

2022

Planning Commission

Annual Report



Prepared by the Planning Division, Planning and Growth Management Department

CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT 200 Baltimore St., La Plata, MD 20646

June 2023

Contents

Purpose of Report	3
Introduction	4
Growth Related Changes in 2022	5
Land Preservation	13
Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance Restrictions	15
Growth Trends	18
Conclusions and Recommendations	25
Appendix	27

Purpose of Report

State law requires the Planning Commission to prepare and file an annual report with the County Commissioners¹. The report is available for public inspection and a copy of the report is provided to the Secretary of Planning for the State of Maryland. The criteria for the content of the report are specified as follows:

"The annual report shall **(a)** index and locate on a map all changes in development patterns including land use, transportation, community facilities patterns, zoning map amendments, and subdivision plats which have occurred during the period covered by the report, and shall state whether these changes are or are not consistent with each other, with the recommendations of the last annual report, with adopted plans of adjoining jurisdictions, and with the adopted plans of all state and local jurisdictions that have the responsibility for financing and constructing public improvements necessary to implement the jurisdiction's plan; **(b)** contain statements and recommendations for improving the planning and development process within the jurisdiction."

The Annual Report for 2022 has been designed to comply with Smart Growth Goals, Measures, and Indicators and Implementation of Planning Visions enumerated in the Land Use Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland². The Annual Report is not intended to provide a comprehensive account of the activities of the Planning Division or the Planning Commission. Further, it should be noted that this Annual Report does not include data from the Towns of La Plata and Indian Head as these jurisdictions are also required to submit individual Annual Reports to the Maryland Department of Planning.

In compliance with the above-stated provision of the Land Use Article, this Annual Report was adopted by the Charles County Planning Commission on June 26, 2023.

Sources of Additional Information

Detailed information on other endeavors, projects, operations and/or the status of submittals is available directly through the following sources:

Planning and Growth Management:	(301) 645-0692 or (301) 645-0627
County Attorney's Office:	(301) 645-0555
Transit:	(301) 645-0642

Charles County Government Web Site: <www.CharlesCountyMD.gov>

¹ Annotated Code of Maryland, Land Use Article, §1-207, §1-208

² Annotated Code of Maryland, Natural Resources Article §8-1808

Introduction

This Annual Report provides an opportunity for the Charles County Planning Commission to review development approvals for calendar year 2022. Actual development can then be compared to the overall vision for future development as articulated in the 2016 Adopted Charles County Comprehensive Plan (“the Plan”). The general “theme” of the Plan is that the County should continue to grow with a Smart Growth philosophy: balancing growth with strong environmental protection measures by conserving resources within the framework and guidance of the Plan. This Comprehensive Plan makes significant changes from the previous plans by reducing the Development District from 52,200 acres to 22,189 acres (a reduction of 30,011 acres), concentrating growth, protecting our natural resources, promoting historic village revitalization efforts, and supporting light rail transit for long term development. Previous Planning Commission Annual Reports have measured development inside and outside of the Development District. However, as of 2016, Annual Reports focus on the Priority Funding Area (PFA) since the modified Development District now matches the PFA in the northern part of Charles County. Additionally, the County is committed to protecting 50 percent of its overall acreage in open space.

Planning Commission Functions and Membership

The Planning Commission consists of seven members who are appointed by the County Commissioners. Members serve four-year terms, which are staggered. A chairperson is appointed annually by the Commissioners. The purpose and functions of the Charles County Planning Commission are stated in the Land Use Article, Charles County Code of Public Laws, and the Charles County Zoning Ordinance. Functions include:

- Prepare and recommend a comprehensive plan for development of the jurisdiction, including among other things, land use, water and sewerage facilities, and transportation;
- Review and approve the subdivision of land of the jurisdiction;
- Reserve transportation facility rights-of-way;
- Review and approve adequate public facilities studies and mitigation measures;
- Approve and periodically amend the Site Design and Architectural Guidelines;
- Review and provide recommendations on rezoning requests for base zones, overlay zones, and floating zones;
- Review and make recommendations for amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Regulations; and
- Adopt rules and regulations governing its procedure and operation consistent with the provisions of the Zoning Ordinance.

During CY2022, the Charles County Planning Commission conducted nineteen (19) regularly scheduled meetings.

Planning Commission Members (Current)

Robin Barnes, Chairman
Kevin Wedding, Vice Chairman
Dawud Abdur-Rahman, Secretary
Maya Coleman
William Murray
Craig Renner
Denard Earl

Growth Related Changes in 2022

This section provides an in-depth look at development that has occurred during calendar year 2022. A map is attached in the Appendix that demonstrates the growth-related changes including preliminary subdivision plans, final plats, site development plans, building permits, and zoning map changes.

Preliminary Subdivision Plan Approvals

A preliminary subdivision plan is the initial plan of subdivision consisting of drawings and supplementary materials that indicate the proposed layout of a subdivision. Approval of a preliminary subdivision plan establishes general consistency with the Charles County Comprehensive Plan, and compliance with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations that are known to be applicable during the preliminary review stages. Lots proposed within a preliminary subdivision plan may be for future residential, commercial, or industrial purposes. Preliminary subdivision plans are approved by the Planning Commission.

Preliminary subdivision plans are required in Charles County for all major subdivisions. A subdivision project is considered to be a major subdivision when the proposed subdivision will result in the creation of more than five (5) lots from a parcel that was in existence on June 15, 1976, or when more than seven (7) lots are proposed from a parcel, residue or remainder in existence on December 31, 2012; provided that any lot resulting from a recorded deed or subdivision plat prior to December 31, 2012, cannot be considered a parcel for purposes of Section 17 of the Charles County Subdivision Regulations.

Figure 1, below, provides a list of the preliminary subdivision plans that were approved in 2022, including revisions. Figure 2, also below, provides a breakdown of preliminary plan housing types.

Figure 1: 2022 Approved Preliminary Subdivision Plans

Subdivision Name	Total Number of New Lots	Acreage	Lots Inside PFA	Lots Inside PUD
Redevelopment of Greensward Turf Farm, Revision #3	14	0	14	0
Springhaven Woods II	74	22.1	74	0
Ridge Grove Estates, Revision #4	2	0	0	0
Parklands Neighborhood, Revision #2	0	0	0	0
Horizon Neighborhood	1092	352.9	1092	1092
Net Total	1,182	375	1,180	1,092

Figure 2: 2022 Preliminary Subdivision Plan Residential Housing Types

Preliminary Plan Housing Types	Total
Single Family Detached	460
Townhouse	708
Apartment	0
Duplex	0
Total	1,168

Figure 3 below calculates the net density of residential preliminary subdivision plans. For residential uses, net density is calculated by dividing the total area of residential lots by the number of residential lots.

Figure 3: Net Density of 2022 Residential Preliminary Subdivision Plans

	Total Area of Residential Units/Lots	Total Number of Residential Lots	Average Lot Size
Countywide	375 Acres	1,168	0.32 acres
Inside PFA	375 Acres	1,166	0.32 acres
Outside PFA	N/A	2 ³	N/A

Final Plat Approvals

A final subdivision plat establishes the official division of land that is approved by the Planning and Growth Management Department and recorded in the Land Records of Charles County. Final subdivision plats are approved and signed by the Planning Director. Final subdivision plats are prepared for both major and minor subdivisions. As defined in §278-17 of the Charles County Subdivision Regulations, a minor subdivision is a subdivision of land, which does not involve any of the following:

- The creation of more than five (5) lots from a parcel that was in existence on June 15, 1976, or more than seven (7) lots are proposed from a parcel, residue or remainder in existence on December 31, 2012; provided that any lot resulting from a recorded deed or subdivision plat prior to December 31, 2012, cannot be considered a parcel for purposes of Section 17 of the Charles County Subdivision Regulations.
- The extension of a public water or sewer system proposed as a part of a private development.
- The installation of off-site drainage improvements through one or more lots to serve one or more other lots proposed as a part of a private development.

Figure 4 below shows the distribution of final plat types that were recorded in 2022. Minor plats such as lot line adjustments, boundary surveys, forest conservation easement plats, etc. do not record any lots.

³ Residential Lots outside PFA were created solely via revised PSPs where no additional acreage was added. No acreage figures are therefore available to calculate average lot size.

Figure 4: 2022 Final Plat Types

Final Plat Type	No. of Plats
Minor Plats (No New Lots)	23
Residential - Minor Plats	9
Residential - Major Plats	12
Commercial	3
Industrial	0
Total	47

Figure 5 below provides a list of final plat lots approved in 2022. Further, Figure 6 below provides the net density of the residential final plats.

Figure 5: 2022 Approved Final Plat Lots

Final Plat Type	No. of New Lots	Plat Area	Inside PFA	Outside PFA	Inside PUD
Residential Minor Plats	17	122.46 acres	0	17 lots, 122.46 acres	0
Residential Major Plats	571	158.51 acres	465 lots, 58.76 acres	106 lots, 99.76 acres	394 lots, 53.61 acres
Commercial	8	35.78 acres	8 lots, 35.78 acres	0	0
Industrial	0	0	0	0	0
Total	596	316.75 acres	473 lots, 94.54 acres	123 lots, 222.22 acres	394 lots, 53.61 acres

Figure 6: Net Density of 2022 Residential Final Plats

	Total Area of Residential Lots	Total Number of Residential Lots	Average Lot Size
Countywide	280.97 acres	588	0.48 acres
Inside PFA	58.76 acres	465	0.13 acres
Outside PFA	222.22 acres	123	1.8 acres

Site Plan Approvals

Site plans are required for all commercial, multi-family residential, and telecommunication structures. There are two (2) types of site plans: major and minor. An application proposing detached single- and two-family dwellings, accessory buildings, additions less than 1,200 square feet for residential uses and change in use would be classified as a minor site plan. Any site plans other than those identified as minor site plan applications would be classified as major. Site plans are reviewed in house and are signed by the Planning Director. Site plans for projects located within the St. Charles Planned Unit Development (PUD) zone are required to obtain final approval by the Planning Commission. Additionally, any site plans that require an Adequate Public Facilities (APF) study to be performed are required to obtain final approval by the Planning Commission.

On the following page, Figure 7 provides a breakdown of site plans approved in 2022 and Figure 8 provides the net density of commercial site plans countywide, as well as inside the Priority Funding Area.

Figure 7: 2022 Site Plans

Type of Use	Building Square Footage	Acreage	Inside PFA	Outside PFA	Inside PUD
Residential	582,336	921.33	582,336 sq. ft./ 921.33 acres	0 sq. ft./ 0 acres	330,633 sq. ft./ 757.43 acres
Commercial/ Retail	203,220	148.04	203,220 sq. ft./ 148.04 acres	0 sq. ft./ 0 acres	0 sq. ft./ 0 acres
Institutional/ Church/School/ Public Use	4,100	79.84	4,100 sq. ft./ 0 acres	0 sq. ft./ 79.84 acres	4,100 sq. ft./ 0 acres
Public Utilities (including cell towers)	31,196	2,686.1 ⁴	14,987 sq. ft./ 784.12 acres	16,209 sq. ft./ 1,901.98 acres	71 sq. ft./ 460 acres
Total	820,852	3,835.31	804,643 sq. ft./ 1,853.49 acres	16,209 sq. ft./ 1,981.82 acres	334,804 sq. ft./ 1,217.43 acres

⁴ It should be noted that cell tower projects in the rural areas are typically constructed on larger properties.

Figure 8: Net Density of 2022 Commercial Site Plans

	Total Area of Commercial Building Area	Total Area of Commercial Lots	Floor Area Ratio (FAR)
Countywide	203,220 sq. ft.	6,448,622.4 sq. ft. (148.04 acres)	0.03 FAR
Inside PFA	203,220 sq. ft.	6,448,622.4 sq. ft. (148.04 acres)	0.03 FAR
Outside PFA	N/A	N/A	N/A

Building Permits

In 2022 there were 826 residential building permits (826 new units) and ten (10) commercial building permits (10 new units) issued in Charles County. Building permits are issued for a variety of building related activities in Charles County including accessory structures, alterations, additions, pools, signs, etc. However, only new residential or new commercial structures are counted for the purposes of the Annual Report. Figure 9 below provides a breakdown of new residential building permits. Similarly, Figure 10 provides the breakdown of new commercial building permits.

Figure 9: 2022 Residential Building Permits

Building Permit Type	Total Number of New Units	Inside PFA	Outside PFA	Inside PUD
Single Family	421	243	178	179
Town House	403	403	0	213
Apartment	0	0	0	0
Duplex, Triplex, Quadriplex	2	2	0	2
Total	826	648	178	394

Figure 10: 2022 Commercial Building Permits

Building Permit Type	Total Number of New Units	Inside PFA	Outside PFA	Inside PUD
New Commercial	10	8	2	0

Other Commercial Building Permit Types:

Commercial Alterations and Additions: 111

Miscellaneous Commercial: 129

Change of Occupancy⁵: 127

Use and Occupancy Permits

In 2022, there were 611 residential Use and Occupancy (U&O) permits (611 new units) and seven (7) commercial U&Os issued (7 new units) in Charles County. Figure 11 below provides a breakdown of new residential U&O permits. Similarly, Figure 12 below provides the breakdown of new commercial U&O Permits.

Figure 11: 2022 Residential Use and Occupancy (U&O) Permit Units

U&O Permit Type	Total Number of New U&Os (in units)	Inside PFA	Outside PFA	Inside PUD
Single Family	386	191	195	122
Town House	225	225	0	208
Apartment	0	0	0	0
Duplex, Triplex, Quadriplex	0	0	0	0
Total	611	416	195	330

⁵A Change of Occupancy permit (formerly known as a Green Card permit) is issued to establish a Use and Occupancy for a commercial space when no construction to the space is proposed. Utilized at the change of ownership or change of tenant, this permit allows for a safety inspection of the proposed space prior to use.

Figure 12: 2022 Commercial Use and Occupancy (U&O) Permit Units

U&O Permit Type	Total Number of New U&Os (in units)	Inside PFA	Outside PFA	Inside PUD
New Commercial	7	7	0	0

Other Commercial Use and Occupancy Permit Types:

Commercial Alterations & Additions: 53

Miscellaneous Commercial: 60

Change of Occupancy: 108

Zoning Map Amendments

The following Zoning Map Amendment (ZMA) was enacted in 2022.

Amendment No.	Summary	Effective Date
Resolution 2022-07 Zoning Map Amendment (ZMA) 21-01 Morland Property	The purpose of this Zoning Map Amendment was to amend the Charles County Zoning Map to rezone the property identified as 0906359169 and 0906359173 from Low Density Suburban Residential (RL), High Density Suburban Residential (RH) and Community Commercial (CC) to High Density Suburban Residential (RH) and Community Commercial (CC) under the premise that there has been a “substantial change in the character of the neighborhood.”	May 25, 2022

Zoning Text Amendments

The following Zoning Text Amendments (ZTAs) were enacted in 2022:

Amendment No.	Summary	Effective Date
Bill 2021-10 Zoning Text Amendment 21-162 Veterinarians and Veterinary Hospitals in the Central Business Zone	The purpose of this Zoning Text Amendment was to permit use code 5.02.400, Veterinarians and Veterinary Hospitals with conditions in the Central Business Zone. The application amended Figure IV-1, Table of Permissible Uses and Article XIII Minimum Standards for Special Exceptions and Uses Permitted with Conditions of the Charles County Zoning Ordinance.	January 1, 2022
Bill 2021-12 Zoning Text Amendment 21-163 Revising Mixed Use (MX) Zone Development Standards in the Federal Opportunity Zone	The purpose of this Zoning Text Amendment was to amend the development standards for the Mixed Use (MX) zone for properties that are located within the designated Federal Opportunity Zone. The amendments corrected discrepancies regarding the permissible number of stories for multi-family uses, reduced the percentage of required civic uses, as well as applicable highway corridor and rear	February 26, 2022

	yard setbacks for consistency with the Waldorf Urban Redevelopment Corridor. The application amended Articles VII and X of the Charles County Zoning Ordinance.	
Bill 2022-06 Adequate Public Facilities - Traffic Section	The purpose of this Zoning Text Amendment was to improve and update the regulations that pertain to the applicability and review of an Adequate Public Facilities Study (APFS), which includes a Traffic Impact Study (TIS).	November 18, 2022
Bill 2022-07 Zoning Text Amendment #22-171 Transit Oriented Development and Parking Facilities	The purpose of this Zoning Text Amendment was to alter the applicable impervious surface ratio for mid-rise and high-rise multi-family projects within Article VII, Planned Development Zone Regulations, §297-110 Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Zone, Figure VII-5A, Schedule of Zone Regulations Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Zone, of the Zoning Ordinance. It also modified the garage parking requirement for multi-family units, found within § 297-338 D. of the Zoning Ordinance, in order to enable attached and detached garage spaces to each be calculated as one (1) full parking space towards satisfaction of the minimum off-street parking requirements of Article XX, Parking Facilities, Figure XX-1, of the Zoning Ordinance.	September 10, 2022
Bill 2022-09 Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 22-168, Mini Warehouses in the Neighborhood Commercial (CN) Zone	The purpose of this Zoning Text Amendment was to permit use code 7.02.230, Mini-Warehouses, by special exception in the Neighborhood Commercial (CN) Zone. The application amended Figure IV-1, Table of Permissible Uses, Figure VI-5, Schedule of Zone Regulations: Commercial Zones, and Article XIII Minimum Standards for Special Exceptions and Uses Permitted with Conditions of the Charles County Zoning Ordinance.	December 17, 2022
Bill 2022-12 Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 21-166 Core Employment/Residential (CER) Zone	The purpose of this Zoning Text Amendment was to enable infill development that is comprised of solely residential uses on currently undeveloped properties. Eligible properties must consist of no less than 2 acres and no greater than 9 acres; and must have a least 50% of the non-street perimeter of the subject property (side and/or rear lot lines) developed with single-family dwellings or higher intensity residential uses.	December 31, 2022

Planned Development Zone Amendments

There were no Planned Development Zone Amendments (PDZAs) enacted in 2022.

Comprehensive Plan Updates

There are no comprehensive plan updates to report for 2022.

Consistency Analysis

All changes in development patterns in 2022, including infrastructure improvements, were found to be consistent with the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, the Charles County Zoning Ordinance, as well as with all adopted plans of the state and adjoining jurisdictions.

Process Improvements

In the spring of 2022 Charles County Planning & Growth Management upgraded its Energov software system for online development approvals. This upgrade improved efficiency and made it easier for staff and external applicants to manage permits and plans electronically.

PGM also benefitted from the Department of Fiscal and Administrative Services' implementation of the Munis ERP Financial system in July 2022. This upgraded software system encompasses accounting, budgeting, purchasing, general billing, and cash receipting functions and enabled PGM staff to more easily manage requisitions, budget transfers, and other financial matters.

Land Preservation

Land preservation programs continue to be very active in Charles County with growing landowner interest in preserving their farm and forest properties. The amount of land protected in the calendar year 2022 reflects this trend, with a net increase of 2,008 acres. The Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) and the Rural Legacy Program contributed 1,736 preserved acres in 2022. These two programs rely heavily on a strong partnership with the County Government that includes staff time and local matching fund contributions. The County's Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program and Forest Conservation Act requirements contributed 799 acres of protected land in 2022.

Figure 13 below provides a detailed breakdown of protected lands in Charles County from all sources.

Figure 13: Protected Lands in Charles County through December 2022 (in acres)

	Type of Protection	Protected through 2021	2022 Data	Protected Through 2022
Regulatory	Resource Protection Zone (RPZ)	26,653	-540 (1)	26,113
	Forest Conservation Easements	9,489	+374	9,863
	Stream Buffers in the Critical Area/Critical Area Buffer outside of the RPZ (IDZ and LDZ)	612		612
Federal	Federal Properties	1,674		1,674
State	State Owned Resource Land	21,884		21,884
	State and Federal Owned Easements	3,657		3,657
	Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation Easements (MALPF)	12,616	+1,247	13,863

	Maryland Historical Trust (MHT)	257		257
	Maryland Environmental Trust (MET)	5,604		5,604
State/Local	Rural Legacy Easement Properties	5,140	+489	5,629
	Transfer of Development Rights Program	7,080	+425	7,481 (2)
	County and Town Parks	3,426	+8 (3)	3,434
Other	The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	2,677		2,677
	Conservancy for Charles County (CCC)	342		342
	Joint MET & CCC Properties	1,472	+29	1,501
Total Acres Protected		102,583	2,008	104,591

(1) Acreage decrease is due to overlap with some of the new 2022 protected lands.
 (2) Total TDR acreage decreased by 24 acres due to overlap with new MET/CCC property.
 (3) County land acquired in 2022 was 17.5 Ac, but GIS data refinements resulted in increase of only 8 Ac.

Local Land Use Goal & Comprehensive Plan Goals

Local Land Use Goal:

With continued adherence to the 2016 Comprehensive Plan and the 2022 Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan⁶, several significant sustained efforts were made, including downzoning measures to protect the County's natural resources, and increasing the size of Priority Preservation Areas (PPA). It is anticipated that the growth rate will be slower and will approach one percent or less rate of growth in the near future. An additional 46,631 acres (or 57% of the remaining undeveloped land) must be preserved for Charles County to meet its goal for land protection in priority preservation areas. Current acreage within the priority preservation areas totals 132,741 acres. To meet the goal of protecting 80% of the existing underdeveloped land in the Priority Preservation Area; 56,391 acres have already been protected by easement or public ownership, leaving 48,932 acres of underdeveloped land potentially available for protection.

The PPA contains 132,741 acres and includes three major rural parts of the county: the Cobb Neck area, the Nanjemoy Peninsula, and much of the Mattawoman Creek Watershed. The adoption of the Tier Map in 2014, designated the PPA as Tier IV, which enabled the County to stabilize the land base in this area by limiting subdivisions on septic systems within the PPA to minor subdivisions.

The Charles County Commissioners held a public hearing in May 2022 for the proposed Amendment to the 2016 Charles County Comprehensive Plan to change the Tier Map designation for approximately 900 acres of land near Newburg from Tier 2 to Tier 4. The Amendment would change the Tier Map designation from Tier 2 to Tier 4 and the Land Use Plan from Rural Residential to Agriculture Conservation for 900 acres of land in Newburg, located between US 301 and the Potomac River, south of Popes Creek Road and north of Clifton. The purpose of the proposed change was to ensure the Tier Map and land use designation were consistent with the existing Rural Conservation zoning of the property and to recognize this area would not be planned for public sewerage service. However, the County Commissioners ultimately decided to defer any further action on the Tier Map until the 2026 Comprehensive Plan Update.

⁶ In 2022, the Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan was updated from its last version from 2017.

Since the completion of the last “Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan” in 2017, Charles County adopted the WCD Zone in 2017 and designated priority preservation areas as Tier IV. This change allowed the County to limit the development of subdivisions dependent on on-site septic systems within priority preservation areas. The County has also taken steps to limit development density within the Watershed Conservation District, which contains the Mattawoman priority preservation area. Since 2017, a new Purchase of Development Rights program, which targets conservation easement funding opportunities within priority preservation areas, was adopted by the County. As reported in the 2016 “Comprehensive Plan,” voluntary interest in agriculture and forest land conservation programs has been high. Through the preservation programs of the Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation, local transfer of development rights, and local purchase of development rights, the County estimates that an average of 800 acres of farm and forest land is currently being protected in priority preservation areas annually.

Timeframe for achieving the goal:

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan is a ten-year planning guidance document. A Work Program is in place to prioritize implementation goals and set realistic timeframes to achieve changes to policies and regulations.

Resources necessary:

Resource needs are reviewed on an annual basis as a part of the County budget process.

Charles County Open Space Goal Acreage Analysis

Charles County has an open space preservation goal of 50 percent. Figure 14 below provides a summary of the County’s preservation efforts through 2022 to meet this open space goal.

Charles County has utilized, and should continue to utilize, Program Open Space funds for regular improvements to County parks and recreation amenities, and strategic acquisition of land for future parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces. Program Open Space has supported 22 projects throughout Charles County from 2017 – 2022. A complete list of those projects can be found in Section I. Additional recreation amenities at these sites will depend on further assistance from Program Open Space funding and will significantly contribute to satisfying long-standing recreation and land conservation goals of the state and county.

The projects selected in this annual report are consistent with the County’s current Land Preservation, Parks and Recreation Plan (LPPRP). The LPPRP clearly states that the demand for active recreation facilities continues to grow and that there is an immediate need to plan and develop such facilities. Athletic playing fields and hiking/biking trails have not kept pace with the County’s rapid population growth. Additionally, the LPPRP calls for more open space acquisition and recreational facilities throughout the County. Recreational demands continue to grow in our area, specifically in the greater Waldorf and La Plata communities. Water access amenities continue to be a priority as well. The strategic enhancements of parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces that utilized Program Open Space funds are planned to help the County work toward achieving the goals of the Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan, as well as those of the County Comprehensive Plan, and State of Maryland.

Figure 14: Open Space Goal Acreage Analysis

Category	Acres	Comments
Total County land area	294,404	
50% overall open space protection goal	147,202	294,404/2
Protected through December 2022	104,591	71% of goal, 35.5% of County total Land area
Additional needed to meet goal	42,611	

Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance Restrictions

Charles County adopted an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) in 1992, which has been amended as needed since that time. Primarily, the APFO governs the approval of development based on the status of public infrastructure, which includes water supply, rural fire suppression resources, roadways, and schools. Through the APFO and related subdivision regulations, the County requires commercial and residential developments to provide necessary improvements to infrastructure (specifically roads and fire suppression water supplies) when the impact of the development is shown to degrade the level of service of the surrounding infrastructure. For schools, a residential development project must be granted an allocation of school capacity for each proposed lot or dwelling unit in order to receive approval of a record plat of subdivision.

The Charles County Commissioners currently allocate the available capacity of each school to pending new development lots based on the measurement of 110% of State Rated Capacity. In order to obtain allocations, capacity must be available in each of the three schools (elementary, middle, and high school) that students generated by the particular subdivision would attend. A school allocation granting is restricted by the most limited school capacity among the three schools serving the proposed community. Charles County Public Schools contains 39 schools and 26,768 students. The district's minority enrollment is 80%. The County's total school attendance has steadily been on the rise, including an increase of 723 students between the 2021-2022 to the 2022-2023 school year head counts.

In the last few years, the Elementary school level has experienced a steady increase in population, warranting the previous expansion of capacity by the construction of Billingsley Elementary School in the Waldorf area. As well as the planned Phoenix International School of the arts (PISOTA) that will open for the 2023-2024 school year. PISOTA will operate in partnership with Charles County Public Schools to offer students an arts and international focused school.

The Charles County Adequate Public Facilities Manual allows the County Commissioners to utilize the capacity of a new school or redistricting up to eighteen (18) months prior to completion. During the 2017 allocation cycle, the added capacity of each elementary school was determined through the School Superintendent's Comprehensive Redistricting process, and the County Commissioners allocated according to the policy. Since the school was later delayed by one year, the Commissioners did not utilize this additional capacity for the 2018 allocation cycle but used it for the 2019 allocation cycle. The Charles County Board of Education's comprehensive redistricting of all Middle Schools went into effect at the start of the 2022-2023 school year.

With regard to funding the local share of school construction projects, a School Construction Excise Tax is collected from the homeowner of each new home via their property tax bill. Since the enactment of the Charles County Excise Tax in 2003, the calculation was based on the Producer Price Index, which was not keeping pace with the actual cost of school construction. In 2015, the Maryland General Assembly passed a revision to the Charles County Excise Tax Legislation to tie the calculation of the Excise Tax to the "State's Per Square Foot Cost of School Construction," ensuring the tax assessment keeps pace with the costs incurred by the County. The Fiscal Year 2023 Excise Tax assessed for a single-family dwelling is \$19,434, and for a townhouse is \$19,608, which is amortized over a 10-year period in the property tax bill.

On December 15, 2020, the Charles County Commissioners adopted changes to the School Allocation Policy that is located within the Charles County Adequate Public Facilities Manual. These changes included but were not limited to: 1. Addition of the Priority Development Project (PDP) Allocation type, which encourages affordable housing, mixed-use development, and growth within the Waldorf Urban Redevelopment Corridor (WURC) and 2. Addition of the Sunset Provision, which allows Development Projects that have been sitting on the School Allocation Waiting List for 6 years to receive 50% of their remaining allocations, and the remaining 50% on the 7th year.

Infrastructure Changes

The Charles County Department of Public Works (DPW) completed numerous infrastructure enhancements in 2022. These projects included roadway improvements, water and sewer improvements, and stormwater and drainage improvements associated with the County's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Permit. Specific projects are as follows:

- Design began on the Hughesville Village Water & Sewer project in November 2022. This project aims to provide public water and sewer infrastructure for the Hughesville Village PFA.
- Feasibility and concept design began on the WURC Stormwater Outfall project in December 2022. This project aims to design a solution for the 100-year design storm for the Waldorf Urban Redevelopment Corridor.
- Three stream restoration projects were completed for the purpose of improving hydrologic/hydraulic functioning and reducing nutrient and sediment loadings into local estuaries and the Chesapeake Bay. Two of the stream restorations, Swann Park and Hunt Club Estates, are located in the Mattawoman Creek Watershed and are estimated to reduce 1,831 pounds of nitrogen and 508,560 pounds of sediment from annually entering the Bay. The third project located in the Port Tobacco River Watershed at the College of Southern Maryland is estimated to reduce 174 pounds of nitrogen and 574,400 pounds of sediment from annually entering the Chesapeake Bay.

New Schools or Additions to Schools

The County Government and Board of Education are a part of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which is the State's largest school construction grant program, averaging at least \$280 million per year in recent years. The Program is governed by Title 5, Subtitle 3 of the Education Article, Annotated Code of Maryland and regulations promulgated by the Interagency Commission on School Construction in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR). CIP funding can be used for major new, renewal, or replacement schools as well as for addition projects or capital maintenance projects (systemic renovations). Charles County received \$22,894,000 in FY23.

The Board of Education also completed a 235-seat addition to Benjamin Stoddert Middle School. This renovation / addition project raises the State Rated Capacity of Stoddert from 722 to 975 and was completed in August 2022.

Enacted into law in 2020, the Built to Learn (BTL) Act became effective on February 12, 2021. The BTL Act allows the Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA) to issue revenue bonds to fund school construction projects and provides for management of the projects by MSA. Charles County Public Schools received \$25,355,517 (1.25 %). MSA bonds were issued for three projects: J. P. Ryon Elementary School for a 9,000 square foot addition of four kindergarten classrooms and one pre-K classroom, Malcolm Elementary School for a 7,200 square foot addition of four kindergarten classrooms and an activity area for 88 students along with a renovation of 2,070 square feet of two classrooms to allow circulation to the addition. Additionally, CCPS will be adding capacity in the new fire/sprinkler tank and adding sprinklers to the entire building. Maurice J. McDonough High School is a renovation/addition project consisting of 12,927 square feet of new addition and 35,161 square feet of renovation. The La Plata HS Phase I renovation has received IAC approval but has not yet been approved by MSA.

The Capital Grant Program for Local School Systems with Significant Enrollment Growth and Relocatable Classrooms (EGRC) are distributed proportionally, based on local school systems with significant enrollment growth or relocatable classrooms. In FY2023, Governor Hogan increased funds for EGRC to \$95.4 million and CCPS received \$4,368,000. This is the first time CCPS has qualified for this funding source.

Growth Trends

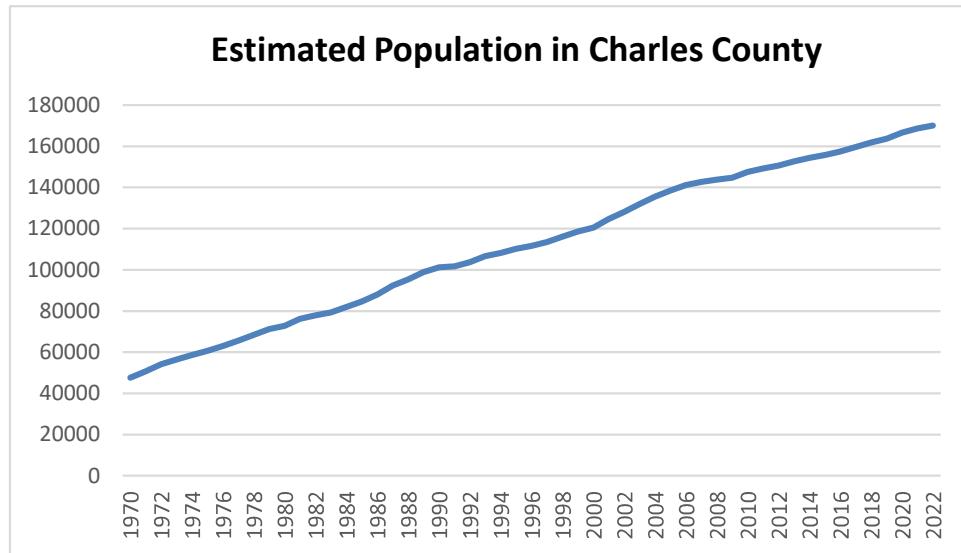
In order to understand growth trends in Charles County, it is important to consider that there are a number of factors that come into play. Charles County is part of the growing Washington DC Metropolitan region; and market conditions in this region affect how the County grows. These market desires for housing type and economic conditions greatly impact what type of development occurs and when.

While market conditions will always play a role, growth is also affected by current policies and regulations that are in place. In 2012, as part of the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act, a Tier Map was adopted countywide that restricts growth in the rural areas of the county to minor subdivisions. In 2016, the Comprehensive Plan was updated, which now calls for a target growth rate of approximately one percent, or less, per year. The years since the 2016 plan was adopted, the growth rates have been mostly on target with the 2016 Comprehensive Plan. There was a slight increase in growth rates in 2020 and 2021, which may be attributable to pandemic-related housing market trends, but growth between 2021 and 2022 slowed to less than 1%.

When considering growth in Charles County, and especially in the Development District, St. Charles accounts for a significant portion of development approvals. The Zoning Indenture known as Docket #90 authorized the Planned Unit Development (PUD) of St. Charles. Through village master plans, St. Charles is allowed to build more than 20,000 total units including single-family homes, townhouses, and apartments. In 2022, final plat approvals in the St. Charles PUD accounted for 85 percent of the final plats approved inside the PFA, and 67 percent of the total final plat approvals.

According to Figure 15 below, the population of Charles County is steadily increasing. While it may appear on the surface that the County is growing rapidly, the average annual rate of growth has decreased over the last several decades. Between 1970 and 1980, the growth rate was 4.32 percent. The growth rate between 1980 and 1990 decreased to 3.35 percent. Between 1990 and 2000, the growth rate dropped again to 1.8 percent, but did not change much between 2000 and 2010 at 2 percent. The population growth rate between 2012 and 2021 was 1.26 percent, which is a reduction of more than 3 percent since the decade between 1970 and 1980. The current growth rate is generally on target with the 2016 Comprehensive Plan.

Figure 15: Estimated Population Growth in Charles County since 1970



Source: U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates

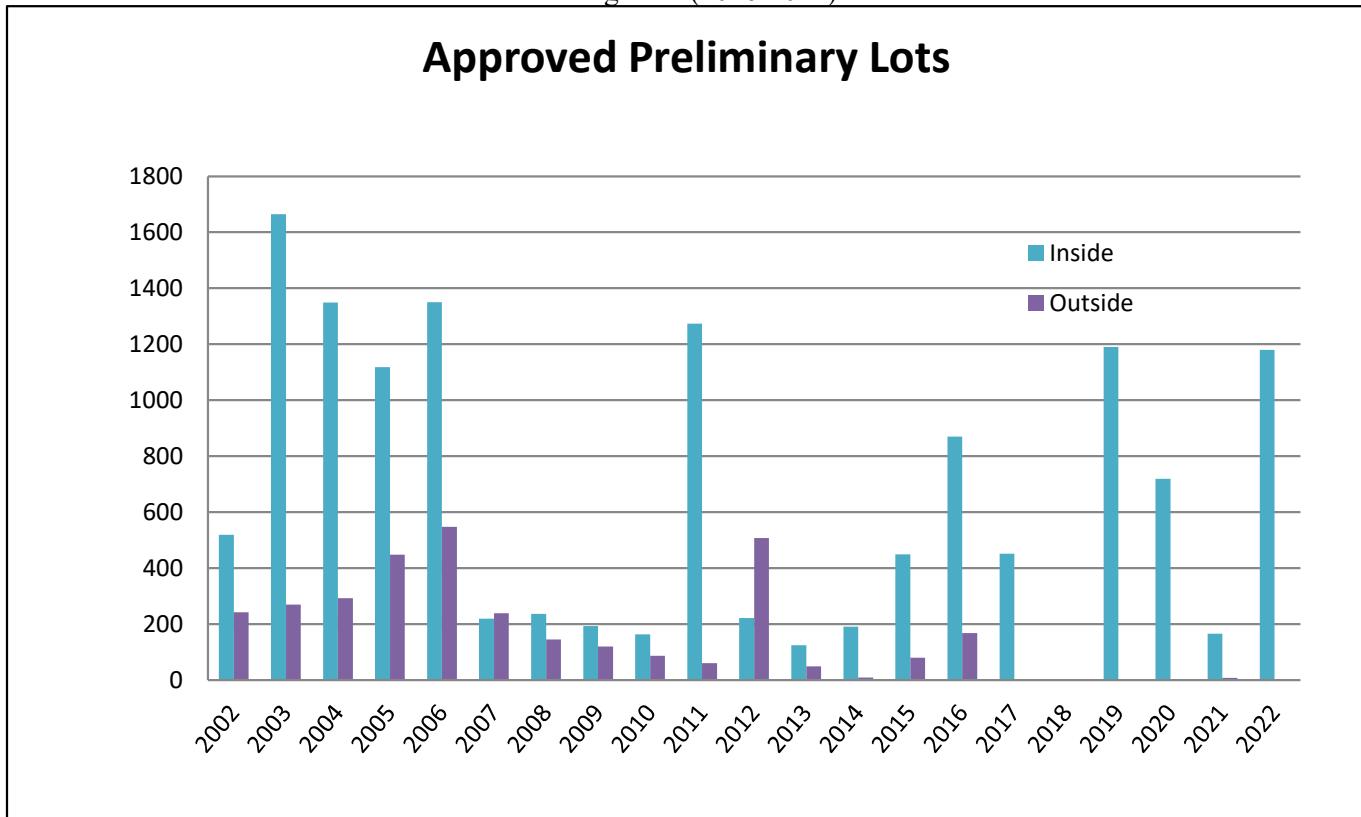
While population is one way to look at growth, there are other factors to consider that will have a direct effect on growth such as the approval of preliminary subdivision plans, final subdivision plats, and building permits. It should be noted, however, that preliminary subdivision plans should only be considered as an indicator of potential growth as they may not be built for several years, and some preliminary plans are voided before moving to the final plat stage. The recordation of final plat lots and the issuance of building permits signifies actual growth. Trends for each of these will be considered in the following pages.

Preliminary Subdivision Plans

Preliminary subdivision plans are required for projects with more than seven (7) proposed lots. As noted previously, preliminary plans that are approved can take years to be built, or they may be voided for a number of reasons. Therefore, while it is important to consider preliminary plan trends for forecasting purposes, final plats and building permits provide a more accurate picture of development in Charles County.

Figure 16 below indicates some clear trends in preliminary plans over the last twenty years, one of which is the ongoing diminishment in the number of planned subdivision lots outside of the Priority Funding Area. The number of annual preliminary plat lots has been inconsistent since the start of the mortgage and financial crisis in 2007, but the number of lots outside the PFA has steadily decreased over the same time span (except for the outlier of 2012). It should also be noted that there was an increase in preliminary lot approvals in 2016 as the Sustainable Growth and Agricultural Preservation Act of 2012 required that preliminary plans in the pipeline be approved by October 1, 2016 in order to be grandfathered. Further, with the adoption of the tier map in 2012, there have been fewer preliminary plans in general, especially in the rural areas. The number of preliminary lots approved in 2022 is one of the highest in the last decade, but because 92% of those were within the St. Charles PUD it doesn't necessarily signify a larger trend in residential development county-wide.

Figure 16: Approved Preliminary Lots Inside and Outside of the Development District (2002-2015) and Priority Funding Area (2016-2022)



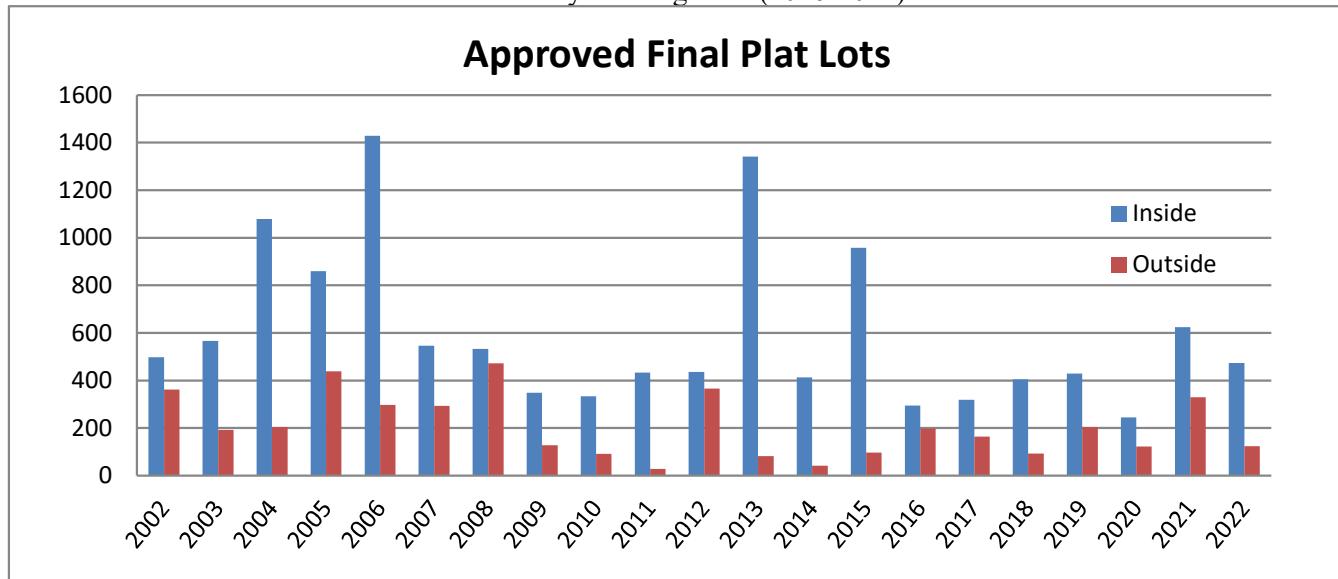
Source: Charles County Planning & Growth Management Department

Final Plats

In looking at trends for final plats in Charles County since 2002 in Figure 17 below, it should be noted that more final plat lots are being recorded inside of the Development District/Priority Funding Area than outside overall. With the exception of 2013 and 2015, the annual approvals of final plat lots have been subdued since the financial crisis that began in 2007/2008. It is noteworthy that the County Commissioners changed the policy on school allocations in 2016 and allowed for a small increase in recorded lots in 2016 and 2017. Since each lot/unit that is receiving a school allocation is required to be recorded in the land records, the increase in available school allocations allowed for some increase in recorded lots in districts that had available capacity at receiving schools.

Even with the recent increase in interest rates and overall cooling of the housing market, final plat lot approvals should be steady over the next few years within the Priority Funding Area as the approved preliminary subdivisions of the last few years are developed. However, as the St. Charles PUD continues to build out, the pipeline of large subdivisions with final plats to approve will begin to dry up and it's unclear whether the steady increase in annual lots will continue much longer.

Figure 17: Number of Final Plat Lots Approved Inside and Outside of the Development District (2002-2015) and Priority Funding Area (2016-2022)⁷



Source: Charles County Planning & Growth Management Department

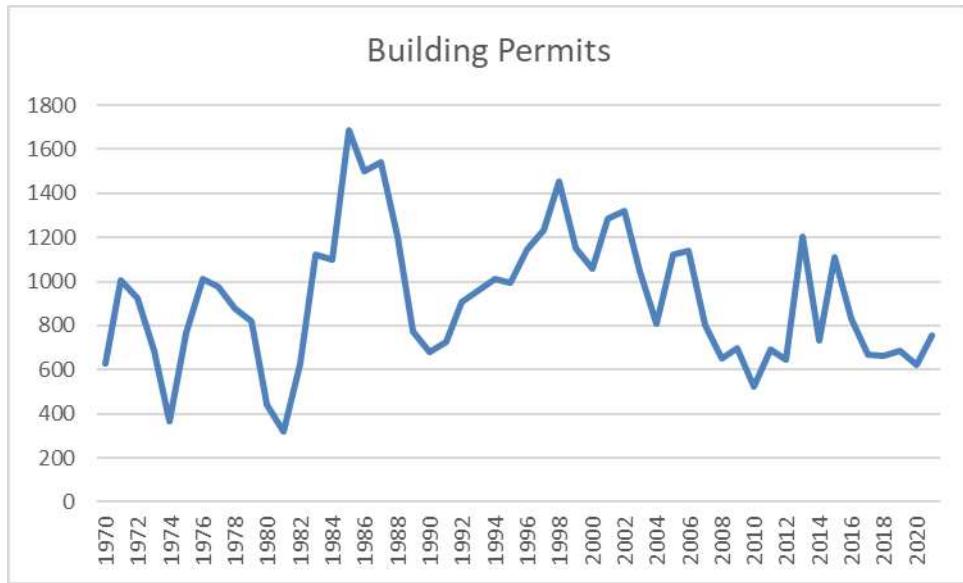
Building Permits

Building permit data is very important to track as it represents actual development that may have been in process for many years. Figure 18 below shows the distribution of building permits over the last 51 years. Between 1981 and 1986 there was a significant building boom in the county, with 1985 being the year with the highest number of building permit approvals since 1969 at almost 1,700 permits. The fifty-year building permit average is 920 permits per year. However, the average number of residential building permits approved in the last ten years is 810.

An analysis of building permits since 1971 shows that the average annual growth rate over this 50-year period is 2.89 percent. This growth rate is understandable when considering that there were several years since 1971 where more than 1,000 building permits were approved, especially during the 1980's. However, the average annual growth rate for building permits over the last ten years between 2013 and 2022 is 1.42 percent. Further, the average annual growth rate for building permits for 2022 is 1.36 percent.

⁷ Final plat lot numbers in Figure 17 include apartment and multi-family (duplex, triplex, quadplex) units, if applicable. Apartment units are not counted as individual lots on final plats; therefore, this information was extracted from building permit data and added to the appropriate plat year. In 2022, there were no building permits approved for apartment units.

Figure 18: Charles County Residential Building Permits since 1970



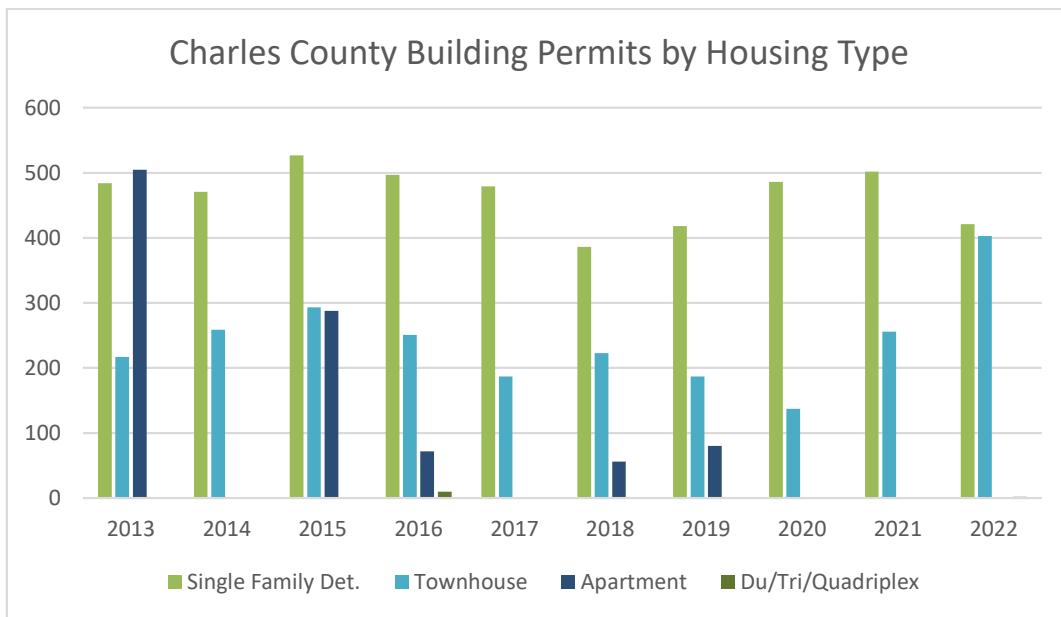
Source: Charles County Planning & Growth Management Department

Figure 19 below shows the ten-year trend for Charles County residential building permits. Similarly, Figure 20 below shows the distribution of building permits by housing type since 2012. Single-family dwellings and townhome approvals have been fairly consistent over the last ten years. Apartment approvals have increased when there is a market demand for this housing type. There has not been a huge market-driven demand for duplex/triplex/quadruplex units in general.

Figure 19: Charles County Residential Building Permits

	SFD's	Townhomes	Apartments	Duplex/Triplex/ Quadruplex	Total
2013	484	217	505	0	1,206
2014	471	259	0	0	730
2015	527	293	288	0	1,108
2016	497	251	72	10	830
2017	479	187	0	0	666
2018	386	223	56	0	665
2019	418	187	80	0	685
2020	486	137	0	0	623
2021	502	256	0	0	758
2022	421	403	0	2	826
Total	4,671	2,413	1,001	12	8,097

Figure 20: Charles County
Residential Building Permits by Housing Types

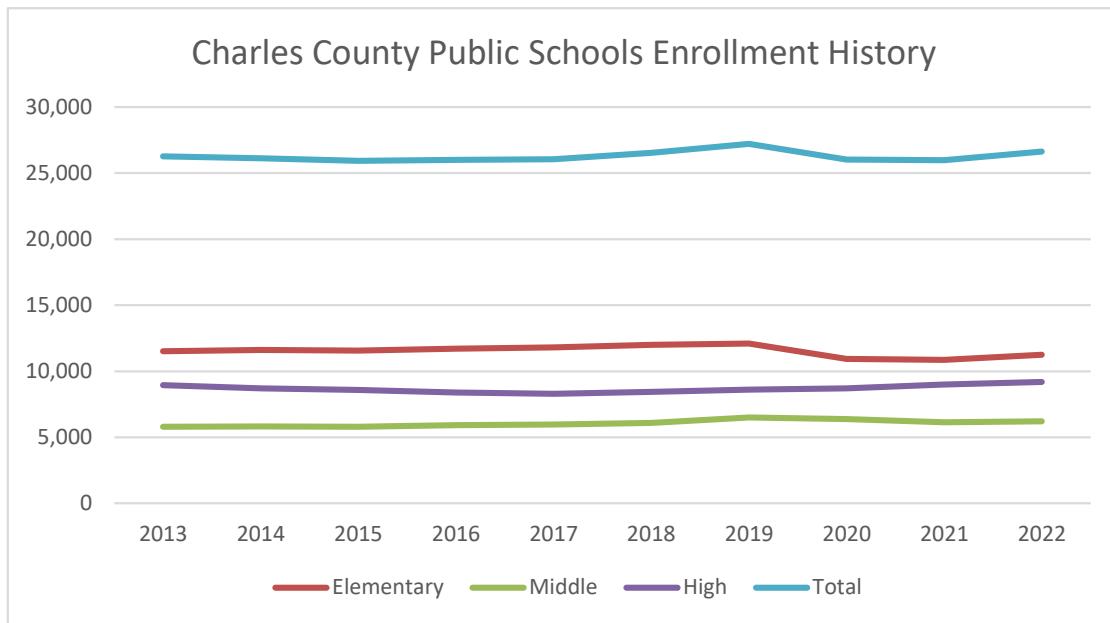


Source: Charles County Planning & Growth Management Department

School Enrollment

A key indicator of the impact of residential growth on public facilities is the effect on student population in the public schools. This indicator is a good way to measure how the increase in residential dwelling units translates into a secondary impact on the services provided by the state and local governments. Since 2012, Charles County has experienced an 18 percent increase in residential dwelling units. However, the overall growth in the public school population has been relatively flat according to Figure 21 below. Total elementary, middle, and high school enrollment in 2013 was 26,261 students versus a total enrollment of 26,640 in 2022. This equates to approximately 1.4 percent growth in enrollment over 10 years. It can be expected that the general increase in population at the elementary school level will move on to the middle and high school levels, but the general lack of overall growth in total school enrollment over the last 10 years does indicate an easing of growth in the County.

Figure 21: Charles County School Enrollment History



Source: Charles County Planning & Growth Management Department

What does this all mean?

When looking at growth in Charles County, there are multiple indicators to consider. Previous Planning Commission Annual Reports have calculated the average annual growth rate strictly on population estimates provided by the Census Bureau. The Comprehensive Plan also calculates the average annual growth rate based on Census estimated population data. When the Census Bureau updates their population estimates, they use current data on deaths, births, and migration. Staff also considers actual residential development approvals, and specifically building permits, as a way of considering the average annual rate of growth. Unlike population data, building permit approvals reflect actual development on the ground, which is a direct result of economic market conditions, as well as current policies and regulations that are in place. The annual growth rate for population for 2022 is 0.73 percent. In comparison, when using cumulative building permit data, the average annual growth rate is 1.36 percent.

It is important to note that building permit data does not include information on the number of persons per household. According to Census 2020, the number of persons per household is 2.79. While building permit data does not capture how many people will be living in new households that are built in the county, this is a more accurate way to capture actual residential growth in Charles County in any given year, which is also driven by economic market trends, as well as current policies and regulations. Further, it is important to point out that school enrollment figures have remained relatively constant at just over one percent growth over 10 years, and this trend is expected to continue.

Due to the significant changes made by the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, including downzoning measures to protect the County's natural resources, and increasing the size of the Priority Preservation Areas, it is anticipated that the rate of growth will be slowed to 1 percent or less in the future. Data from final plats, building permits, and school enrollment provide a more accurate indication of growth and development trends. These measures would appear to reflect a steady or low rate of growth.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Due to the significant changes made in the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, and the fact that 65 percent of the County is mapped as Tier IV and limited to minor subdivisions, it is anticipated that the growth rate will be slowed to a 1 percent or less rate of growth per year. Further, growth control mechanisms, especially zoning, water and sewer policies, and adequate public facility regulations, will likely continue to result in 70 to 75 percent of new growth occurring in the Development District and the incorporated towns.

Consistency with Comprehensive Plan

One of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan goals is to direct 75 percent of future residential growth to the Development District and to the Towns of Indian Head and La Plata as these areas will provide infrastructure to support growth, including water and sewer, schools and roads. As noted previously, the 2016 Comprehensive Plan reduced the size of the Development District from 52,200 acres to 22,189 acres for a total reduction of 30,011 acres.

Figure 22 below demonstrates how Charles County's development activity is generally consistent with the 2016 Comprehensive Plan goals. It is important to note that local market conditions, including the Washington DC market, influence housing availability and price in Charles County. The Planning Division, in cooperation with the American Planning Association's Community Planning Assistance Team, completed a housing study in 2018 that provided several recommendations to facilitate the implementation of affordable housing in Charles County. According to the study, the County needs 1,823 additional affordable housing units serving households earning at or below 30 percent to 80 percent of the area median income by the year 2025, or 228 units per year until 2025. For more information on the Charles County Housing Study, please visit the following link: <https://www.planning.org/publications/document/9156685/>. Since the study there have been no committed affordable units built, although a number have been proposed and awarded Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC). In 2023, the Department of Planning and Growth Management established a subcommittee to further consider affordable housing and to make recommendations to meet this goal.

Figure 22: Development Consistency with Comprehensive Plan Goals

	Comprehensive Plan Goals	2022	5-Year Average	10-Year Average
% Preliminary Plan Lots Inside Development District/PFA:	75%	99.8%	99.6%	94%
% Final Plat Lots Inside Development District/PFA:	75%	79%	71%	79%
Housing: Single Family	80%	61%	58%	58%
Housing: Townhomes	15%	39%	39%	30%
Housing: Apartments	5%	0%	3%	12%

In 2022, nearly 100 percent of preliminary plan lots were located in the Development District/PFA. An analysis of preliminary plan lots inside the Development District/PFA from 2013 through 2022 demonstrates that the County is exceeding Comprehensive Plan goals, averaging 94 percent over the ten-year period.

In 2022, 79 percent of the final plat lots were located inside the Development District/PFA. Further, an analysis of final plat lots inside the Development District/PFA from 2013 through 2022 demonstrates that the County is consistent with Comprehensive Plan goals, averaging 79 percent over the ten-year period.

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan identifies a goal for housing mix of approximately 80 percent single-family detached units, 15 percent townhouses and condominiums, and 5 percent apartments. Therefore, using building permit data for 2022 as an indicator, the County continues to exceed the goal for townhouses and while coming in below the goal for single-family dwellings. The goal was not met for apartments in 2022 as there were no approvals. The number of approved apartment units should rebound in the coming years as the County continues to promote higher density residential development along the Waldorf Urban Redevelopment Corridor.

Per the state Smart, Green and Growing legislation, jurisdictions are to establish a goal toward increasing the percentage of growth within their PFAs while decreasing the percentage of growth outside. Priority Funding Areas are existing communities and places where State and local governments want to target their efforts to encourage and support economic development and new growth. Further, these locations are also where local governments want State investment to support future growth. The 2022 Annual Report map in the appendix includes the Priority Funding Areas.

The current growth policy of Charles County is aligned with the principles of the State legislation by encouraging, as a matter of policy, the majority of development into the Development District and the PFAs. Charles County has been supporting smart growth as a policy and concept as reflected in the Planned Unit Development (PUD) of St. Charles Communities for well over three decades. Additionally, the County is committed to having 50 percent of its overall acreage in open space. A large Priority Preservation Area has been established with an aggressive goal of preserving 80 percent of the remaining undeveloped land within these areas. The County's commitment to land preservation has resulted in over 1,000 acres protected annually since 2016, including the more than 2,000 acres preserved in 2022.

Currently, the trend lines indicate development is within the level of tolerance. If, in the coming years, development trends do not continue in this manner, then policies can be re-evaluated by the Planning Commission to determine if changes are necessary.

Appendix

- 1) Development Activity Map with Priority Funding Areas
- 2) Land Use Map from the Comprehensive Plan
- 3) Protected Lands Map
- 4) Tier Map
- 5) Priority Preservation Areas Map

IMPORTANT PLEASE NOTE: All publications located within the Planning and Growth Management section of the web site are believed to be accurate as of their posting date. However, they may not be accurate on the day you view them. To verify whether these documents are the most current official document, please contact the division associated with the document in question.

PLANNING COMMISSION OF CHARLES COUNTY, MARYLAND

BE IT RESOLVED, this 26th day of June 2023, by the Planning Commission of Charles County that the document consisting of text, maps, and charts, entitled “2022 Planning Commission Annual Report” and dated June 2023, is hereby adopted in accordance with the Land Use Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

Robin Barnes


Robin Barnes (Jun 29, 2023 13:13 EDT)

Robin Barnes, Chairman

ATTEST:

Amy Brackett

Amy Brackett, Clerk



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



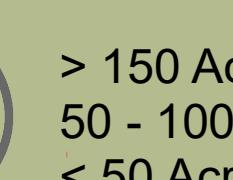
CHARLES COUNTY
MARYLAND

LEGEND

- Development District
- Residential
- Watershed Conservation District
- Employment & Industrial Park Districts
- Commercial & Business Districts
- Mixed Use Districts
- Redevelopment District
- Suburban Large Lot District
- Rural Residential
- Agriculture Conservation District
- Rural Conservation District
- Incorporated Towns
- Incorporated Town Growth Areas
- Transit Corridor
- Protected Lands
- Major Stream Valleys
- Military or Federally Owned Lands
- Chesapeake Bay Critical Area

Villages

- Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed Residential & Commercial

 > 150 Acres
 50 - 100 Acres
 < 50 Acres


LAND USE PLAN


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


CHARLES COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

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PRIORITY PRESERVATION AREAS

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

VIRGINIA

