-write of the Floodplain Management Program since 1992. The Commissioners requested staff to review the possibility of the county participating in the Community Rating System in 2015 after FEMA releases the second phase of revised Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

Continuing to address Green Building Standards, the Commissioners approved the revised Grading and Sediment Control Ordinance. This ordinance allows the Maryland Department of Environment to grant the department continued delegation of Grading and Sediment Control enforcement authority until June 2016.

TRANSPORTATION

Connecting People and Places

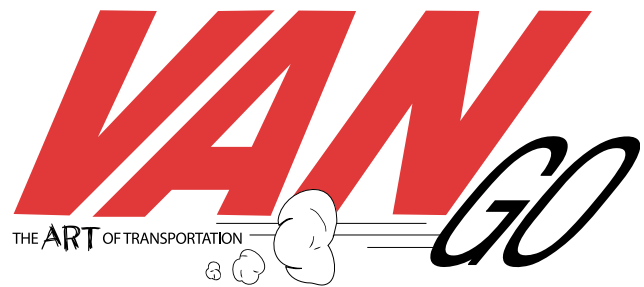
VanGO is a countywide transportation system providing safe and reliable transit services to citizens. During fiscal 2014, VanGO public transit services transported 766,255 passengers in combined fixed-route and specialized, door-to-door services. VanGO operated nearly 80,000 hours of service, traveling approximately 1.6 million miles.

At the start of fiscal 2014, after more than a year of planning and working to secure grant funding from the Federal Transit Administration and Maryland Transit Administration, VanGO established transit links with Prince George's County's TheBus public transit system. This connection provides Charles County residents with opportunities to use VanGO to reach Brandywine Crossing shopping center and points north, including the Branch Avenue Metrorail Station in Prince George's County. The public welcomed the new service, and ridership steadily increased.

In September 2013, a new VanGO commuter park-and-ride transfer pavilion at the US Route 301 park-and-ride facility opened. There is a large, sheltered waiting area for patrons and an area large enough for VanGO buses to assemble. The pavilion separates commuter bus services from local VanGO services, which improves safety and flow of operations. The Departments of Community Services and Planning and Growth Management managed collaboratively project design and construction, which

involved upgrading the existing park-and-ride facility with an information office and restroom facilities for bus drivers. The new facility features dedicated bus lanes for pick-up and drop-off of riders. The project added six new bus shelters, 12 new benches for additional seating, trash receptacles, security cameras, and increased street lighting for enhanced customer comfort and safety.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funded 80 percent of the park-and-ride pavilion project, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) funded 10 percent, and the county funded the final 10 percent. The new pavilion began operating in September 2013. The FTA and MTA are providing the county with funding to make further improvements to the park-and-ride facility, including repaving the parking lot, and installing new sidewalks, lighting, shelters, and handicap-accessible ramps.



GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Creating an Employee-Friendly Workplace

Each year, the Department of Human Resources Employee Committee distributes an employee satisfaction survey to Charles County Government employees. In October 2013, based on committee recommendation, the Commissioners approved conducting the employee satisfaction survey on a bi-annual basis. As a result of survey feedback, the County Commissioners approved County Administrator meetings with all employees. The first session occurred in June 2014 with 210 employees in attendance.

In August 2013 the Department of Human Resources launched the Leadership Academy, a program developed to provide supervisory training for managers. Members of the Employee Committee comprised the first cohort. The training requires completion of seven core and four elective courses. More than 100 employees are participating in the Leadership Academy.

The Employee Committee continued the process of evaluating policies and no-cost or low-cost incentives for county employees. The committee recommended the continuation of tuition reimbursement funding, which the Commissioners approved for the fiscal 2015 budget. The committee recommended, and the Commissioners approved, revisions to the employee years of service awards program. Employees with 30 or more years of service, in five year increments, would be allowed to choose administrative leave, a cash-out equivalent, or defer the cash equivalent into their deferred compensation account, if they have one.

Supporting Workforce Diversity

Charles County Government is committed to increasing diversity at all county government levels. The Department of Human Resources tracks and analyzes voluntary demographic data to ensure the most qualified candidates are recruited from a diverse pool of applicants. During fiscal 2014, the department recruited 59 positions and received approximately 4,000 applications. Nearly 80 percent of those applicants voluntarily provided demographic data. Fifty percent of those applicants were female, and 36 percent were minority applicants. Nearly 42 percent of personnel hired, promoted, transferred or demoted in fiscal 2014 were women, and 22 percent were minorities. County government demographic makeup of women and minorities is 40 percent and 23 percent, respectively.

The department sought alternative advertising venues to expand the pool of applicants. In fiscal 2014, the department advertised several positions on web sites geared toward minority candidates and expanded the use of social media to advertise open positions.



FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

The Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services is responsible for the county's financial and technological services. The department's goal is to effectively and efficiently manage Charles County Government's fiscal operations based on sound, comprehensive, short- and long-term fiscal policies. The department comprises five divisions: Accounting, Budget, Information Technology, Purchasing, and Treasury.

The Accounting Division is responsible for processing payroll, accounts payable, accounts receivable, risk management, and general accounting functions, including water and sewer billing. For the 12th consecutive year, the Accounting Division received the Certificate of Achievement in Financial Reporting for the fiscal 2013 Consolidated Annual Financial Report.

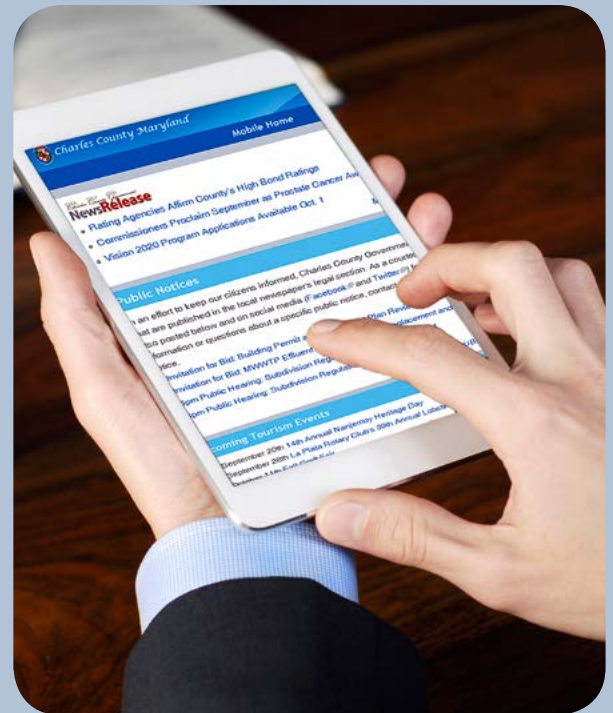
The Budget Division develops the annual budget and five-year capital improvement projects plan, and monitors revenues and expenditures. For the 18th consecutive year, the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada awarded the Budget Division the Certificate of Distinguished Budget Presentation award for the fiscal 2014 budget book. The certificate is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental

budgetary reporting. To receive the award, a governmental unit must publish a budget document that meets program criteria as a policy document, operation guide, financial plan, and communication device. The budget book contains approximately 500 pages, and is available as a resource document in local public libraries and on the county's website, www.CharlesCountyMD.gov//fas/budget/budget. The budget book provides descriptions of county programs and dedicated funds, in addition to facts, figures, and historical information.

The Treasury Division collects and invests county funds, except pension plans. The division administers and collects county property taxes, and taxes for the incorporated towns of Indian Head and La Plata and for the State of Maryland. The Treasury Division collects payments for county-sponsored services such as utility bills, tag-a-bags, liquor licenses, permits, dog tags, motor vehicle registrations, red light fines, and speed camera fines. A senior tax credit is available to qualified seniors residing in Charles County. The division is headquartered at the Charles County Government Building in La Plata, and has a satellite location in Waldorf adjacent to the Sheriff's Office District III station.

Going Mobile

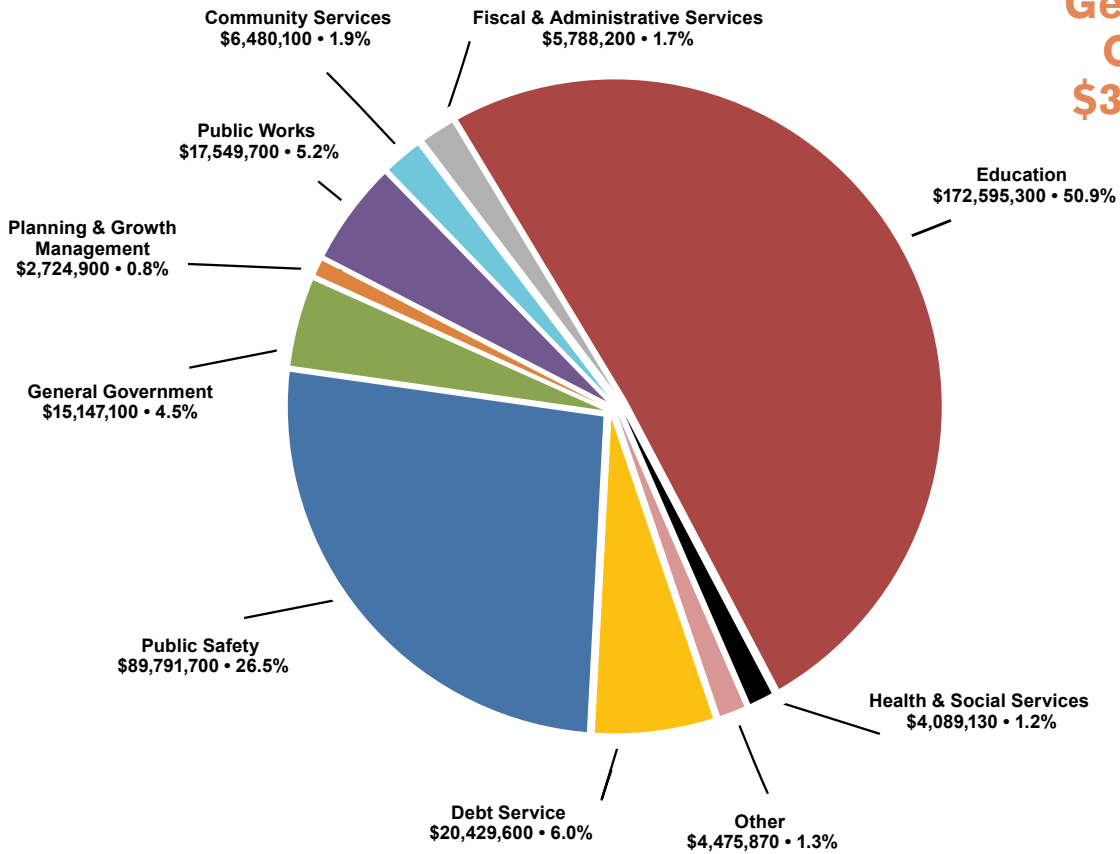
The Information Technology (IT) Division acquires, designs, develops, maintains, and enhances technology infrastructure, applications, and telecommunications to support county operations. In fiscal 2014, the division enhanced its mobile county website to accompany the county's citizen-focused main website. The mobile website (m.CharlesCountyMD.gov) allows citizens to quickly access county news releases, public notices, and upcoming events via mobile devices. It also provides easy access to the county's Get Connected program, which links citizens quickly to social media, cable television, email alerts, and newsletters. Thanks to the IT Division's work, the Center for Digital Government selected Charles County as the "Most Digitally Advanced County" for counties nationwide with populations in the 150,000 – 249,999 range. This is the 12th consecutive year that the IT Division has received this award, and its first year winning in the higher population category.



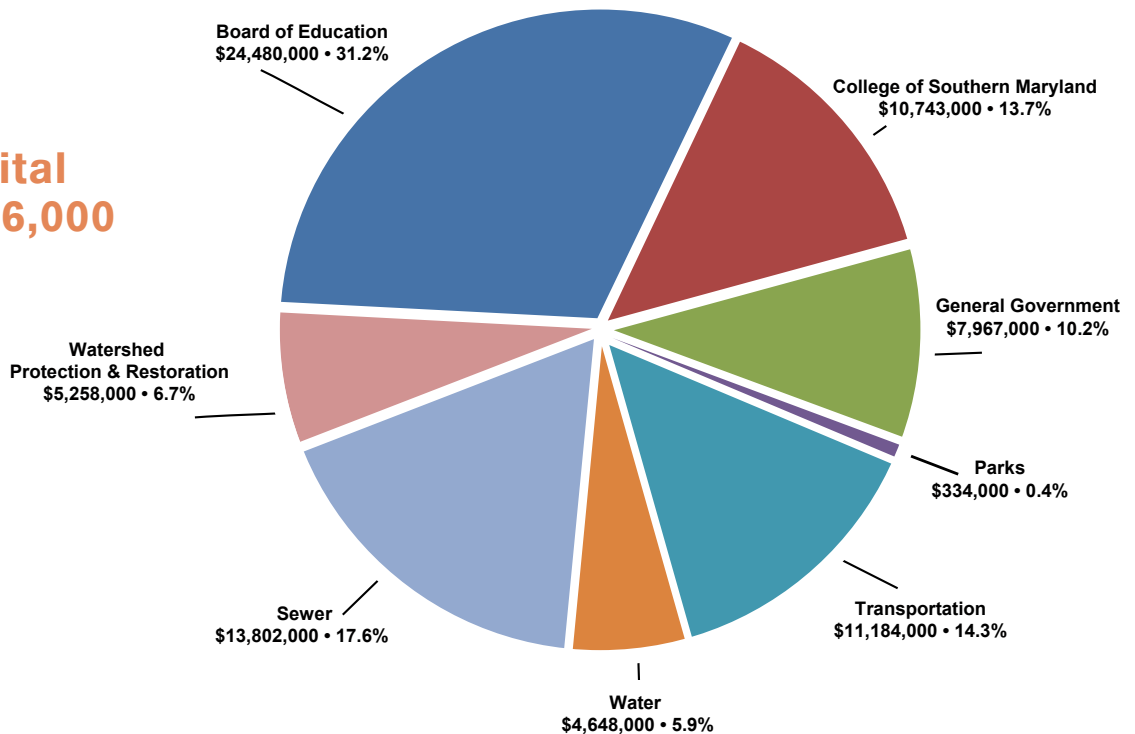
OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGETS

Fiscal Year 2014

**General Fund
Operating
\$339,071,600**



**Capital
\$78,416,000**



Charles County Government



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County Administrator

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Did You Know...

Queen Anne's Lace, also called wild carrot, is commonly found along roads and through fields, and is Charles County's official flower. Queen Anne's Lace is a biennial with one- to three-foot stems and lace flowers that do not blossom until their second year.

The **Great Blue Heron** is the nation's tallest bird and is Charles County's official bird. The bird is abundant along rivers and creeks and is a superb fisherman.

Charles County's official tree is the **Dogwood**. The Dogwood tree produces beautiful flowers each spring. The flowers are usually small and have four or five petals. The berries that appear in the fall are commonly eaten by birds in the winter.

The Charles County Seal

The Charles County seal incorporates a part of the Maryland state seal, which is designed from the First Lord Baltimore's escutcheon. Charles County was established on May 10, 1658, and named for Charles Calvert, England's Third Lord Baltimore.

The coronet is a silver gilded band, covered with yellow lacquer. The five spheres on top of the crown are plain silver balls. The brim is white with small strawberry leaves.

The cross of red and white on the shield symbolizes the arms of the Crossland family, which was the family of the mother of the First Lord Baltimore.

The black and gold design on the shield is that of the Calvert family. It was given to Calvert as a result of storming a fortification in battle.

The date of 1658, which is on the bottom of the Seal, is the date when the order of erection was approved by the Colonial Governor.

