



# 2019

Charles County Government  
**ANNUAL REPORT**



## The Charles County Board of 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

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

### Commissioner Meetings

**Board Meetings** — The Board of Commissioners meetings are scheduled regularly and held in the County Government Building at 200 Baltimore Street in La Plata. Commissioner Board Meetings are aired on Charles County Government Television, which broadcasts on Comcast channel 95 and Verizon channel 10. Board meetings also are streamed live at [www.CharlesCountyMD.gov](http://www.CharlesCountyMD.gov).

**Community Meetings** — The Commissioners hold community meetings at convenient locations in Charles County. These meetings are open to the public, and provide an opportunity for attendees to ask questions and discuss items important to the community.



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Charles County Government  
**Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report**

Production of the Annual Report is managed by the  
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## A Message from Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq.

President, Charles County Board of Commissioners

Charles County is pleased to share its annual report on the progress that has been made over the past year. Our Board of County Commissioners were sworn into office on Dec. 4, 2018, and immediately went to work on identifying our priorities and how we could achieve them during our four-year term. We launched that effort with a retreat, where we established five goals that reflect what matters most to our community — economic development and supportive services; institutional governance and policy; environment; education; and quality of life.

Expanding economic development opportunities is important to the county's vitality and growth. Our professional staff are working to ensure our planning and permit processes are more business-friendly and efficient. In March 2019, economic development staff hosted an international trade seminar to educate local business owners about overseas opportunities for expansion. We are proactively engaged in efforts to retain and attract new businesses to Charles County every day. The outcome of this work is not immediately felt, but it will deliver long-term investment and sustainability.

While economic opportunities are expanding in the more developed parts of Charles County, tourism depends on protecting our natural assets along our vast shoreline. Mallow's Bay achieved National Marine Sanctuary designation, the first of its kind in nearly 20 years. This natural treasure that harbors a World War I "ghost" fleet of ships will attract visitors not only regionally but nationally. We have also approved expansion of rural legacy areas, where an abundance of farms, wetlands, and historic sites will be preserved now and safeguarded for future generations to enjoy.

Our community is continuing to experience rapid growth as more new residents are recognizing the benefits of calling Charles County their home. That also presents challenges, as we work to ensure everyone has a safe and affordable place to live. We have examined affordable housing challenges and are collaborating with local and regional partners to determine effective solutions. Also, we supported nonprofit investment in the development of a permanent homeless shelter and subsidized housing to fill the gaps.

Census 2020 is quickly approaching, and we will have the opportunity to obtain data on how the population has increased and changed over the past 10 years. I anticipate results that indicate increasing diversity, which I believe only strengthens our community. It's important every person is counted, so we can accurately understand our demographics and how to adjust our services to meet your needs. It's also critical for county government to be both efficient and effective as we grow, and the county is exploring "smart county" solutions that leverage our purchasing power, economize our internal operations, and share resources more effectively among the county, schools, and public safety.

— Continued

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**  
2019 – 2021

**Economic Development & Supportive Services**

**Commercial Development:** International Trade, Commercial Tax Base Expansion, Business Attraction, and Opportunity Zone Enhancements

**Industry Diversification:** Research and Development, Sustainable Natural Resource Based Industries, Tourism, and Entertainment Industry

**Infrastructure/Services:** Broadband Access, Water and Sewer, Transportation Network, Workforce Development, and Business Support

**Institutional Governance and Policy**

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

**Public Policy:** Legislation, Governance Leadership, Resource Stewardship (Asset Management, Fiscal Responsibility), and Buy Local (Minority Business Enterprise)

**Environment**

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

**Natural Resource Management:** Expand Solar Energy, Provide Incentives, Rainwater Collection, Expand Commercial Recycling, and Reduce Impervious Surface

**Environmental Management:** Wastewater Treatment, Clean Water Supply, and Storm Water Management

**Education**

**Board of Education:** Funding and Formal Collaboration (Board of Education and Board of Commissioners)

**Education Advisory Board/Committee**

**Human Resource Development (County)**

**Quality of Life**

**Public Safety:** Collaboration (Sheriff's Dept./Fire/EMS)

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

**Recreation and Entertainment:** Parks and Amenities, Stadium, Agritourism, Festivals, and Popes Creek

**Affordable/Workforce Housing:** Housing Authority Committee, and Equitable Housing

**Additional Goals Submitted by Departments**

Cardiac Resuscitation Outcomes, Customer Service, Attract Candidates and Retain Employees

Additionally, your Board of County Commissioners is making every effort to lead a transparent, accountable, and responsive government. Since taking office, we've held more than a dozen town halls and community meetings, launched a Citizen's Academy to engage residents in our government, and proactively met with groups throughout our community to listen to concerns and offer solutions. We've assembled a broadband task force to get you connected online too. We established an ambitious timeline and look to connect many more of our rural residents to the Internet, which is a necessity in today's modern world.

The initiatives I have highlighted are just a few of the many ways your county government serves the community. We look forward to your continued engagement and welcome your feedback on this report.

Sincerely,



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



Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq. • 2018 Oath of Office Swearing In Ceremony

For additional details, visit:

[www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/  
Commissioners/Goals-and-Objectives](http://www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/Commissioners/Goals-and-Objectives)

## Charles County Board of Commissioners



Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq.  
President



Bobby Rucci  
District 4  
Vice President



Gilbert O. Bowling, III  
District 1



Thomasina O. Coates, M.S.  
District 2



Amanda M. Stewart, M.Ed.  
District 3

### Charles County Government

**County Administrator**  
Mark Belton

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

Central Services  
Division

Internal Audit Office

Media Services  
Division

Clerk to the  
Commissioners

Commissioners  
Office Staff

**Office of the County Attorney**  
Wes Adams, County Attorney

**Community Services**  
Dina Barclay, Director

**Economic Development**  
Darréll A. Brown, Director

**Emergency Services**  
Bill Stephens, Director

**Fiscal & Administrative Services**  
Jenifer Ellin, Director

**Human Resources**  
Alexis B. Blackwell, Director

**Planning & Growth Management**  
Deborah E. Hall, Acting Director

**Public Works**  
Bill Shreve, Director

**Recreation, Parks & Tourism**  
Eileen B. Minnick, Director



## A Message from Mark Belton

County Administrator

It's a privilege to serve as the County Administrator for such a dynamic community and to be able to work with the outstanding group of professionals and subject-matter experts that comprise the Charles County Government workforce. We are proud of the work we do, to deliver the quality services our residents demand while practicing fiscal responsibility. The work cannot be done without resident input and feedback or the contributions of our many government, nonprofit, and community partners. The Annual Report is our way of sharing accomplishments and the proactive ways we address the challenges inherent to a growing jurisdiction.

Charles County is proud to have earned and maintained triple-A bond ratings. These ratings are the foundation for future success as they ensure the ability to borrow money at the lowest possible interest rate so that we can invest it in capital projects to support the needs of our fast-growing county. Our local government leaders have made sound financial decisions that help pay for resident priorities, such as schools, public safety, roads, parks, and other recreational opportunities that enhance our quality of life. Additionally, the ratings are a validation of our government's efforts to address and solve the issues of today while being resilient in planning for the challenges of the future.

Charles County Government remains committed to the High-Performance Organizational Model, which highlights core values such as communication, innovation, integrity, initiative, respect, teamwork, and well-being. These values define our behavior and are integrated into our work culture. We are also making strides to tackle head-on the impacts climate change will have on our county and population in the coming decades. We are striving for sustainability by implementing energy efficiency measures, pursuing renewable energy generation to more than offset what we use, working with academic sector partners to plan for the future, and educating our employees through rigorous professional training.

Our County is a desirable place to live as shown by our fast and steady growth, complete with all the opportunities and challenges that implies. We are investing in the future by building infrastructure to support higher demand on roads, our transit network, buildings, and water treatment facilities. Our Economic Development Department works tirelessly to attract, retain, and grow businesses, as well as promote redevelopment. We continually improve our ability to provide emergency services, manage fiscal and human resources operations effectively, provide effective and responsive planning and permitting services, and enhance communications with our residents to make government more transparent and accessible. Our recreational and park facilities are also a priority and I'm proud that one of our county parks, Mallows Bay, has achieved designation by the federal government as a National Marine Sanctuary, the first our country has seen in almost 20 years. That distinction is the result of many years of effort by our county, the state of Maryland, the federal government, and other private sector proponents.

We are committed to serving you, our residents, and to providing the quality of service and efficiency of operations you deserve. I look forward to hearing from you.

  
Mark Belton  
County Administrator

# Climate Resiliency

## Taking Action In Charles County

**Charles County Government** is working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, transition to 100 percent renewable electricity, improve sustainability in county operations, and educate the county workforce on climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

### Resiliency Planning and Financing

Charles County is one of three vanguard counties in the state working with the University of Maryland Center for Global Sustainability on a project called Resiliency Planning and Financing for Maryland Counties. The goal of the project is to develop Resilience Action Plans to establish planning and financing systems in pursuit of climate change resilience. The effort includes elements such as:

- The essential role of multi-community collaboration and coordination.
- Ensuring resilience efforts address needs of the most vulnerable populations.
- Integrating resilience planning into every aspect of local government operations.
- Approaching resiliency as a community asset rather than an obligation.
- Addressing the limitation of fiscal resources and understanding how to prioritize actions among multiple departments and stakeholders.
- Aligning priorities and resources with community goals to jumpstart the resiliency process.

### Maryland Climate Leadership Academy

Charles County Government employees are taking full advantage of professional credentialing opportunities offered through the Maryland Climate Leadership Academy, the nation's first state-sponsored institution with continuing education and executive training programs designed for local government officials. As a part of this learning opportunity, Charles County is hosting a class throughout the fall month. More than 20 county employees are taking the training, which will include relevant professional disciplines, such as planning, fiscal, public works, and utilities.

### County Government Efforts

Planning is underway for construction projects for solar arrays on county-owned land that will more than offset 100 percent of electricity needs for county buildings and facilities.

The county has worked to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by utilizing appropriate landfill covers and upgrading the current passive collection system to one that actively captures emissions. Additionally, several measures have been instituted to increase the recycling rate to 46 percent, added to a 4 percent source-reduction-credit, equals a total-waste-diversion rate of 50 percent.

Shoreline restoration along the Potomac and Wicomico Rivers has also been prioritized with the completion of a scientific assessment that identified 153 sites along 27 miles of shoreline as in most need of restoration for ecological services benefits, including storm surge buffering, carbon sequestration, wetlands restoration, and habitat creation.

Charles County received a community resiliency grant from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to identify the sources of nuisance and urban flooding, analyze the associated hazards, and identify actions to increase community resiliency. The result of the project will be a chapter on resiliency added to the county's Hazard Mitigation Plan.





# County Government Overall Energy Savings Efforts

**Waldorf West** Library achieving LEED Silver designation.

**Energy efficient upgrades** to lighting and HVAC systems were completed at various county buildings.

The Energy Savings Performance Contracting program is lowering energy needs and costs by **reducing fossil fuel usage** through equipment replacement and efficiency upgrades.

The **sewer system force main design** requires lower flow velocities than typical designs, reducing energy use.

The Mattawoman Wastewater Treatment Plant's **Flow Equalization System** will provide diurnal flow balancing, decreasing resource use, and increasing process performance. During extreme weather events, flow equalization will prevent backups and sewer overflows.

## Climate **4** Resiliency The **4** Key Focus Areas



Charles County is leading by example and interviewing experts in the field to aid our community's understanding of the impacts of climate change. Tune into the Charles County Unscripted podcast to learn more about how Charles County is working to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate. Featured guests include: Dr. Peter Goodwin, President of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science; Secretary Ben Grumbles, Maryland Department of the Environment; and Nancy Kopp, Maryland State Treasurer. You can also hear from County officials and departments on how Charles County is building capacity for better decision making and leading local government efforts in climate resiliency planning.

The first podcast in our series is available at [www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/Podcasts](http://www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/Podcasts), and the remaining edition will be available prior to January 1, 2020. *The Charles County Government podcasts are also available on Apple Podcasts and Google Play.*

**"Maryland is among the states most vulnerable to climate change.** Rising sea levels, along with increased storm intensity, have devastating and far-reaching environmental and economic impacts on Chesapeake Bay and the quality of life Marylanders enjoy. Maryland's sizable farming community could suffer costly losses during extreme droughts and heat waves. Marylanders everywhere will face increased risk of flooding and significant property damage as a result of more precipitation and other extreme weather events. Children, the elderly, and other sensitive populations are vulnerable to the effects of heat waves and increased air pollution. For these reasons, addressing climate change must be among the state's highest priorities."

— Climate Change Maryland • EmPOWER Maryland

Learn more: [www.ClimateChange.Maryland.gov/science/](http://www.ClimateChange.Maryland.gov/science/)



# Mallows Bay

## A National Marine Sanctuary

Opened to the public in 2012, Mallows Bay Park is a home to the world-renowned World War I Ghost Fleet, a showcase of Charles County's rich maritime history.





**Established in 1658, Charles County continues to have strong ties to the tidal Potomac. While serving as a source of food, commerce, and transportation for hundreds of years, the river now provides a bounty of natural, cultural, and historic features for residents and visitors to explore and enjoy.**

## *The Ghost Fleet at Mallows Bay Park*

Located in Nanjemoy, Maryland (1440 Wilson Landing Road), the park includes the partially submerged remains of more than 100 wooden steamships that were built in response to threats from World War I-era, German U-boats that were sinking ships in the Atlantic. Although the ships never saw action during the war, their construction at more than 40 shipyards in 17 states reflected the massive national wartime effort that drove the expansion and economic development of waterfront communities and maritime service industries. The fleet was brought to the Potomac River to be salvaged for scrap metal by a company in Alexandria, Virginia, not far from the sanctuary site. Today, nature has reclaimed the ships, with some appearing to look like long skinny islands of vegetation. The wrecks provide shelter for flora and fauna, including fish, beaver, and osprey.

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# Mallows Bay

Continued from previous page

## National Marine Sanctuary

On September 16, 2014, the State of Maryland, Charles County, and more than 60 supporting organizations, submitted a nomination to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recommending consideration of Mallows Bay-Potomac River as the newest National Marine Sanctuary. A sanctuary designation would protect and conserve the shipwrecks and cultural heritage resources, foster education and research partnerships, and increase opportunities for public access, tourism, and economic development. The nomination enjoyed broad community support, as well as strong support from the Maryland congressional delegation.

Located along an 18-square mile stretch of Potomac River coast in Charles County, the new sanctuary boasts a collection of historic shipwrecks dating back to the Civil War, as well as archaeological artifacts nearly 12,000 years old. Its culturally rich landscape also includes sites that represent the history of Native American communities in the area, the once-booming Potomac River fishing industry and the Civil War.

In order to further preserve this unique site, in October 2015, NOAA declared its intent to designate Mallows Bay as a National Marine Sanctuary. The National Marine Sanctuary System was established in 1972 to recognize and promote the conservation, recreational, ecological, historical, research, or aesthetic values of special areas of the marine environment. Sanctuaries are managed to protect and conserve their resources and to allow uses that are compatible with resource protection.

The Mallows Bay designation is a first for the State of Maryland and Chesapeake watershed; the designation will attract tourists from around the globe and promote county economic development. The first national marine sanctuary designated since 2000.

NOAA, the State of Maryland, and Charles County will manage the national marine sanctuary jointly. NOAA's sanctuary management actions primarily will be focused on protecting the Ghost Fleet and related maritime heritage resources. Authorities related to natural resources and their management will remain with Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Potomac River Fisheries Commission, a multi-state agency.

— Continued



Photo Credit: Peter Turcik

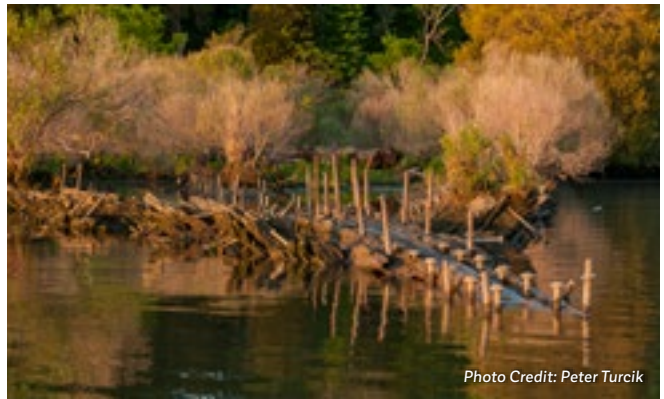


Photo Credit: Peter Turcik



Photo Credit: Peter Turcik

# Charles County Received Local and National News Coverage for the Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary Designation

In July 2019, Charles County Government, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the State of Maryland announced the designation of Mallows Bay as a new national marine sanctuary, which will protect the remains of more than 100 abandoned steamships and vessels built as part of America's engagement in World War I. The designation has generated local, regional, and national media coverage. This coverage continues to assist in promoting this hidden gem to residents and tourists alike and increasing opportunities for public access, tourism, and economic development.

**Associated Press** — Marine Sanctuary Named in Maryland With Steamship Remains

*The Associated Press article was shared by:*

- New York Times
- The Washington Post
- U.S. News
- ABC News
- The Tribune
- San Francisco Chronicle
- Minneapolis Star Tribune

**Christian Broadcast Network (CBN)** — 'Ghost Fleet': The Nation's Newest Marine Sanctuary

**Charlotte Observer** — New national marine sanctuary has more than 100 abandoned ships

**Courthouse News Service** — 'Ghost Fleet' of Shipwrecks Moves Closer to Sanctuary Status

**CNN** — A new national marine sanctuary in Maryland will protect WWI-era shipwrecks

**Daily Caller** — WWI Shipwreck Graveyard Declared National Marine Park

**Fox 5 DC** — Charles County landmark becoming new marine sanctuary

**Maryland Independent** — NOAA issues final approval of Mallows Bay sanctuary

**National Geographic** — 'Ghost fleet' of sunken warships declared a national marine sanctuary  
*Also in National Geographic Australia*

**NBC4** — Maryland Bay Where WWI-Era Ships Submerged Designated National Marine Sanctuary

**Seafood Source** — New national marine sanctuary created by NOAA, state of Maryland

**TheBayNet.com** — New sanctuary in Chesapeake Bay watershed will protect the "Ghost Fleet" of more than 200 shipwrecks

**Toronto Star** — The Story of the Wrecked Ships of Mallows Bay

**Value Walk** — NOAA Designates New National Marine Sanctuary In Maryland

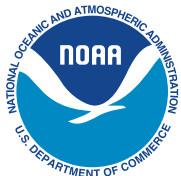
**Washington Post** — In Mallows Bay, a 'ghost fleet' of wrecked ships is very much alive

**WAMU 88.5** — The Ghost Fleet: How Skeletons of WWI Ships Came to Rest in the Potomac

**WJLA** — 'The ghost fleet of Mallows Bay' preserved in America's newest National Marine Sanctuary

## Mallows Bay Park Partners

Thank you to our partners from local, regional, state, and national organizations that enthusiastically supported the initial application and tirelessly advocated for final designation. The dedication from these groups continues with a mission to support education, research, and recreation opportunities at Mallows Bay-Potomac River National Marine Sanctuary.



# Mallows Bay

## A Charles County Treasure

First opened to the public in 2012, Mallows Bay Park is a showcase of Charles County's rich maritime history and provides a wide variety of outdoor recreational opportunities related to the world-renowned World War I Ghost Fleet.

Mallows Bay Park is open daily from dawn to dusk. Park amenities include a motorized boat launch, kayak launch, shoreline fishing, observation areas, and four miles of nature trails. While visitors on foot can catch a glimpse of several of the sunken ships, the best way to view the ghost fleet is by kayak. Visitors can launch their own kayaks and take advantage of a self-guided tour of the wreck site (water trail maps are available at the park). Paddlers are advised to use caution when exploring, due to the diverse shipwreck debris hidden under the water's surface. The Charles County Department of Recreation, Parks and Tourism offers guided tours (kayak included) on Sundays (May-October).

Learn more at [www.CharlesCountyParks.com](http://www.CharlesCountyParks.com)





*Stand in the middle of Charles County and turn 360 degrees...*

Every direction leads visitors to explore an array of unique encounters with history and nature at our core. Where else can you experience living history that will transport you back in time, kayaking through a WWI ship graveyard, or enjoying delectable seafood, all within the borders of one county?



Journey to **Port Tobacco Village**, a Maryland port town that was a hotbed of Confederate activity and where residents may have been involved in the conspiracy.



Paddle through the World War I Ghost Fleet while observing **Mallows Bay Park's** unique wildlife and historic and cultural features. Book a guided tour and kayak the serene waters at your own pace.



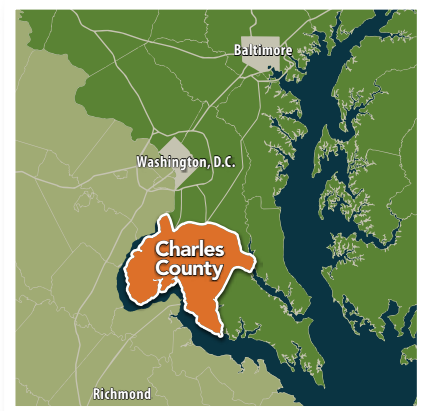
Legendary food abounds. Fresh catches and famed **Maryland blue crabs** are served in charming restaurants that dot our extensive and spectacular shoreline.

For more unique experience information, connect with us!

[ExploreCharlesCounty.com](http://ExploreCharlesCounty.com)

ExploreCharlesCounty @ExploreCharlesC

#ExploreCharlesCounty





# Tourism In Charles County

## Destination Marketing and Promotion

**Branding** — The tourism strapline, “Legends, Lore, and Room to Explore,” invites visitors to take a fresh look at Charles County’s recreational and historic tourism assets. The Tourism Division is dedicated to showcasing Charles County as an outdoor adventure destination for all ages and adventure levels. The division continued the roll out of the philosophy and branding, and the planning phase for the final piece — a new stand-alone website — began late in fiscal 2019. All collateral materials, the visitor guide, marketing profile sheets, and trade show displays have been redesigned to reflect the new image. Be sure to keep an eye on the Tourism Division as we strive to help our visitors and residents create and celebrate their own legendary memories as they “Explore Charles County!”

**Promotion** — Charles County is featured in an episode as part of the premier season of an outdoor adventure series on Amazon Prime. The episode showcases kayaking at Mallows Bay, charter fishing out of Cobb Island, and bird watching at Port Tobacco River Park. The concept of A.W.O.L. (Air Water Or Land) is to share outdoor adventure that is accessible to the average person, as well as affordable and low impact. The episode aired on August 5, 2019 and is available on demand for Amazon Prime subscribers.

**Advertising** — The division leveraged county funds with Maryland Office of Tourism Development grant monies to cover a wider advertising/marketing distribution. The division also collaborated with CycleLifeHQ to target overnight visitors in regional and national publications to attract cyclists for a weekend stay with advertisements directing cyclists to web and mobile service; and coordinated the fulfillment of all requests for visitor information that have come in by phone, fax, email, or in-person. In fiscal 2019, the customer fulfillment center responded to more than 6,000 specific requests for the “Explore Charles County Visitor Guide” as a direct result of ad placement.

## Targeted Visitor Attraction

**Cycle Tourism** — The division completed a web and mobile service with CycleLifeHQ to establish the county as a bicycling destination and connect local business with bicycle tourists. Through these efforts, cyclists will have access to information all in one place to determine when and where they want to travel, in order to take advantage of all our beautiful county has to offer.



## Fishing Tournaments —

Sponsored back-to-back, internationally-televized Fishing League Worldwide tournaments. Week one featured the TH Marine Bass Fishing League All-American Championship for a top award of \$120,000; 49 boaters and co-anglers competed and are the best of more than 25,000 participants nationwide. We hosted the YETI College Fishing Championship in week two, which featured the top 165 teams from 671 participating schools. Anglers remained in the area for practice leading up to the tournament, which resulted in 2,585 hotel room nights being sold over the one- to 11-day period. Due to the success of these events, two additional fishing tournaments were negotiated for fiscal 2020. The upper part of the Potomac River has an amazing history as a natural habitat and fisheries breeding area for largemouth bass and other native fish.

## Agritourism/Value-Added Agriculture

In collaboration with the Economic Development Department, the Tourism Division assisted new and existing **value-added agriculture businesses** through promotion and advocacy, to include support of House Bill 480/Senate Bill 508 Brewery Promotion Fund.

Agriculture is prominently featured in the Charles County episode of the **Amazon Prime series, A.W.O.L.** With a visit to EatWell Natural Farm, an excursion to the La Plata Farmers Market, and horseback riding at Southern Grace Farm, the episode showcases the county’s evolving food and agriculture sector.

All Tourism collateral material and itineraries are updated to include options that **highlight the local agriculture.**

## Return on Investment

Charles County continues to experience growth in revenues generated by travel and tourism initiatives. In 2017 (calendar year), Charles County realized **\$218.1 million in tourism industry sales**, with \$55.7 million in total tourism tax receipts. An estimated 1.1 million visitors stayed in hotels and/or spent money at local businesses, restaurants, and other local amenities in Charles County in 2017.

Compiled by Tourism Economics, Inc. for the Maryland Office of Tourism Development



Economic Development Chief of Business Development Lucretia Freeman-Buster (left) and Director Darréll Brown (right) at the Embassy of Ghana with His Excellency, Ambassador H.E. Dr. Barfuor Adjei-Barwuah and Mr. Kofi Tonto, Department of Communication.

## International Trade and Investment

The Economic Development Department began exploring opportunities to tap into new markets and attract new investment through International Trade initiatives. In the spring, the department hosted an International Trade Seminar, which was attended by more than 60 Charles County businesspeople and stakeholders. Commissioner President Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq. opened the event, underscoring the Board of Commissioners' goal to create and support business growth through overseas relationships.

Commissioner President Collins, Economic Development Department Director Darréll Brown, and Chief of Business Development Lucretia Freeman-Buster visited the Embassy of Mozambique in Washington, D.C., where they met with His Excellency Ambassador Carlos dos Santos and Commercial Counselor Godinho Alvas to begin exploring mutually beneficial opportunities for trade and investment. Freeman-Buster and Project Coordinator Daniella Djiogan also attended the annual Sister Cities Conference in Houston, Texas to learn more about how to launch and leverage international relationships to promote export opportunities for local companies, attract foreign direct investment to Charles County, and to encourage cultural, educational, and professional exchanges.

## Business Attraction

The Economic Development Department continues business attraction efforts through ongoing advertising targeted to the Washington, D.C. metro region. Both digital and print ads focus on our key message, "Close to Washington, D.C., talented workforce, lower cost of doing business." Advertising is targeted to C-level executives in target industries, which include healthcare, technology, and federal contraction.

### Several new major projects were initiated during the year.

- Demolition of an old office building, near the St. Charles Towne Center Mall, made way for the new MedStar Shah medical building, a 50,000-square-foot integrated health facility, expected to open next summer and employ more than 80 skilled workers.
- The UPS facility in Waldorf expanded, adding 40 new full-time and 22 new part-time jobs.
- Construction began on the Velocity Center in Indian Head, a place for innovation, learning, and collaboration for academia, the Navy, and the community, operated by the College of Southern Maryland.
- The new, 90,000-square-foot Maryland Army Reserve Training Center opened in White Plains, bringing more than 60 new jobs to the county, along with hundreds of reservists who will train on weekends throughout the year.

## A TOP PLACE FOR TECH

Technology firms in Charles County, MD have the right mix of ability and agility to move quickly in this lightning-fast market. See how our location, costs, and talent will help you to expand and deliver.

**STRATEGIC LOCATION**

- 30 minutes from Washington, DC
- Key federal installations within 60 minutes
- NSF Indian Head within the county

**LOWER COST OF DOING BUSINESS**

- Leases 20%-40% less
- Competitive taxes

**TOP TALENT, INCLUDING**

- 5,000 DOD civilian residents
- Over 7,000 residents employed in Professional, Scientific and Technical Industries
- Over 800,000 workers within a 45-minute commute

Learn more at [www.MeetCharlesCounty.com](http://www.MeetCharlesCounty.com) or contact Lucretia Freeman-Buster, Chief of Business Development, at [BusterL@MeetCharlesCounty.com](mailto:BusterL@MeetCharlesCounty.com) or 301-885-1344.



## Agriculture

The Economic Development Department continues to support the county's agricultural industry and enterprises. Throughout the year, the department used multiple marketing outlets and materials to promote local agriculture while working to strengthen the environment for these businesses through local and regional relationships and collaboration. Residents were encouraged to "buy local" from Charles County growers and producers through advertising for the county's farmers markets, handout cards with market hours and harvest schedules, directional signs, and a new, agriculture-specific Facebook page and e-newsletter.

To enhance the business environment for agriculture, the Economic Development Department collaborated with the Department of Planning and Growth Management on a zoning text amendment that establishes the necessary framework attract and retain businesses in the craft beverage industry, including breweries, wineries, and distilleries. The department continues to build regional partnerships in both urban and rural agricultural communities through involvement in both the Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' (MWCOG) Regional Ag Work Group. As a result, Charles County was included, for the first time, in MWCOG's "What Our Region Grows" report.



## Business Retention and Expansion

Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) was a major focus of the Economic Development Department during fiscal 2019 and is continuing into this fiscal year. The department implemented an ambitious BRE outreach project to learn more about local employers, their challenges, opportunities, needs, and growth potential. Staff met with 60 Charles County businesses, going through an extensive questionnaire covering all aspects of the business, such as hiring and workforce, marketing and competition, succession planning, obstacles to growth, and long-term strategies.

The Economic Development Department created a BRE Taskforce of subject matter experts from the community to assist with reviewing the information provided by the businesses – whose identities were kept confidential. Taskforce members pinpointed "red flags" that required immediate attention and recommended assistance to individual businesses to address those concerns. Then, all data and responses collected during the project were aggregated and thoroughly analyzed to reveal common themes, issues, and trends. The department is developing programs to address the top priority issues with plans for implementation later in fiscal 2020.



## Welcome to Billingsley Elementary School

The Charles County Public Schools started off the 2019-2020 school year with the opening of its 22nd elementary school — Billingsley Elementary School, home of the Bobcats. Located off Billingsley Road in White Plains, the school opened with nearly 700 students and features:

- About 35 classrooms
- Four outdoor activity areas
- Environmentally-friendly landscaping
- Two floors for learning
- Several playing fields

The opening of Billingsley helped to alleviate overcrowding at other elementary schools and balance student enrollment. A systemwide elementary school redistricting was also implemented this school year.

### Commissioner President Collins Joins Dr. Kim Hill to Greet our Students

Charles County Commissioner President Reuben B. Collins was proud to join the children attending Billingsley Elementary on their first day. Additional visits were made to Matthew Henson Middle School (Bryans Road) and McDonough High School (Pomfret).

Photos are available online at: <https://bit.ly/2k06Nxl>.



# Education and Learning

## Charles County Public Schools

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is nationally recognized for educational excellence in science, technology, engineering, the arts, and mathematics (STEAM) programs; computer science offerings; and career and technology education (CTE) courses for students interested in learning-by-doing. CCPS is composed of 37 schools — 22 elementary, eight middle, and seven high — that provide challenging, yet engaging instruction for children age three through grade 12. CCPS also includes three educational learning centers that feature advanced special education programs, alternative and distance learning for high school students, and environmental education.

### \$120 Million in Scholarships

The Class of 2019 included 1,997 seniors who earned nearly \$120 million in scholarship offers. Students continue to exceed benchmarks to graduate on time with their peers. In 2018, the graduation rate for seniors was 93.47 percent, which landed the school system in the top-third among Maryland counties for its graduation rate. Maryland's graduation rate statewide was 87.12 percent, putting CCPS ahead of the state average by nearly five percentage points. Supports are in place for students in need of assistance to meet graduation requirements and include alternative learning programs and targeted intervention plans.

### School Safety

CCPS is continuing its efforts to provide safe, inviting, and welcoming learning environments. The **See Something, Say Something** campaign continues with an emphasis on reporting unsafe or threatening behavior. CCPS encourages students, staff, parents, and the community to report anything that threatens the safety of others. An anonymous reporting tool is located at [www.ccboe.com/index.php/see-something-say-something](http://www.ccboe.com/index.php/see-something-say-something). The Office of School Safety and Security investigates all reports, often with the assistance of school resource officers. The school system also has an anonymous reporting hotline, 301-302-8305.

As part of an increased focus on school safety and security, CCPS launched a **pilot student identification (ID) badge program** in 2018 at three schools. The program was expanded this year to include all seven high schools, two middle schools, and one elementary school. Badges include a student's name, school, grade, and school year. Each ID features a unique barcode for uses such as tracking late arrivals and early dismissals, purchasing cafeteria meals, or checking materials out of the school library. The goal is to implement the program at every school.

Another safety enhancement in place is the approval process for **volunteers interested in working at a CCPS** school with children. Parents and community members interested in

volunteering, as well as those who attend special events, such as field trips, must complete registration procedures. All volunteers are required to complete a background screening and participate in training requirements. Volunteer approval is for one year. Visit the CCPS website for details.

### Renovations and Construction

**Dr. Samuel A. Mudd Elementary School** opened new doors this school year, as renovations two years in the making were completed. The building underwent a major renovation that included the creation of a separate gymnasium and cafeteria area, a new main entrance, and an additional 36,436 square feet of learning space for students. In 2017, renovations began on an approximately 45,000-square-foot building first erected in 1967. Today, that space has nearly doubled to a total of 76,819 square feet in modernized learning space for students.

**Arthur Middleton Elementary School** has received several building enhancements during the last year. The school building that once included an open-space floor plan now features classrooms with walls, providing a more structured learning environment. Spaces, such as the media center, have been enclosed and the building features a new entrance that allows for staff to monitor who is entering and leaving the building.

Renovations begin this school year on **Eva Turner Elementary School** in Waldorf. The building is set to undergo a two-year renovation that will modernize the building, increase space to maximize instructional opportunities, and upgrade both the mechanical and electrical systems. Construction is expected to be complete in June 2021. For the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, Eva Turner students and staff will attend classes at the Transition School (3155 John Hanson Drive in Waldorf).

Plans are underway for a renovation to begin this fall at **Benjamin Stoddert Middle School**. The renovation includes the expansion of classroom space to accommodate an additional 250 students and will take place in phases. Students will not relocate off campus during construction, which will take three years to complete. The expansion at Stoddert will help to alleviate overcrowding at the middle-school level and balance student enrollment.

# Education and Learning



## College of Southern Maryland Velocity Center

### Where Education and Innovation Meet

The new College of Southern Maryland (CSM) Velocity Center, operated and managed by the College of Southern Maryland, will be a place of innovation, learning, and collaboration for academia, the Navy, and the community. The collaborative learning space for innovation will support workforce development and economic growth in Southern Maryland.

This 13,000-square-foot innovative facility, expected to open in spring 2020, is located in Charles County on Maryland Route 210 approximately a quarter-mile outside of the Naval Surface Warfare Center (NSWC) IHEODTD in Indian Head. Spurring economic growth and workforce development, the CSM Velocity Center is where Navy scientists and industry leaders can interact with students and interns, have a place to tinker or conduct unclassified research, and where the community can take CSM courses such as computer-aided design, cybersecurity, drones/small unmanned aircraft systems, government procurement, social entrepreneurship, and tech transfer entrepreneurship, among others.

The CSM Velocity Center aligns with the strategic plans of the region's naval bases — NSWC IHEODTD, the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division (NAWC AD), and the Chesapeake Bay Detachment of the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory — and with the State of Maryland Economic Development Commission, Southern Maryland Economic Development Plan, and the Charles County Strategic Economic Development Plan.



### Flexible Space and Creative Programming

The facility will include the following types of activities:

- Flexspace for academia and Navy technology showcases, professional development workshops, recruiting events, prototyping space, vendors' showcases, technology transfer and projects; and shared office space that can be rented on a short-term basis by the day or week, designed for contractors or visitors who have business in Indian Head;
- Community MakerSpace and Fabrication lab, for learning, exploring, and sharing equipped with a variety of maker equipment including 3D printers, laser cutters, subtractive machines, and soldering irons. Programming will also include continuing education courses such as app development, drone and UAV workshops, cyber security and more;
- Student space for cyber/gaming, CAD modeling, simulation, and app development; Robotics, Prototyping, Rocket pods; and Technology Transfer and commercialization projects.

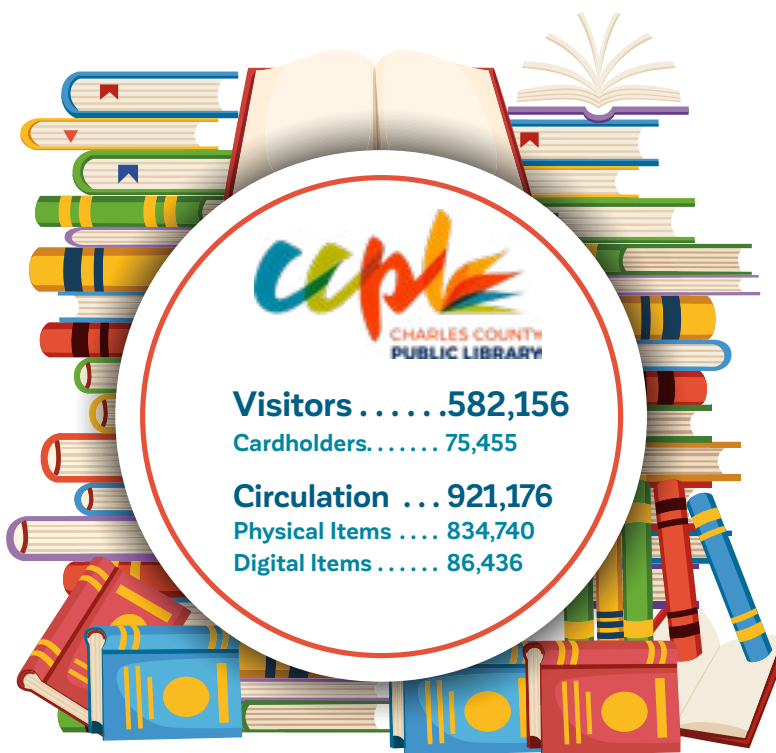
*Rental fees are available for all spaces.*

## Public Library

Through the varied programs and services at the Charles County Public Library (CCPL), we were able to offer our community unique experiences, as well as educational assistance that is not offered anywhere else. CCPL's mission is to create opportunities to engage, discover, and learn.

Visit: [www.CCPLonline.org](http://www.CCPLonline.org)

The library continues to position itself as an indispensable community asset through delivering programs that serve a diverse community. These programs range from story-time to job seeking help, book discussions, curated art programs, veterans' assistance, 3D printing, and more. Some highlights from fiscal 2019:



## Summer Reading Program

The library continues to grow in our partnership with the Charles County Public School system through the utilization of the library's **Summer Reading Program**. Middle Schools in Charles County used the library's summer reading program as the primary program for their students during the summer break.

- 2,528 participants registered for the 2019 Summer Reading Program. This was a 15 percent increase from last year.
- 77 percent (1,943) of these participants were Charles County youth.

## Programs

The library and our staff provided new programs and services to our community that have been long awaited. There were 49,878 patrons who participated in Charles County Public Library programs, through 2,193 programs in fiscal 2019. Highlights include:

- **SOAR Innovation Space** - This innovative space aimed at small businesses, entrepreneurs, and those looking to learn new skills continues to be an extremely popular service at our Waldorf West branch.
- Our **Mobile Hotspots** available for checkout were increased this year. They were first provided to CCPL, in part through a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Maryland State Library.
- **Notary public services** are now available at all branches with extended hours.

## Employment services

- **Young Adult Job Fair** — This year we had our largest turnout ever, with more than 750 attendees.
- CCPL partnered with the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation's Mobile Job Source to aid in **job searching assistance** for 299 patrons.
- The Library started a partnership with the College of Southern Maryland Small Business Development Center, allowing patrons to access **small business programs free of charge**, that would otherwise be very costly.
- This year we also offered several different programs to help those of all ages seeking employment. Topics included: **resume help, interviewing skills, and free headshots**.

## Drop the Mic Studio

The Drop the Mic Recording Studio opened at the P.D. Brown Memorial Branch on March 20. The space is a full-scale, professional recording studio with a sound booth, microphones for instruments, singing and speaking, and recording and mixing equipment. The studio was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services' RE-95-17-0068-17 grant, in the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program, and by the support of the Charles County Public Library Board of Trustees, as well as a gift from the Citizens for the Charles County Public Library, Inc.

## Charles County Sheriff's Office

**Sheriff Troy D. Berry** leads the Charles County Sheriff's Office (CCSO), one of the largest employers in Charles County with more than 650 personnel including police officers, corrections officers, and civilians. Elected in 2014, Sheriff Berry is the first African American to serve as Sheriff in the agency's 360-year history. He was re-elected Sheriff in 2018.

The Sheriff's Office 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 also operates the Charles County Detention Center.

The men and women of the CCSO are dedicated to service through superior performance and respect. The protection of life is the agency's highest priority. In 2018, officers responded to more than 235,604 calls for service. Last October, during the agency's Annual Awards Banquet, three officers received Bronze Medals of Valor for acts of bravery that put them at extreme risk while apprehending the killer of a police officer from a neighboring jurisdiction. In addition, three employees received meritorious awards, six received life-saving awards, and 16 received Sheriff's awards for outstanding field service.

During the past fiscal year, many successes stand out: crime in Charles County has decreased; the Digital Forensics Unit was unveiled; new outreach efforts were made to educate the public on the dangers of heroin and opioids; several officers graduated from prestigious leadership and training programs; and employees continued to remain actively involved with communities and youth.

Sheriff's Office 2018 Year in Review: [www.CCSO.us/Annual-Reports/](http://www.CCSO.us/Annual-Reports/)



**Decrease in Crime:** Preliminary crime numbers show that in comparison with 2017, overall crime decreased by 2.5 percent in 2018. The CCSO was again recognized this year by the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention for outstanding crime prevention programs.

**Crime Solving and Technology:** In June, the agency unveiled the newly acquired Digital Forensic Unit (DFU) during a press conference. The DFU, which is staffed by two full-time digital analyst experts, affords investigators the ability to conduct immediate examinations of electronic devices that are recovered during criminal investigations.

"Digital evidence from phones and computers touches all types of crimes, from homicides to financial fraud. But it is especially prominent in cases of child abuse, as smartphones have become a way for predators to connect with, groom, and abuse their young victims. This unit is critical because it helps us move faster on investigations into child sexual abuse cases and other crimes," said Sheriff Berry.

**Community Outreach:** The CCSO has been recognized as having outstanding relationships with the communities they serve. The agency continues to join forces with organizations such as the Center for Abused Persons, Charles County Crime Solvers, Parents Affected by Addiction, and Lifestyles of Maryland, Inc. Residents showed their support by participating in events such as the Crime Watch Kickoff, Citizens Advisory Council Meetings, and National Night Out. School Resource Officers are active in all middle and high schools and host numerous camps throughout the summer to continue mentoring students. The agency also participates with the United Way, American Cancer Association, Special Olympics Maryland, Corrections Reentry Fair for inmates preparing for release, annual Toy Drive, Christmas Connection, and Shop with a Cop among others.



## Prevention, Treatment, and Enforcement

### Division of Behavioral Health Services

The **Charles County Department of Health, Division of Behavioral Health Services** provides a wide range of treatment and supportive services to help combat the Opioid Epidemic in our community. The program provides assessment, referrals, individual, group, couples and family counseling services as well as psychiatric evaluations and medication management for individuals suffering from both mental illness and substance use. Our prescribers currently provide Buprenorphine, Subutex, and Vivitrol treatment.

The department maintains a **Peer Recovery Program** available to county residents and their families for additional support with addiction education, Naloxone training, and outreach services. Peer Recovery Specialists respond to overdose reports at the local hospital and offer treatment options for those interested. They can assist with transporting clients to inpatient treatment and 12-step programs, as well as participating in outreach events.

We work closely with our colleagues at the health department, specifically with the Community Health and Nursing STI program to implement **harm reduction strategies to reduce the spread of STIs** through substance-related use by making available STI education, testing, treatment, and referrals. The program also provides both level I and Level II intensive outpatient services on-site and at the Charles County Detention Center with the goal of expanding services in the near future. Additionally, we provide assessments, treatment, and referrals for Family Recovery Court through a collaborative effort with Charles County Court House, Judges and Department of Social Services.

The **Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA)** tackled the opioid epidemic by hosting and partnering with other organizations to put on several events, perform weekly community outreach, and worked towards the complete saturation of Naloxone into the community. The HOPE Team was in the community providing educational information, Narcan training, HIV testing, and other harm reduction supplies. The Opioid Intervention Team actively worked to improve the services our community provides. Representatives from several organizations impacted by the opioid epidemic met quarterly to discuss overdose cases and provided potential recommendations to prevent such occurrences in the future.

### UM CRMC Opioid Prevention

Ever since Governor Larry Hogan signed the Heroin and Opioid Prevention Effort (HOPE) and Treatment Act into law in 2017, UM CRMC and the Charles County Department of Health have been **partnering to reduce the opioid epidemic**.

When patients experiencing an opioid overdose go to the emergency room, they have the **opportunity to talk with a peer recovery specialist**—someone who has been in their shoes but conquered their addiction. Patients also receive a prescription for the opiate-reversing drug naloxone and instructions for using it. In addition, UM CRMC has focused on improving its approach to pain management and reducing prescriptions for opiates. These efforts are paying off as opiate-related deaths in Charles County dropped from 36 in 2016 to 13 in 2018.

### Sheriff's Office HOPE for the Heroin Epidemic

Opioid addiction is an epidemic affecting all parts of the country. While the number of overdoses continues to rise on a national level, the number of overdoses and fatalities linked to opioids saw a decrease in Charles County in 2018. The agency unveiled the **HOPE (Heroin Overdose Prevention Education) trailer** in the fall. This mobile educational tool was designed to raise awareness and inform parents of the warning signs related to drug abuse. The trailer—designed to resemble a teenager's bedroom—offers parents the opportunity to see where teens are likely to hide drugs.



## Health and Well-Being

### NextGen 9-1-1

To prepare Charles County for the transition to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG911), several tasks were completed in fiscal 2019. Given the fact that 9-1-1 will be capable of receiving voice, text, pictures, video, telematics and IoT data, we anticipate increased call load, demand for service, need for data storage, and network speed and capacity requirements, as well as new skill sets for 9-1-1 specialists.

We began by preparing our primary and back up 9-1-1 Centers to receive this new data. All computer network equipment, electrical circuits and power protection equipment, 9-1-1 consoles, and geographical information system (GIS) computers were replaced with new equipment. We also installed a state-of-the-art, IP-based NG911 telephone system and an IP-PBX network and equipment.

To prepare 9-1-1 specialists for NG911, we updated 9-1-1 staff job descriptions to include the training, competencies, and professional development benchmarks that will be required in the NG911 world. To prepare for the increased demand for services, we increased the number of “trunks” that are used to deliver 9-1-1 calls, the number of 9-1-1 call taker positions from 12 to 18, and the total number of 9-1-1 specialists from 25 to 29. To prepare for the possibility of a cyber security threat, we conducted an audit. This is a critical first step in the transition to NG911 and an Emergency Services IP Network (ESInet).

Nearly all enhancements were funded by the 9-1-1 Trust Fund, the fee that is included on your phone bill.



### County Mitigation Efforts

Over the past year, Emergency Management received a Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant to update the Hazard Mitigation Plan. Emergency Management assembled a diverse committee of representatives from all over County Government, including the Department of Planning and Growth Management, Department of Health, Sheriff's Office, College of Southern Maryland, Port Tobacco River Conservancy, Volunteer Fire and Emergency Medical Services, State Highway Administration, Soil Conservation, Local United States Department of Agriculture farm agents, Maryland Emergency Management Agency, Town of Indian Head, Town of La Plata, and the Village of Port Tobacco. The committee evaluated common hazards in the county, then developed strategies to lower the risk of the hazard impact to county residents. Through each step of plan development, the committee published their work to the public through a website, meetings were open to the public, and a public hearing was held by the Commissioners to gather public comments regarding the mitigation actions that the plan proposed. The plan was approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and adopted by the Commissioners in December 2018. In early 2019, the Emergency Operations Plan update was completed based upon the Hazard Identification and Risk Analysis presented in the Mitigation Plan.

In June 2019, the county was awarded a grant by the Department of National Resources (DNR) Chesapeake and Atlantic Trust Fund that will allow Emergency Management to develop a Nuisance and Urban Flooding Plan in the next fiscal year. The new plan will be an extension of the Mitigation Plan. Development of the plan will utilize a similar format to the Mitigation Plan development by assembling a diverse committee to explore ways to address flooding in the urban and coastal setting in an environmentally-friendly manner. The guidance from DNR will encourage the committee to consider flooding due to climate change and sea level rise.



## Charles County Department of Emergency Services Awards

### Program Innovator Awards

Charles County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) was invited to the annual meeting of the Resuscitation Quality Improvement (RQI) Partners, held in Dallas, Texas with partners, American Heart Association (AHA) and Laerdal, to provide perspective and input as pilot and early adopters of educational programs for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) clinicians and emergency medical dispatchers/9-1-1 specialists. The programs innovate low-dose, high-frequency education, combining it with high-fidelity simulation and an online learning management system. The educational products capture performance metrics which are used to deliver positive reinforcement of actions that can save lives.

Charles County is the only EMS system in the United States that is piloting and early adopting RQI for EMS and RQI for telecommunicators. AHA and Laerdal honored Charles County EMS with a Resuscitation Quality Improvement Award. This award signifies the innovative program and leadership partnership in these programs which hold the promise of doubling bystander CPR and potentially doubling survival from cardiac arrest in Charles County.

In addition, RQI Partners recognized the valued partnership with Charles County by awarding Charles County EMS an RQI Program Innovator challenge coin, recognizing the fact that the partnership is, "Transforming Resuscitation Forever."

### MIH Team Recognized for Model Practice

In 2019, the Charles County Mobile Integrated Healthcare Team (MIH) (*pictured*) was selected as a model practice by the National Association of County and City Health Officials' (NACCHO) Model Practice Program. The selection of this initiative as a Model Practice means that the MIH team and program demonstrates exemplary and replicable qualities in response to a local public health need. The MIH program reflects a strong local health department role, collaboration, innovation, and has demonstrated its value through evaluation.

In addition, Model Practice winners are invited to showcase their projects via a poster presentation at the NACCHO's annual awards ceremony in July. This was a great opportunity to share our work with other counties across the nation. This is the second national-level award that the Charles County's MIH program has been honored with since the team's implementation two years ago.

## Health and Well-Being



### Affordable and Accessible Healthcare

The Administrative Care Coordination Unit (ACCU) provides care coordination and ombudsman services to Medicaid HealthChoice recipients. For FY19, ACCU received 1505 referrals; reaching out to each recipient to educate them regarding their benefits, how to access services, assist in locating providers, and help resolve grievances.

**Charles County Mobile Integrated Healthcare:** The Charles County Department of Health, in collaboration with the University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center and the Charles County Department of Emergency Services, has established the Charles County Mobile Integrated Healthcare (MIH) team to address the health and social determinants leading to repeated use of hospital and emergency medicine utilization.

The MIH team includes a paramedic, a community health nurse, and a community health worker. During the initial visit, the MIH team assesses the patient's vital signs, reviews discharge paperwork, evaluates compliance with discharge instructions, completes a medication evaluation, conducts an environmental scan of the home for safety issues, and provides health education and chronic disease self-management information.

**Charles County Department of Health's Oral Health Program:** The Charles County Department of Health's Oral Health Program serves as a safety-net provider to provide adult and child dental services to the underserved population in Charles County. The newest initiative is the Medicaid Adult Dental Coverage Pilot, which is an important step forward in demonstrating that a Medicaid adult dental benefit that enables adults to establish a dental home, obtain preventive care, and avert costly dental conditions; and is a good investment in health outcomes and the fiscal health of Medicaid.

### Collaboration through Partnerships

The Partnerships for a Healthier Charles County (PHCC) was established in 1994 to serve as a community health network and as a forum for collaboration and sharing of information between county agencies and services. The focus of the PHCC is to improve the health outcomes of county residents through community collaboration and effective partnerships. Health improvement projects are data driven and developed using the 2018 Charles County Community Health Needs Assessment Report and Health Improvement Plan. The PHCC has three active subcommittees: the Access to Care Team, the Behavioral Health Team, and the Chronic Disease Prevention Team.

Collaboration on chronic disease prevention and management projects such as the Increasing Colorectal Cancer Screening and Comprehensive Quality Improvement in Primary Care Programs with non-profits. The Charles County Department of Health works closely with numerous community partners including Health Partners Inc. and the Partnerships for a Healthier Charles County to improve population health. Health Partners is currently collaborating with the health department on the Comprehensive Quality Improvement in Primary Care grant and the Increasing Colorectal Cancer Screening through Community-Clinical Linkages grant.



# UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND CHARLES REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

## Expanding Our Network of Care

University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center (UM CRMC) is an acute-care community hospital serving Charles County, one of the fastest-growing counties in Maryland. Generations of families have been born in this community hospital and continue to trust the staff with their health and safety. UM CRMC has provided excellence in acute health care and preventive services in Charles County and the surrounding communities for more than 80 years.

In 2017, to keep pace with rapid changes in medical care and technology, UM CRMC opened the new Charles Regional Medical Pavilion in north La Plata, offering outpatient services for sports and orthopedic rehabilitation, an imaging center, and primary care. Additionally, UM CRMC continues to provide a growing network of outpatient providers through University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Group including women's health, surgical care, gastroenterology, diabetes and endocrinology, and diet and nutrition services.

## Access to Care

UM CRMC believes a strong medical center serves the community most effectively by working in partnership with like-minded community organizations. This hospital has been a founding member of the Partnerships for a Healthier Charles County since 1994 and now leads the Access to Care Coalition (ACC) team. This ACC implementation team targets barriers to health care access, with the goals of increasing primary care and specialty physicians in Charles County and improving social determinants of health such as transportation and health literacy. Partner organizations include the Charles County Department of Health; Department of Social Services; Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland; Health Partners, Inc.; Greater Baden Medical Services; and many other community agencies. The team has more than 100 members on their

directory. Together, they are working towards accessible and affordable healthcare. In July 2019, the ACC team hosted a Healthcare Fair in the western side of Charles County. The fair was meant to bring information on health care resources and increase the health literacy of the attendees that visited the event. This Bryans Road area event was a huge success with more than 70 attendees and 25 agencies represented. The team hopes to make this an annual event and continue to reach the medically underserved areas of Charles County.

## Health Education Seminars

The UM CRMC Foundation hosts bi-monthly educational health seminars that are offered free to the community. Designed to inform and educate attendees on financial and health care concerns, the speakers are often local professional advisors or UM CRMC employees with subject matter expertise. Attendees are provided information and recommendations on topics such as estate planning, tax strategies, aging at home, stress reduction, advanced directives, and more. With each event, community members have enjoyed learning how to manage health and financial wellness now and for years to come.

## Awards

UM CRMC continues to excel by being recognized for various efforts throughout 2019. The Center for Wound Healing accepted a national award from Healogics for the fifth year. Additionally, UM CRMC received the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association's Get With The Guidelines Target: Stroke Honor Roll Elite Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award, and was awarded an 'A' from The Leapfrog Group's Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade. Each recognition shows UM CRMC's dedication to providing advanced care and utmost safety to every patient that comes through its doors.



## Quality of Life

### Waldorf Senior and Recreational Center

The Waldorf Senior and Recreational Center (WSRC) opened on Monday, Sept. 23 2019. The WSRC is a unique partnership between the Department of Community Services and the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism that will for the first time, provide a single location with full-scale, multi-generational programming and activities for older adults, families, and individuals of all ages in Charles County.

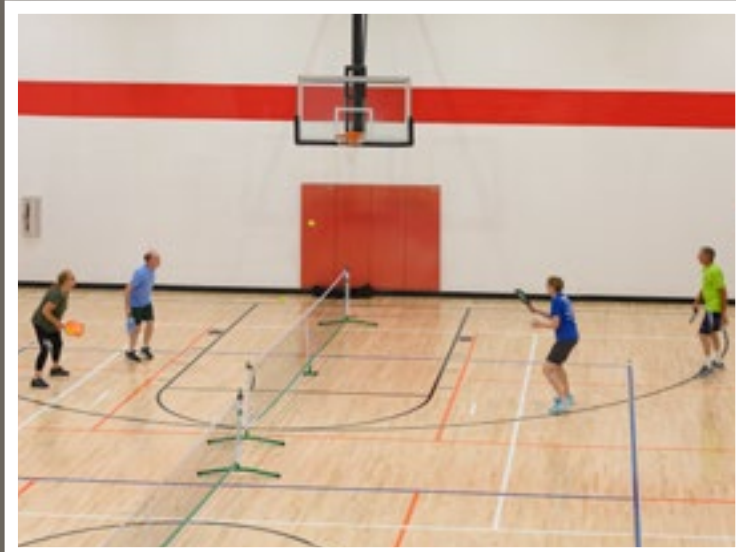
This newly-renovated, 30,000-square-foot facility will offer a wider variety of new programs for residents, with expanded hours and days of service, as compared to existing senior centers and community centers.

Highlights of the WSRC include: a dedicated fitness equipment room; a group exercise room; racquetball, pickleball, and basketball courts; an art room; a scalable multi-purpose room for special events; classrooms and activity spaces for health, wellness, and personal enrichment opportunities.

The new commercial kitchen supports the Senior Nutrition Program, an Older American's Act requirement that provides nutritious daily meals for older adults during senior center hours, for a voluntary donation. In addition to meals, this program reduces social isolation of older adults.

Programs offered by the Recreation Division will include numerous activities, classes, and special events for individuals, youth, and families, including evenings and weekends and some school holidays.





## Our Seniors



2018 Indian Head Breast Cancer Walk



2018 Senior Holiday Party



2019 Senior Prom

### Aging and Human Services

Charles County is the fastest growing population in Maryland for older adults aged 60 and better. As such, the Aging and Human Services Division continues to experience steady increases in the demand for long-term care and supportive services; especially those that are home- and community-based. The division has explored innovative ways to meet this challenge, with minimal fiscal impact to the county. For example, serving as a practicum placement for Masters-level social work interns and utilizing federal grant funds for an additional part-time case manager are two methods the division has implemented to increase its service capacity, particularly for frail and vulnerable residents.

#### Maryland Access Point

Maryland Access Point (MAP), the primary information, assistance, and referral (I&A-R) service offers scheduled appointments and walk-in services at the Richard R. Clark Senior Center in La Plata, and at the division's administrative offices in Port Tobacco during regular business hours. Residents can also access MAP/I&A-R via a toll-free phone line, a web-based service request, or a dedicated email address. The MAP/I&A-R program is a "no wrong door" and single point of entry for all Aging and Human Service programs operated by the division and regularly reaches capacity with the volume of customer requests received. With the opening of the new WSRC, the division plans to

establish an additional MAP/I&A-R location at the center to further enhance access to its many programs and services, especially those that assist frail elders and family caregivers with long-term care planning and supports.

MAP/I&A-R provides coordination of public benefits, application assistance, appointments for consultation on Medicare, Medicaid, and supplemental health insurance, prescription drug coverage, benefits check-ups, as well as referrals to Legal Aid and other public and private partner agencies, as needed. All services are open to seniors, individuals with disabilities, as well as caregivers.

# Maryland Access Point

**CHARLES COUNTY**

**1-855-843-9725**

**MDAccessPoint@CharlesCountyMD.gov**





## Families and Children

### Charles County Advocacy Council for Children, Youth, and Families

The Charles County Advocacy Council for Children, Youth, and Families (CCACCYF), also known as the Local Management Board, serves as the designated neutral convener in Charles County for the planning and coordination of state-funded services for children, youth, and families. The CCACCYF Board members receive guidance from the Governor's Office for Children (GOC) to address priority needs and populations in Maryland, as identified by the GOC. Through a variety of state grants, the CCACCYF administers and monitors performance of qualified local contractors who deliver the priority services to eligible Charles County residents. Recent accomplishments of the CCACCYF include:

#### Annual Early Childhood Day

The 11th annual "Early Childhood Day" was held on August 3, 2019 (**pictured**). This free event served approximately 300 children from 140 registered local families. Participating families had the opportunity to meet with more than 28 different exhibitors and providers of community health and human services, representing a broad range resources for children in Charles County. The day also included fun activities, games, and free promotional items. During the event, the CCACCYF provided backpacks to all participating children, stuffed with learning supplies to facilitate school readiness. In addition, 25 early-learning toys, promotional water bottles, and 300 commemorative beach balls were given out to attending families. This year, the Early Childhood Day mascot "Charlie" was worn by our Community Services Summer Intern Rebecca Smith. "Charlie" interacted with the children, handed out balloons, and posed for photos throughout this successful annual event.

#### Summer Meals Program

The Summer Meals Program, which receives state funds through the CCACCYF is another key program. It helps low-income children and families who are at-risk of food insufficiency to access free, nutritionally-balanced meals at designated locations across the county during the summer months when schools are closed. The Summer Meal sites are chosen based upon a high percentage of the walkable community being eligible for Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) program. This program not only reduces childhood hunger, but also provides nutrition education, referrals, and connection to other community resources to help needy families in the community. During the fiscal 2019, Summer Meals served 20,921 free meals to children and families in Charles County.





White Plains Golf Course Irrigation System



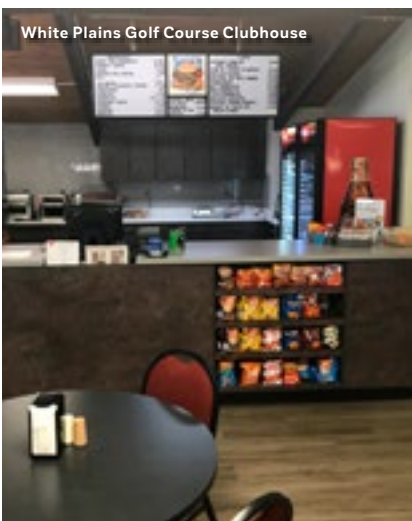
Maxwell Hall Pavilion



White Plains Athletic Complex Lighting



Gilbert Run Park Zipline



White Plains Golf Course Clubhouse

## Improving Our Parks

Athletic field lighting for the **White Plains Athletic Complex** 90-foot baseball field was replaced with a new energy-efficient system. This upgrade allows for an extended game schedule enhancing Charles County's growing adult kickball league, as well as various youth and adult baseball programs.

The Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism, Parks and Grounds Division completed playground improvement projects at two of our most visited park locations. Phase I of the **Gilbert Run Park** new adventure play area opened in April 2019. This venue features a 100-foot long zipline for children age 5 to 12. The Parks and Grounds Division removed and replaced the aging and obsolete playground equipment at **White Plains Park**.

The Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism partnered with the Crossroads at Hughesville Garden Club and the newly formed Friends of Maxwell Hall to provide monthly open houses at this historic **Maxwell Hall Park** property and special events scheduled throughout the year. The Parks and Grounds Division completed several projects designed to enhance the visitor experience at this historic venue. Improvements include an events and activities barn, school field trip pavilion, interpretive gardens and landscaping, and additional site lighting and parking areas.

Opened in 1972, the Charles County's only public golf course **White Plains Golf Course** recently completed a number of renovation projects including: complete remodel of clubhouse food service area, restroom renovations, roof replacement, and a new HVAC system. In addition to improvements in the clubhouse, a new environment-friendly, automated irrigation system was completed in fiscal 2019. This upgrade replaces a 45-year-old pipe network, which was prone to frequent line breaks and the recurring closure of portions of the golf course.



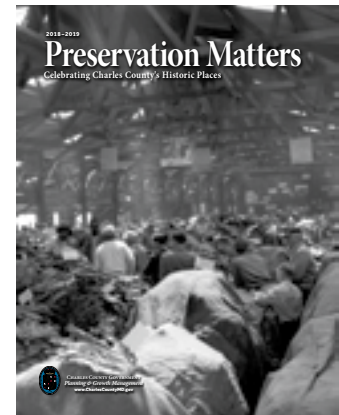
## Rural Legacy Program

**Land preservation** programs continue to be very active in Charles County with growing interest from landowners to preserve their farm and forest properties. The Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) and the Rural Legacy Program rely on a strong partnership with Charles County, which provides matching fund contributions to implement these programs. Over the past year, nearly 1,000 acres of farm and forest land was permanently protected by conservation easements in Charles County through the MALPF Program. As of August 1, 2019, an additional 2,583 acres were under contract for conservation easement purchase by MALPF with a budget of \$7.3 million.

To accommodate landowner interest and to utilize state grant funding, the county initiated the process to expand the **Zekiah Watershed Rural Legacy Area**. If approved by the Maryland Board of Public Works, the proposed expansion would add an additional 30,000 acres to the Rural legacy Area and allow property within Cobb Neck to become eligible for state grant funding for land preservation. Since 1998, the county has received 19 grant awards through the Rural Legacy Program totaling \$18.5 million. This funding allowed the county to preserve 4,377 acres within the existing Zekiah Watershed Rural Legacy Area.

In January 2019, the County Commissioners joined the Department of the Navy's Multi-Year Encroachment Protection Agreement, which allows the county to participate in the United States Department of Defense's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program. This partnership enables the county to leverage REPI funding to purchase conservation easements near military installations. In fiscal 2020, the county allocated \$460,000 to leverage REPI funding.

Learn more: [www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/PGM/Planning/Land-Preservation](http://www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/PGM/Planning/Land-Preservation)



Learn more about the Rural Legacy Program and the Zekiah Watershed area by reading the latest Preservation Matters magazine's featured article "Zekiah Valley – Preserving Our Rural Heritage."

[www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/PGM/Planning/Preservation-Matters](http://www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/PGM/Planning/Preservation-Matters)

# Wastewater Management & Drinking Water

## Community Wastewater

The county provides treatment of community wastewater to effectively protect the environment. The county's sewer overflow prevention strategies and solutions include a multifaceted approach. The primary projects that are underway to address treatment, management, and overflow mitigation are:

**Mattawoman Plant Flow Equalization Tank: \$23 million construction est., \$1.1 million for design** — This project will construct an 11.3-million-gallon concrete flow equalization tank with associated equipment at the Mattawoman Wastewater Treatment Plant (MWWTP). The flow equalization tank will store excess wet weather flow surges and regulate the daily flow to downstream processes. The tank is at 30 percent in the design phase and scheduled to break ground in fall 2020.

**Manhole Securing Projects: \$929,000 total project** — This project includes modifications to 75 existing manholes nearest to MWWTP that are at the highest risk for potential sanitary sewer overflows. The project is intended to protect the environment from overflows, as well as protect the sewer system from inflows at times when the Mattawoman Creek floods the area. To date, 66 manholes are complete and the remainder are under construction.

**Closed Loop Project: \$15 Million** — This project is the complete rehabilitation of the MWWTP Influent and Effluent Pump Stations, which are 40 years old. The project includes replacement of all critical equipment that has reached its useful life to improve system reliability. Construction began in December 2017. When complete, the project will increase the MWWTP's peak pumping capacity to 60 MGD. The effluent pumps have been completed and replacement of the influent pumps is underway.

**4 Infiltration and Inflow Projects: \$1.3 million/year** — This is a multi-phased, multi-year program to eliminate Infiltration and Inflow (I&I) in the county's public sewer system. Work in the Zekiah area is 90 percent complete and Bryans Road area is complete. Pinefield subdivision is the next rehab project that will address the I&I issues that were identified in the area through flow monitoring and television inspection.

**MWWTP Clarifier Rehabilitation: \$1.5 million** — In a continuing project to improve the treatment process, the Mattawoman Primary Clarifier #1 was rehabbed. All new equipment was installed, including weirs, mechanism, and pumps. This project will assist Mattawoman Wastewater Treatment Plant to process wastewater effectively and will assist in compliance with the Maryland Department of the Environment's discharge permit.

**St. Marks Pump Station: \$5.1 million** — In the Waldorf wastewater collection system, the St. Marks Sewer Pump Station was completely reconstructed. The building and equipment were installed, including piping, pumps, and electronics. This project will help to keep sewer collections system operating efficiently, minimizing the potential for sewer overflows.



Mattawoman Wastewater Plant Flow Equalization Tank



Mattawoman Wastewater Plant Closed Loop



Mattawoman Wastewater Plant Closed Loop



Swan Point Electrical Improvements



St. Marks Pump Station



Clifton Well



## Our Drinking Water Supply

Fresh, safe, and reliable drinking water is a top health and safe environment priority for the county. The Utilities Division is responsible for the operation, maintenance, compliance monitoring, and reporting of all county-owned water and wastewater facilities. The county operates and maintains **154 facilities** to include wells, water storage tanks, treatment plants, and pump stations; manages **925 miles of water and sewer lines**; and provides service for nearly **33,000 water connections**.

Charles County conforms to some of the most stringent safe water drinking practices in the country. Employees conduct thousands of tests on the drinking water supply each year and the county publishes its drinking water quality reports annually. In addition, the county provides for tangible return-on-investment with an aggressive capital infrastructure renewal and replacement program. To protect our underground facilities, county locators responded to 16,562 Miss Utility tickets protecting lines and Cross Connection Control conducted 244 inspections, received 2,622 backflow reports, and managed the overhaul of 1,846 dual checks, supporting the protection of the drinking water supply. Finally, Charles County is among the top performers in preventing loss of clean drinking water, and proactively protects this precious natural resource while pursuing all avenues to ensure sustainability through 2040 and beyond.

### Pretreatment and Testing

Pretreatment conducted 165 inspections and issued 141 permits. The Mattawoman Water Quality Lab provided more than 24,000 analytical results for monitoring and ensuring compliance.



## Recycling Initiatives

The Environmental Resources Division continues to work on improving its recycling and waste reduction programs. The division's efforts continue to ensure the county surpasses the state-mandated recycling rate of 35 percent. The division operates two full-time recycling centers, two part-time recycling centers, curbside recycling collection, curbside yard waste collection, and recycling collection in County Government buildings.

The division, in conjunction with the Media Services Division, visited the Prince George's County Material Recovery Facility (*pictured*) and shot footage of the sorting process for the development of a commercial. The

division is focusing on eliminating plastic bags from the single-stream recycling program. Film plastic is one of the most common contaminants in the program. Not only is film plastic not accepted, but it also causes operational issues by jamming equipment and stopping the sorting process. The division hopes to utilize the commercial in conjunction with a new participation tool to educate residents on the acceptable materials for the curbside program.

Watch "How Plastic Bags Impact Recycling Efforts" Public Service Announcement on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/OBzBSM00Kig>

## Fiscal 2019 Recycling and Collection



**7,810 tons**

Curbside recycling collected from 46,444 homes.

**20,169 tons**

Total tons of recyclables collected at the curb and drop off locations.

**2,704 tons**

Total yard waste collected curbside.

**144.16 tons**

Total tons of electronics collected for recycling.

**1,727 cars**

Household hazardous waste collected at 12 events held monthly.

**2,528 loads**

Total loads provided with 130,403 patrons at the Recycling and Mulch Facility.



# SHRED IT!

## COMMUNITY SHRED EVENT

### And Environmental Workshops

In October 2018 and May 2019 the Department of Public Works hosted two environmental outreach events. The events included backyard composting and rain barrel workshops, as well as free document shredding services. The educational workshops are a collaboration of the Department of Planning and Growth Management and the Department of Public Works staff with the University of Maryland Extension staff.

Residents that attended the rain barrel workshops learned about the practical uses for rain barrels, how to reduce the impact of runoff on local waterways, and proper in-home installation techniques. The county's rain barrel program provides residents who install two rain barrels on their property eligibility for up to a 50 percent credit on their annual stormwater fee.

The composting workshop teaches participants the basics of home composting. For residents that preregistered, a plastic GEOBIN® was provided to start composting at home.

Event photos can be viewed at: <https://flic.kr/s/aHsmE3MRPq>

Participation at the two Shred It & Workshop events resulted in fiscal year totals as follows:

### Shred It Event

1,132 cars  
38.81 tons

### Composting Geobins

Distributed: 58

### Rain Barrels

Distributed: 50

## Roads and Stormwater Management

### Stormwater and Our Roads

In fiscal 2019, Charles County received record rainfall totals that forced Roads Division was responsible for repairing dozens of failing stormwater management pipes and sinkholes. The Roads Division staff, contract inspectors, and maintenance contractors:

- Inspected 4,376 stormwater basins/inlets
- Repaired 58 stormwater basins
- Vacuum cleaned 51 stormwater basins/pipes
- Removed 115 tons of trash and debris from stormwater basins
- Swept 403 miles of roadway
- Removed 174 tons of trash and debris with mechanical sweeper
- Relined 1,020 feet of deteriorating stormwater pipe to extend life expectancy
- Applied 792 stormwater management basin marker on storm drain inlets in 10 neighborhoods (Basin markers state, “No Dumping” and “Only Rain in the Drain”)
- Cleaned and repaired 335 stormwater management ponds

### Winter Weather Events

In fiscal 2019, county staff and contract forces mobilized for six winter weather events that totaled up to 23 inches of snow and ice. There was 4,000 tons of salt used to treat road surfaces for the season. This is close to a 50 percent reduction in salt compared to the amount used just a few years ago.

### New Roads

In fiscal 2019, the county added 34 new roads, totaling 12 lane-miles to its inventory.

### Surface Treatment Program

The Roads Division re-surfaced 30 miles of roadway which includes asphalt overlay, slurry seal, and modified seal. There were 9 roads that received overlay, 10 roads were slurry sealed, 10 roads were modified sealed, 54 roads were crack sealed, and more than 50 roads were deep patched. Major roads that were paved with asphalt were parts of St. Charles Parkway and Billingsley Road. Approximately 35 miles of roadway was line striped.

### Safety Improvements

The Roads Division applied slurry seal on the north end of St. Charles Parkway and Springhill Newton Road to improve skid resistance which reduces vehicle accidents.



## Stormwater Management and Impervious Surfaces

Charles County's **commitment to environmental stewardship** is especially evident as related to stormwater management restoration. In 2014, the county was issued a five-year stormwater management discharge permit by the state with a due date of December 2019. The permit requires stormwater management restoration for 20 percent of the county's unmanaged impervious surface.

To begin the five-year permit period, all **impervious surface** in the county was mapped, and more than 7,000 acres were identified as needing stormwater management. Watershed assessments were completed for all 10 of the county's watersheds. These assessments measured water quality, evaluated stream valleys for erosion, surveyed hotspots for pollution, and identified stormwater restoration projects.

Staffing under the **Watershed Restoration and Protection Program** increased from 3.5 to 10.4 full-time equivalents during this five-year period and three consultant engineering firms were hired to assist in design and permitting of restoration projects.

Several **permanent restoration projects** have been completed. They include three-step pool conveyances, three submerged gravel wetlands, five wet pond-constructed wetlands, 25 swales, a bioretention facility, a large underground storm filtering and storage facility, an outfall stabilization and two shoreline stabilizations. Several additional projects are currently under construction and in the design and permitting phases.





## Charles County Transit System Updates and Improvements

VanGO public transportation services transported **more than 800,000 passengers** in combined fixed-route and specialized, door-to-door programs, operating 1.8 million miles and logging 94,000 hours of service. More than 45,000 elderly and disabled passengers, 17,000 of whom relied upon the use of a wheelchair or other mobility device, were transported door-to-door via VanGO's specialized services.

**MV Transportation** has been contracted to operate VanGO services. This new contract, which requires significantly higher levels of performance, has resulted in more reliable service, cleaner and better-maintained buses, and improved customer service. VanGO took delivery of eight new medium-duty buses that provide more seating and are utilized on higher ridership routes.

In conjunction with the new Waldorf Senior and Recreation Center, a **new route** has been designed to service to the center. The new route will also provide hourly service from Waldorf to Brandywine Crossing, connecting to the Prince George's County transit system, TheBus.

### Public Transportation

**VanGO is a countywide transportation system** committed to providing safe and reliable transit and quality service for Charles County residents.

At Charles County Government, we believe our passengers have the right to travel safely in a clean and appropriate atmosphere, and to be treated with courtesy and respect. Passengers are entitled to a driver who maintains control over their vehicle to the best of their ability and to vehicles that are properly maintained and driven in a safe and defensive manner.

VanGO offers the **Double Map** bus tracking app — available at your app store and online at <http://VanGO.Doublemap.com/map/>. Once installed, you can choose Charles County from the area list, customize your view, choose specific routes, and select a stop to view the arrival time. An announcements section is also offered for information pertaining to delays and closures.

VanGO operates **specialized transportation services** under a variety of programs, such as subscription services and demand response. These services are available for senior citizens and persons with disabilities who are unable to use the fixed route system. Specialized Services provide door-to-door transportation and allow a personal care attendant to accompany a passenger for free when approved in advance. An application is required that demonstrates why a person may be unable to use the fixed route system.

Learn more at [www.Go-VanGO.com](http://www.Go-VanGO.com)

Watch the Sept. 30, 2019 **CCGTV Update Show** for a great introduction to the VanGO public transit system as Rob Romero, Transit Development Administrator explains routes, the Double Map App, and more. View the show on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/sq-LJKbcrJs>.

## Housing Authority Services and Programs

The **Charles County Housing Authority** administers a variety of housing programs directed at assisting low- and moderate-income families. The largest program administered by the Housing Authority is the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, which provides ongoing federal subsidies for eligible residents to improve affordability of rental housing for low-income families. Rental properties are regularly inspected to assure that conditions are decent, safe, and sanitary in accordance with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) quality standards.

### Fiscal 2019 Accomplishments and Updates

**Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCV)** — is a tenant-based rental assistance program that allows families to select homes to rent throughout Charles County. Because it is tenant-based, participants are able to choose units from the public rental market and private property owners in turn receive guaranteed federal rental subsidies on behalf of families. Competitive fair market rents set by HUD provide tenants maximum choice and the ability to live in their preferred neighborhoods.

- In fiscal year 2019, the Housing Authority met with approximately 200 existing applicants from the HCV waiting list and successfully enrolled 80 new households for ongoing support from the HCV program. As a result of decreasing existing wait list counts, the Housing Authority anticipates re-opening the HCV wait list application process in fiscal 2020 for the first time in many years.
- Applied fair and equitable steps to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse of federal funds by identifying HCV participants with significant violations of HUD policies and requirements. These fraud prevention actions resulted in annual program savings of approximately \$700,000. These savings are directly utilized to enable the Housing Authority to serve more applicants and at-risk families from the HCV wait list and to better utilize the federally reserved funds for eligible households who are in greatest need.



**Special Loan Programs** — provide low-interest or deferred loans to improve the basic livability of single-family homes for low and moderate-income families. Examples of work include new roof, windows, doors, etc.

- Through the Special Loans Program, Charles County Government was able to successfully complete a home replacement project (*pictured above*) for a senior citizen. This project was valued at \$192,000.

**Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)** — assist non-profit and community-based organizations in obtaining funding for projects directed at neighborhood and housing revitalization, economic development, and improved community facilities.

- Secured \$309,000 in new grant funds toward the purchase of a home for permanent supportive housing to assist victims of domestic violence.

**Settlement Expense Loan Program (SELP)** — provides direct financial assistance of up to \$6,000 for settlement expenses to qualified low-income and moderate-income first time home buyers in Charles County.

- \$18,000 in SELP funds were provided to low-income and moderate-income first-time homebuyers to assist with home purchase settlement expenses.



## Fostering Employment Opportunities

The Department of Human Resources serves more than 700 full-time staff and supports outside county agencies in meeting human resource needs. The department is committed to attracting, developing, and retaining a skilled and diverse workforce. As part of the department's commitment, we:

**Use multiple avenues to ensure employees receive notification about employment opportunities within the County Government.**

**Engage residents on social media, as well as utilize industry specific resources to announce employment opportunities.**

**Attended Society for Human Resource Management conference on recruitment.**

**Created targeted marketing initiatives to recruit hard-to-fill positions.**

## Employee Engagement and Development

Recognizing that our employees are our most valuable resource, the department continually engages county staff to help lead the organization using the High Performing Organization Model. By doing so, we have implemented a number of programs to foster increased participation amongst employees, including:

Drafting a plan, via the Human Resources Employee Committee, for the **quarterly recognition program** that recognizes staff for excellence in the execution of the county's seven core values of communication, innovation, integrity, initiative, respect, teamwork, and well-being.

Managing and advocating for a thriving **employee wellness program** which has earned the prestigious Healthiest Maryland Businesses Wellness at Work silver award.

Seeking employee input in a **bi-annual employee survey** which empowers employees to share their perspectives on various aspects of their work and work environment.

Coordinating a **performance management system** that resulted in a newly implemented performance appraisal program that seeks input from staff on their performance.

Conducting **training sessions** on pension benefits.

Providing tips and reminders to employees on topics such as **wellness and benefits**.

Providing **benefits refresher courses** to staff to ensure they are up-to-date on the best use of their benefits plans.

Establishing staff-site office hours to support employees in understanding their benefits.

## Diversity and Equity

Beginning in September 2019, the county will have five staff members participate in the **2019 Government Alliance on Race and Equity Metropolitan Washington Learning Year Cohort**. Over the course of the ten-month program, participants will obtain tools and resources that will assist the county in developing a racial equity program to address, among other areas, training, access to information and services, programming, and policies. The results-based program provides:

- A racial equity **training** curriculum, with cohort participants who are equipped to implement the training with other employees.
- A **Racial Equity Tool** to be used in policy, practice, program and budget decisions.
- **Support** for identifying and launching pilot projects that demonstrate where to start achieving racial equity outcomes in our jurisdiction.
- A **capacity building plan** and organizational structure to institutionalize equity within our own jurisdiction.
- Example **policies and practices** that help advance racial equity.
- Support on **developing** a Racial Equity Action Plan.
- **Bias and respectful communication training**.



# FISCAL 2020 GENERAL FUND BUDGET

\$425,097,500 • July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020



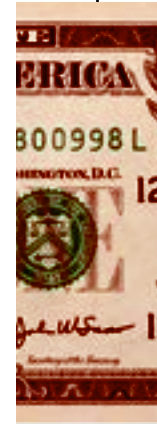
**Education**  
48.7% • \$206,850,100  
Board of Education Total: \$192,074,000



**Sheriff's Office**  
22.3% • \$94,754,000



**County Government**  
15.5% • \$65,734,100



## How Does It Work?

The Charles County budget is the annual financial blueprint of the board of commissioners priorities to balance available resources with the service needs of our residents. You can view the various parts of the budget process online at:

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

**Debt Service**  
7.3% • \$31,219,900



**Other Agencies**  
3.2% • \$13,805,300  
State's Attorney, Health Department, Circuit Court, Election Board, Other



**Miscellaneous**  
3.0% • \$12,734,100  
Retiree Fringe, Central Services, Contingency, Capital Project Transfer, Watershed Fund Subsidy



## County Retains AAA Bond Rating

The three major national bond rating agencies have reaffirmed the county's AAA bond rating. Private independent rating services meet with county leaders and fiscal staff annually to evaluate the county's ability to repay bonds' principal and interest in a timely manner. Top bond ratings are earned by demonstrating the strength of the county's financial position and economic stability.

"This achievement demonstrates the Board of Commissioners is delivering on its commitment to prudent financial management, which earns not only the confidence of the bond market, but of our citizens," said Commissioner President Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq.

S&P Global Ratings noted the rating is based on the county's very strong management with "strong financial policies and practices." The report also highlighted "the county's proactive and multi-pronged approach to climate change

as indicative of the management team's overall long-term planning strategy."

Moody's evaluation cites "the county's healthy financial position and adherence to formal financial and debt policies, which will likely continue to support stable financial operations going forward."

Fitch Ratings said they expect "the county to maintain a high level of fundamental financial flexibility throughout economic cycles, supported by solid economic and revenue prospects, expenditure and revenue flexibility and sound reserve levels."

The county's \$58 million general obligation bonds were scheduled for public sale on Tuesday, Nov. 5, to fund improvements in schools, general government facilities, and water and sewer projects.

# Resource Stewardship



## The Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services

has policies in place to ensure proper stewardship of county's assets. These policies include procedures for the recognition in the accounting and asset program of acquisitions, disposals, and transfers of capital assets to ensure compliance with accounting and reporting requirements. The county is committed to fiscal responsibility and endeavors to spend, earn, and generate funds without placing undue hardship on its residents. The Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services applies annually to the Government Finance Officers Association for the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Program and the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award Program. This program encourages governments to provide budget documents and financial information that is understandable and accessible to the public.

**Asset Management** — The department supports asset management by:

- Properly managing and tracking the county's assets and infrastructure in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards.
- Increasing efficiencies within County Government through automation improvements, such as remote deposit, E-recording for deeds, on-line property tax sales, and vendor automated clearing house payments.
- Developing financial plans for the replacement and maintenance of assets through multi-year budgeting projections.
- Investing county funds within legal requirements to ensure liquidity while minimizing risks.

**Fiscal Responsibility** — The department supports the county's fiscal responsibility by:

- Proactively monitoring county finances and budgets to enforce accountability related to spending.
- Maintaining county's AAA bond rating with all three major bond credit rating agencies.
- Adopting a balanced budget on a per fund basis that is sustainable.
- Providing fiscal recommendations on spending requests and funding sources.
- Competitively procuring budgeted items in accordance with county purchasing procedures.
- Establishing cash flow analysis and predict outflow of funds.
- Detecting and deterring fraudulent activity through automation.

## Information Management and Security

The management and security of the information, or data, that the county collects is of the utmost importance to Charles County. The county's focus is on providing the most effective tools to manage critical county data throughout its entire lifecycle, from data creation through disposal. Just as important, the county focuses on data security by safeguarding the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of that data. The county is committed to implementing the security tools, controls, and policies necessary to detect and prevent threats to our data.

During the past year, the county continued to take steps to safeguard our data by implementing and updating various information security controls, such as a remote Security Operations Center (SOC). The SOC is dedicated to monitoring the county's information infrastructure 24/7 for security breaches and breach attempts. Additionally, the county underwent a comprehensive vulnerability assessment by an external assessor to analyze our current cybersecurity posture and provide improvement recommendations.



## Program Area News and Updates

### BROADBAND ACCESS

In 2019, the newly elected Board of County Commissioners identified a high-priority project to deploy high-speed Internet to the rural areas of Charles County. Our county has several areas that are somewhat rural and do not meet the density requirements to be served by our current cable/Internet providers, Verizon and Comcast.

Our offices were tasked with assembling a cross-departmental team of experts and line leaders in specific areas, who will provide options to address the issue for consideration by the Commissioners. On the team we have included two residents from districts that are unserved, the Board of Education, and our local cooperative provider of electricity, Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO). Team members internal to Charles County Government include representatives from the Economic Development Department, Department of Emergency Services, Department of Planning and Growth Management, and Information Technology Division.

To date, we have been awarded a grant from the State of Maryland to develop a comprehensive Broadband Strategic Plan, and we have identified and hired a consultant to prepare the plan. We are constantly refining our maps of unserved areas, working with SMECO and other third-party providers to strategically plan for potential partnerships, and have provided several formal updates to the Commissioners. The team functions at a high capacity and frequently breaks out into subcommittees to problem solve. By February 2020, the Commissioners will receive the Broadband Strategic Plan, complete with pricing and options for deployment.

The Broadband Taskforce is a cross-disciplinary team of line leader experts, empowered to make decisions and provide creative solutions to leadership. We have moved efficiently through the process and have embraced our goal of bringing high-speed Internet to unserved areas.

### EnerGov Permitting System

On October 22, 2018, the Department of Planning and Growth Management's permitting system transitioned to EnerGov. The new system was implemented by the Information Technology Division. EnerGov provides the public the ability to submit plans, documents, and fees electronically. Staff are able to effectively collect, deliver, and manage the data associated with permitting, inspections, reviews, approvals, licensing, and enforcement activities in a more-timely manner.

Use of EnerGov allows staff to provide detailed feedback on marked-up plans and generates standardized review letters for comments and approvals.

Our county users — residents, and contractors, can create individual portals where they can review the status of plans and permits and upload revised documents or drawings.

In conjunction with this, electronic plan review software was implemented to integrate with EnerGov and keep all plan data electronically stored with the associated permit/plan. EnerGov was also integrated with Laserfiche, our document management and records retention system, to ensure that critical documents are properly indexed, easily accessible by the appropriate individuals, as well as adhere to our records retention schedules.

The use of EnerGov has reduced environmental waste generated by paper copies and the cost to individuals and businesses that no longer are required to provide paper copies.

### Citizen Response Office

The Citizen Response Office responds to emails, telephone calls, social media, letters, and in-person visits from residents to provide assistance with issues of concern. Additionally, residents' concerns can be received from individual commissioners; staff attended events, e.g. county fair; and other sources.

During fiscal 2019, the office received 1,091 cases for action. Cases are assigned to county departments and outside agencies such as the Charles County Board of Education, Department of Social Services, Department of Health, Sheriff's Office, and State Highway Administration.

The Citizen Response Office gathers information through research with county department staff and/or other governmental agencies to provide a resolution or position.

Streamlining communications in an effective and timely manner with accurate information is the directive for this office. Included in the responsibilities are liaison duties with congressional and state offices, when appropriate, to meet the needs of our residents.

## HPO Model and Leadership Philosophy

### Executive Leadership Team

Our Executive Leadership Team has held two leadership retreats in 2019. These retreats are meant to visit different locations in Maryland and experience the many cultural assets. Each retreat has a specific focus and topic.

- In April, the Executive Leadership Team traveled to Woodmont Natural Resources Management Area – Woodmont Lodge in scenic, rural Western Maryland. Our time was focused on the complex topic of **climate change**. Our team heard from several experts in the field on some very pertinent topics, such as the public health impacts, floodplain management, and available resources to assist with common issues.
- In July, our team traveled to the eastern part of the state to tackle the topic of **diversity and inclusion**. First and foremost, we visited freshly-minted Harriet Tubman State Park. It was amazing to hear about Harriet Tubman's life and how she contributed to the Underground Railroad as a "conductor," and guided approximately 300 slaves to freedom. She was a truly remarkable individual with a special and rich history. We continued our retreat with interactive conversations and presentations regarding diversity and inclusion. Our training included some frequent misconceptions, videos, and open topic discussions on equality versus equity. We each committed to a positive change to improve diversity and inclusion in our work environment and being accountable to do so.

### NACo High Performance Leadership Academy

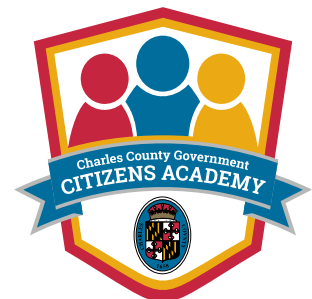
This year, Charles County Government has recommitted its dedication to the High Performing Organization (HPO) Model by selecting five emerging leaders to take a 12-week course, the National Association of Counties (NACo) High Performance Leadership Academy. The competition for the opportunity was rigorous, but leadership identified five candidates that will invest three months, dedicating several hours per week, to improving their High Performance Leadership knowledge. Our team will work with other teams around the nation on class projects and overall training. This promises to be a truly unique opportunity for our staff. Upon completion, the Charles County team will work on a project, specific to our organization, on how to advance and encourage High Performance Leadership. We are excited to provide this opportunity and see what this intense training will yield for our emerging leaders.

The goal of the training is to have a constant focus on our work environment and the culture here at Charles County Government. By focusing on a leadership mindset, leading through effective change, practicing communication and collaboration, and measuring what matters, we hope to empower employees, encourage positive change, and grow our organization's strength from within. We are committed to having conversations about leadership at all levels. Our expectation is that the five selected candidates will become program ambassadors and share their experiences with their co-workers, supervisors, department heads, and county administration.

## Community Engagement

Charles County Government strives to keep the community informed through a variety of communication tools. Over the past year, public engagement on policies and initiatives has expanded through increased direct contact with our residents and businesses at community meetings, business roundtables, and town halls, as well as by providing an open door for meetings and engagement with public officials.

The county also hired a community engagement coordinator to cultivate citizen leadership and public participation in government. The county is launching a **Citizen's Academy** to develop a formal network of civic leaders and ambassadors. Participants in the Citizen's Academy will complete an eight-session educational program to learn about all aspects of County Government. Graduates of the program will be challenged to reach out into the community to leverage community participation in our County Government's work and solicit input on county policy priorities. They will also be invited to quarterly meetings to stay informed on programs and initiatives and share feedback with elected leaders.



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**About Charles County Government**

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

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

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**CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

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