

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



CHARLES COUNTY
GOVERNMENT



CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

WELCOME	Commissioner President Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq.	3
	Charles County Board of Commissioners	4-5

COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

www.CharlesCountyMD.gov

County Departments • Central Services Division	
Media Services Division • Internal Audit Office	
Administration • Clerk to the Commissioners	
Climate Resiliency Reporting	10
Broadband in Charles County.....	15

COMMUNITY SERVICES

www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/government/departments/community-services

Housing Authority • Aging and Human Services	
Local Management Board (CCACCYF) • Child Care	
Nanjemoy Community Center	
Assisting Charles County Seniors	22
Charles County Connected Devices.....	22
Special Loans Program.....	23

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

www.MeetCharlesCounty.com

Commercial Development/Redevelopment	
Business Services • Agriculture Business Development	
Economic Research and Special Projects	
Economic Development Marketing	
Energetics Comprehensive Modernization Plan	16
Asset Inventory.....	17
Business Support & BGAP Statistics	17
Capital Infusion	17
EDD Loan Programs	17
Federal & State COVID Relief Grant Programs..	17
Attracting Businesses to Charles County	17

EMERGENCY SERVICES

www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/services/emergency-services

9-1-1 Public Safety Communications • EMS	
Emergency Management • False Alarm Reduction Unit	
Animal Control • Tri-County Animal Shelter	
Recognition Successes	27

FISCAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/government/departments/fiscal-and-administrative-services

Accounting • Budget • Information Technology • Payroll
Purchasing • Treasury • Water and Sewer Billing

Charles County's Budget	7
Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Highlights.....	8

HUMAN RESOURCES

www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/government/departments/human-resources

Recruiting Contribution	20
Staff Training.....	20
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	21

PLANNING AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT

www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/government/planning-and-growth-management

Planning • Codes, Permits, Inspection Services • Transit	
Stormwater Management.....	12
Drainage Improvement Program	12
Farmland Preservation	14
Public Transit – VanGO	14

PUBLIC WORKS

www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/government/public-works-facilities
www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/services/public-works-utilities

Facilities: Buildings and Trades • Environmental Resources	
Fleet and Inventory Management • Roads	
Utilities: Water and Sewer Operations and Maintenance	
Capital Services • Operations Support • Technical Support	
Environmental Resources	24
Facilities Fleet Vehicle Comparison	26
Utilities Operations & Maintenance.....	26

RECREATION, PARKS, AND TOURISM

www.CharlesCountyParks.com • www.ExploreCharlesCounty.com

Recreation • Parks and Grounds • Tourism

Accomplishments & Highlights	18
Statistics.....	18



WELCOME

Commissioner President Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq.

It's an honor to serve as your Commissioner President, and on behalf of our Board of Commissioners, it's a privilege to present our annual report on our accomplishments and the priorities that guide our path forward. As we reflect on 2023, our community's enhanced quality of life and progress are evident in every corner of Charles County. This report will highlight many of these achievements to advance our collective goals.

Charles County is garnering attention for all the right reasons. Once again, we have secured a triple-A credit rating – a rare achievement among the 3,000 counties nationwide. This top-tier rating underscores our prudent management of fiscal resources, the expertise of our executive leadership, and our sound fiscal policies, ensuring that we meet our obligations today and in the future.

Our stable economic outlook has been supported by proactive efforts to spur commercial growth and expand small businesses, which are the backbone of our economy. Our county continues to flourish, attracting new residents and businesses who choose to make Charles County their home. This growth translates into a safe, prosperous community where residents have abundant opportunities to work, enjoy a range of amenities, and shop and dine close to home.

As we grow, we want to make sure that we integrate equity into every decision we make. Across Charles County – from Waldorf to Indian Head, and from La Plata to White Plains and Hughesville – we focus on making investments that offer everyone equitable access to resources and services. Our focus on equity ensures that progress touches all parts of our county.

We are proud of the many accomplishments that this report highlights, and we hope you will take a moment to review them. Our focus remains steadfast on creating a place where every resident can thrive. Together, as one Charles County, we are setting the stage for a future filled with promise and prosperity. Thank you for your continued trust and engagement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "RBC".

Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq.

Commissioner President

CHARLES COUNTY is a code home rule county governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners. The five Commissioners are elected at large to four-year terms of office. The Commissioner President is the presiding officer of the board at meetings and hearings. The Commissioner President may reside anywhere in the county. The other four Commissioners must each reside in a Commissioner district.

BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

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

COMMISSIONER MEETINGS

BOARD MEETINGS — The Board of Commissioners meetings are scheduled regularly and held virtually and/or in the County Government Building at 200 Baltimore Street in La Plata. The public can watch meetings on Comcast 95, Verizon Fios 10, Roku, or Apple TV streaming devices (Charles County Government), and online at: www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/services/media-services/charles-county-government-television. For virtual meetings, residents without internet service or cable access can listen to the meeting at 301-645-0500. Meetings are advertised in advance at www.CharlesCountyMD.gov.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS — The Commissioners hold community meetings virtually and at convenient locations throughout Charles County. These meetings are open to the public and provide an opportunity for attendees to ask questions and discuss items that are important to the community.

CHARLES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner President Reuben B. Collins, II, Esq.

is a lifelong resident of Charles County, raised in Bryans Road. He is a graduate of Charles County Public Schools. For more than 20 years, he has practiced law for R.B. Collins Law, LLC. He served three previous terms as County Commissioner for District 3. This is his second term serving as Commissioner President. He is the first African American elected to this Charles County position.



Commissioner Vice President

Ralph E. Patterson, II, M.A.

(District 4) Commissioner Patterson enjoys giving back to his community through coaching youth in soccer and volleyball. He has a strong family background of service. Currently, he is a high school Special Education teacher in Prince George's County.



Commissioner Gilbert "BJ" Bowling,

III (District 1) is a lifelong resident of Charles County and lives in Dentsville. He owns and operates a fifth-generation family farm with his grandfather and father and has worked professionally in public safety for more than 20 years.



Commissioner Thomasina O. Coates, M.S.

(District 2) is a native of Charles County, proud graduate of Charles County Public Schools, and lives in White Plains. She owns a small business in Charles County and worked in information technology for the federal government for 30 years.



Commissioner Amanda M. Stewart, M.Ed.

(District 3) is a 30-year resident of Charles County, proud graduate of Charles County Public Schools, and is serving her third term as a County Commissioner. She has more than 15 years of experience in public education and co-owns a small business with her husband.



COMMISSIONER HIGHLIGHTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Commissioner Accomplishments

- Approved the body worn cameras for Charles County Sheriff's Office
- Approved the VanGO free fare
- Incorporated **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** into their budget discussions to ensure funding decisions would create equitable opportunities, embrace diversity, and address disparities
- Approved funding for the Charles County **Public Schools**, which again exceeded maintenance of effort funding.
- Continued to grow our Career Emergency Medical Services Division with funding for new **EMT** positions.
- Continued the **Commissioners Cares Scholarship program** for the College of Southern Maryland
- Approved funding for a **24/7 library kiosk** with Wi-Fi at the Nanjemoy Community Center for the Charles County Public Library
- Increased funding for the **Charitable Trust** to distribute to local non-profits
- Approved funding for a feasibility study to support phase two of the **Climate Action Plan**

Capital Improvement Program Highlights

- Construction of a new elementary school, planning for a new middle school, and additions for full day kindergarten classrooms
- Open space enclosure funding for Piccowaxen Middle School, Indian Head Elementary School, and Dr. James Craik Elementary School
- Planning for a new recreation center
- Phase III of the Western Parkway
- New parks in Waldorf and Popes Creek
- New VanGO maintenance facility
- Funding for structures to address homelessness within the county
- Water and sewer infrastructure improvement
- Stormwater infrastructure



Commissioner Calendar Events

394

One-Way Engagement Sessions

Board of Commissioners Sessions	44
Public Hearings	32

Legislative Actions Passed

Bills	10
Resolutions and Ordinances	18
Public Comments Sessions 231 Participants (In Person, Virtual, Written)	13

Recognition Presentations

2023 County Seals	64
-------------------	-----------

Citation Presentations

Anniversaries (wedding, birthday, retirement, etc.)	96
Recognitions (individuals, groups, causes)	46
Condolences	44

Responding to Resident Concerns

The county handles resident input, questions, and concerns through its **Citizen Response Office**. Residents can contact the office for streamlined communication and timely responses by calling 301-645-0699 or completing the online contact form at CharlesCountyMD.gov.

Fiduciary Responsibility

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



Emergency Services

9-1-1 Calls and Emergency Response

Public Works

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

Economic Development

Business Attraction and Retention

Infrastructure

Broadband Expansion, Wastewater Treatment, and Supplying Potable Water

Community Services

Programs and Support for Seniors, Families, and Children

Planning and Growth

Permits, Inspections, Development Process, and Historic Preservation

Transportation

County Road Maintenance and Public Transit

Housing Authority

Housing Assistance for Low- and Moderate-Income Households

Parks and Recreation

Sports, Camps, Recreation Centers, and Public Parks

Animal Care Center

Temporary Housing, Care, and Adoption of Pets

Tourism

Promoting Local Attractions and Travel to Charles County

Charles County's Budget

Charles County Government's budget represents the allocation of resources based upon the delivery of essential programs and services. Each year, the County Administrator and fiscal leaders develop the budget process by:

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

In developing the budget, our approach is:

- Build a fiscally responsible budget
- Discuss department and agency priorities
- Balance budget through internal reallocation of resources; no tax rate increase
- Plan for a sustainable budget to meet future needs

The **Capital Improvement Program** (CIP) is budgeted for funding one-time expenditures that pay for community assets. The Board of Commissioners reviews the CIP annually to designate funds for land preservation, construction and/or renovations of infrastructure. Government projects are supported by general fund revenues and bonds which cover schools, transportation, land preservation, and parks.

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

The Board of County Commissioners receives public comments, makes changes based on community input, and approves the final budget by the end of May. The fiscal 2025 budget timeline is available online. Budget approval is anticipated May 14, 2024.

BE INVOLVED IN THE BUDGET PROCESS

Visit the new, online engagement platform.
Charles-County-MD.CivilSpace.io



- View the budget timeline
- Tune into episodes of "Let's Get Fiscal"
- Find answers to frequently asked questions
- Sign up for notifications

County Retains AAA Bond Rating

All three major national bond rating agencies have reaffirmed the county's Triple-A 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 allows the county to borrow at low interest rates which saves taxpayer dollars.

The county issued \$55 million general obligation bonds in November 2023 to fund improvements in schools, general government facilities, parks, roads, stormwater, and water and sewer projects.

S&P Global
Moody's
Fitch Ratings



Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Highlights

July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

The fiscal year 2024 general fund budget was approved for **\$527,362,100**. This is the largest operating fund of Charles County Government and is used to account for financial transactions associated with government services, which are not legally required to be accounted for in a special fund, or are not part of self-supporting operations, which are called enterprise funds.

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

Available on our website is a new video series titled "Let's Get Fiscal." These short podcasts are available for viewing and help to explain the different aspects of the budget.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

An \$11.0 million increase was approved for operations to support county road maintenance, recreation services, information technology, planning, and community resources coordination. It also boosts employee compensation through merit and cost-of-living increases and a one-time take home bonus of \$500 for all full-time employees hired on or before June 30, 2023.

PUBLIC WORKS – Improvements to the county's water and sewer infrastructure, as well as stormwater infrastructure improvements.

EMERGENCY SERVICES – Sixteen new emergency services technicians to support the county's growing population and two EMS supply technicians. An interface which will allow St. Mary's, Calvert, and Prince George's to share real time status information with Charles County was also included in the budget.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS – Just over \$1.0 billion in funding in fiscal 2024 to fiscal 2028 for county infrastructure to support schools, county buildings, roads, parks, water and sewer facilities, and stormwater management.



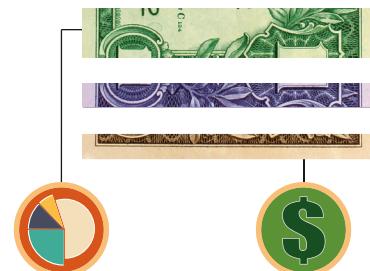
EDUCATION
\$235,393,600 • 44.6%
Board of Education
Total: \$218,767,000



SHERIFF'S OFFICE
\$121,304,100 • 23.0%



COUNTY GOVERNMENT
\$89,711,500 • 17.0%



OTHER AGENCIES
\$19,464,500 • 3.7%
State's Attorney, Health Department, Circuit Court, Election Board, Other

MISCELLANEOUS
\$28,382,000 • 5.4%
Retiree Fringe, Central Services, Contingency, Capital Project Transfer

DEBT SERVICE
\$33,106,400 • 6.3%

BOARD OF EDUCATION

A \$6.1 million increase for Public Schools which fully funds the requested budget, supports the blueprint implementation, and exceeds the Maintenance of Effort. The Board of Education is an elected body that prioritizes funds based upon the superintendent's proposed budget. The Board of Commissioners receives a briefing on the Board of Education's budget and approves spending by category in June each year. For details, visit www.ccboe.com.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

The Board of Commissioners increased the allocation of funds to the Sheriff's Office by \$13.3 million. The budget also provides for mandated increases per county code in employee compensation for sworn deputies. Funding for fiscal 2024 included four new positions which included two sworn officers, an application/web developer and a digital forensic analyst; and funds were added to pay for the state mandated body worn camera program.

OTHER LOCAL AGENCY OPERATIONS

Provides funding for the State's Attorney's Office, Department of Health, Circuit Court, Election Board, and other government agencies. An assignment clerk was approved to assist the Circuit Court with scheduling and managing the hearing dockets and other court-related events.

REAL PROPERTY TAX RATE

The real property tax rate remained the same at \$1.141 for County Government and \$0.064 for Fire and Rescue per \$100 of assessed value. The income tax rate of 3.03 percent also remained unchanged.

The Fire and Rescue funds are used to pay for facilities and capital assets used by the Charles County Volunteer Fire and EMS Associations and are governed by the Board of Fire and Rescue. The board reviews the financing of the fire departments and

rescue squads in Charles County and makes appropriate recommendations on the formula for distribution of fire tax revenues, purchase of equipment, and facility needs. One cent of the Fire and Rescue Tax pays for a Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) for the volunteers. The Fire Department is an all-volunteer service and EMS volunteers supplement paid EMS staff in Charles County. For more information on its operations, visit www.ccvfireems.org.

CHARLES COUNTY AVAILABLE PROPERTY TAX CREDITS

Homeowner's Tax Credit — Income based for those with an income of \$60,000 or less plus other requirements.

Senior Credit — For our seniors in the County that have lived in their homes for 20 plus years and have an income of \$50,000 or less plus other requirements.

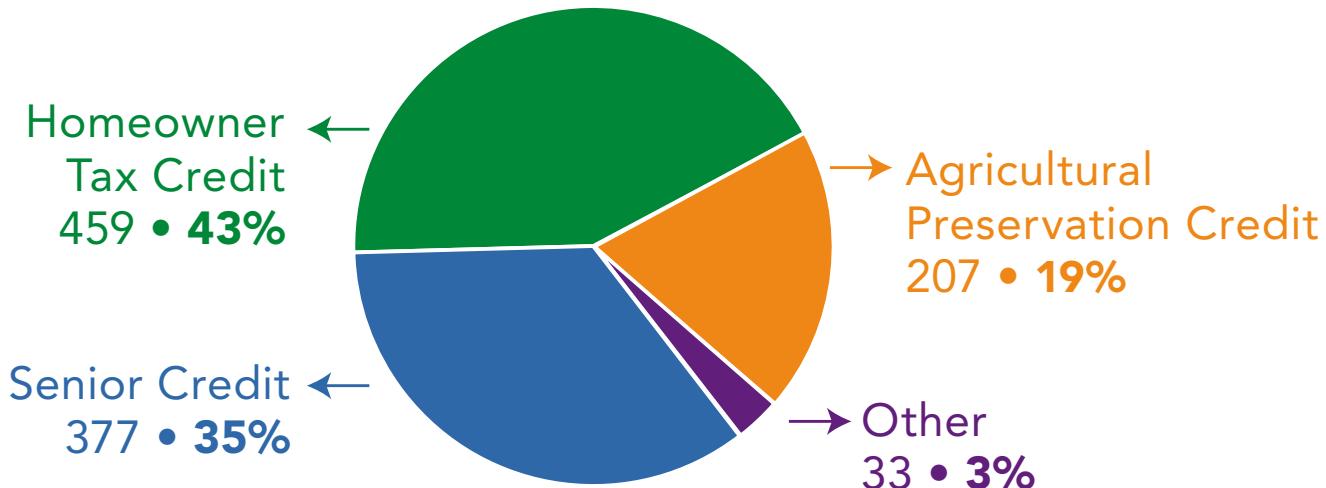
Agricultural Preservation Credit — For residents who use part of their land for agricultural or forest purposes.

Watershed Protection & Restoration Credit — For residents who use rain barrels for water usage and protecting freshwater resources in the County as well as developments constructed after July 1, 2001, that meet the 2000 Maryland Stormwater Design Manual, Volumes I and II.

Line of Duty Credit — For residents who have lost a spouse in the line of duty and they were an active law enforcement/correctional officer or rescue worker.

Volunteer Emergency Responders Tax Credit — Approved in 2023, Accepting applications beginning in 2024.

TAX CREDITS PROVIDED



Learn more:
www.CharlesCountyMD.gov/BudgetProcess
The fiscal 2024 budget is available online



Resiliency Reporting

The **Charles County Resilience Authority** is a nonprofit government instrumentality operated for the public purpose of responding to the impacts of climate change in communities across Charles County.

The Resilience Authority prioritizes equity-based projects to build the resilience of overburdened and underserved communities through nature-based projects with multiple co-benefits, and our goal is to turn climate change challenges into positive opportunities to address environmental justice issues to create more equitable, environmentally sustainable – and thus resilient – communities in Charles County.

Recognizing that nature-based solutions are on the front lines of climate resilience and environmental justice, this past year, the

Resilience Authority applied for and received funding through county, state, and federal grants for **Resilience Forward – RAYC Ahead**. This funding will support its initiatives to Reforest Charles County Public Schools and design urban tree canopied pocket parks and green stormwater solutions through its Concrete to Green partnership with Charles County government, and create the Resilience Authority Youth Corps.

Additionally, the Resilience Authority has partnered with the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Sciences for the first ever County level **Climate Adaptation Report Card**.

ESTABLISHMENT OF URBAN TREE CANOPIES AT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Increasing temperatures from climate change affect everyone, and communities in **urban heat islands** (areas characterized by more heat-absorbing buildings and pavements and fewer cool spaces with trees/greenery) are more likely to experience heat-related illnesses and mortality, with related negative effects including poor air quality and a higher air conditioning cost burden. Multiple Charles County public schools are in urban heat islands. Well planned native tree planting and long-term maintenance of those trees build climate resilience by reducing impervious surface, providing needed cooling, improving air quality and health outcomes, while advancing carbon sequestration and stormwater management.

**RESILIENCE FORWARD
RAYC AHEAD**
Climate resilience grounded in environmental justice for everyone.

FORMATION OF THE RESILIENCE AUTHORITY YOUTH CORPS OF CHARLES COUNTY

The Resilience Authority and the Student Conservation Association (thesca.org) have joined forces to form the Resilience Authority Youth Corps (RAYC). Through our **“Resilience Forward – RAYC Ahead”** initiative, the Student Conservation Association, in coordination with Charles County public schools, provides paid green job training and career development for Charles County high school students and young adults associated with monitoring and maintaining newly planted urban tree canopies in the county’s urban heat islands.



In April of 2023, the Resilience Authority held its inaugural Resilience **ARBOR DAY** event at Thomas Stone High School, and in October 2023, we celebrated the 2023 Charles County Resilience Authority **FALL ARBOR DAY** at Westlake High School in Waldorf (pictured) to mark the 75th tree planted on Charles County public school campuses in urban heat islands.

CLIMATE COMPETENCY

Climate Action Plans

Charles County is undertaking a climate action planning process. This effort will develop Climate Action Plans for County Government operations, as well as for the broader community.

The plans will include prioritized action strategies and recommendations to help mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, while also making the county **more resilient to climate change**. A stakeholder engagement process will take place in 2024 to gather input for the community-wide plan.

Learn more:

[CharlesCountyMD.gov/
climate-action](http://CharlesCountyMD.gov/climate-action)

Stormwater Drainage Improvement Program

In early 2023, the Charles County Commissioners approved a prioritized list of **more than 100 neighborhoods** for assistance through the Residential Stormwater Drainage Improvement Program. These neighborhoods are experiencing varying degrees of stormwater drainage issues on private property due to the increase in precipitation and extreme weather events that the County has been experiencing. Charles County Government has begun the process of making the necessary repairs to privately-owned stormwater drainage conveyance systems, thereby improving the resilience of these neighborhoods. The County has devoted approximately a third of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to this effort. A dashboard is available online where citizens can view the assessment and prioritization information:

[Experience.arcgis.com/experience/
d441be55d07d4a02a1d5bacc133d0476](http://Experience.arcgis.com/experience/d441be55d07d4a02a1d5bacc133d0476)



SMECO EV Recharge

In 2023, Charles County Government continued its partnership with the Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO) to expand electric vehicle (EV) charging station infrastructure in Charles County as part of their **Recharge program**. Through this effort, SMECO installs, owns, and operates EV charging stations on publicly owned property. Three more charging stations were approved for installation at Bensville Park, Waldorf West Library, and the Jaycees Hall. A total of **15 charging stations** have been, or will be, installed throughout Charles County utilizing the Recharge Program. More locations are under consideration.

Planning & Growth Management

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The requirements for stormwater management begin with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System at the Federal level through the Clean Water Act and regulated through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The Act establishes parameters for the discharge of pollutants to our waters to protect water quality. The requirements are further enhanced through Maryland's Stormwater Management Act of 2007 (Annotated Code of Maryland, Environmental Article 4 §§201 -215, administered by the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE)).

Jointly, EPA and MDE mandate compliance through Maryland's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System

(MS4) permit program. Charles County is issued a MS4 permit from MDE to implement and enforce, and requirements are codified in Chapter 274 Stormwater Management of the Code of Charles County Maryland.

The objective of "Stormwater Management Practices" in Charles County is to protect, maintain, and enhance the public health, safety, and general welfare to control adverse impacts associated with increased stormwater runoff.

Stormwater management helps to reduce stream channel erosion, pollution, siltation, sedimentation, and local flooding.

This will restore, enhance, and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of streams, water resources, and minimize damage to public and private property.

In accordance with Federal, State, and local requirements, Charles County performs tri-annual inspections, at a minimum, to verify that the stormwater management practices are maintained, and in working order.



Number of Stormwater Management Inspections Performed

Fiscal 2021

July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021

4,476

Fiscal 2022

July 1, 2021–June 30, 2022

1,919

Fiscal 2023

July 1, 2022–June 30, 2023

3,306

DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

During fiscal 2023, Infrastructure Management's capital projects team made remarkable strides in infrastructure development, with the Residential Drainage Improvement Program. This effort was bolstered by the compilation of 109 projects requiring rehabilitation, all situated on private property.

To effectively allocate our design resources, we planned and prioritized these projects in collaboration with a third-party consultant, Biohabitats. Their evaluation and ranking process ensured that our resources were strategically directed towards the most critical areas, facilitating efficient and impactful improvements. These accomplishments, rooted in extensive planning and collaborative efforts, propel us toward a more sustainable and prosperous future for all residents of Charles County.



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



Planning & Growth Management



333

Average number
of visitors

229

Average number
of new users

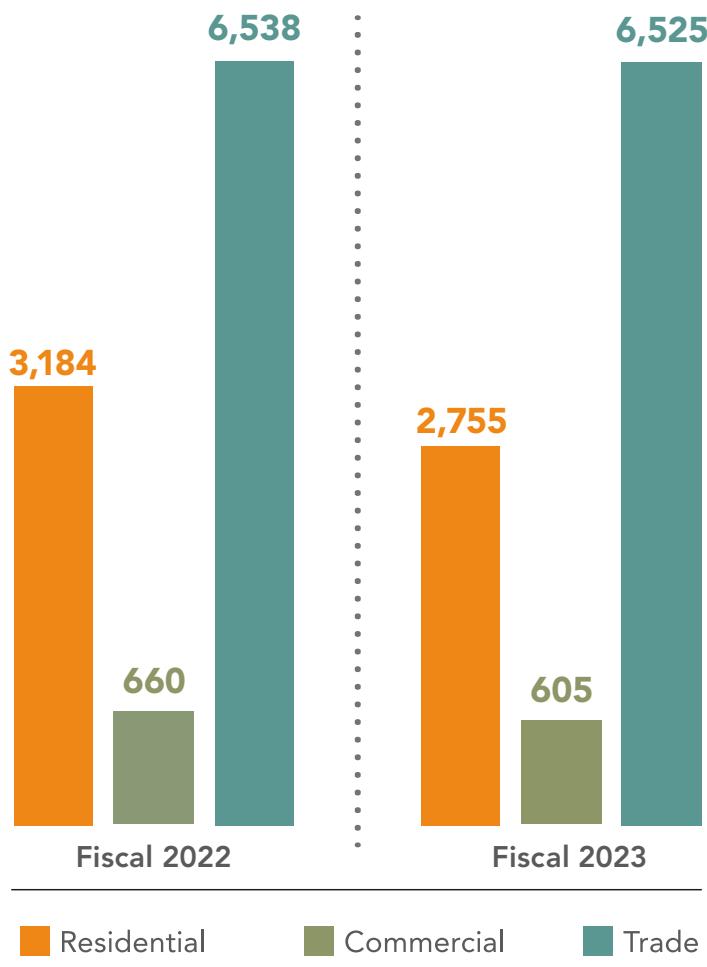
261

Average number of
guides completed

**Most
Commonly
Run Online
Permit
Guides:**

- Residential
Decks
- Single Family
Dwellings
- Residential
Additions

Permit Applications



The percentage of permits issued within the shown number of days.

Example:
Within 15 days, 30.3% of all residential permits were issued.

RESIDENTIAL	
15 Days	30.3%
30 Days	59.9%
45 Days	74.2%
60 Days	82.2%
COMMERCIAL	
30 Days	29.9%
60 Days	57.0%
90 Days	71.6%
120 Days	80.8%
TRADE	
Same Day	17.9%
1 day	45.7%
2 days	57.7%
3 days	64.5%

FARMLAND PRESERVATION

Charles County's Planning and Growth Management has permanently **preserved 18 properties** through the Rural Legacy Program, Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program, and the Transfer of Development Rights Program. These conservation easement acquisitions represent a \$5.1 million investment in the conservation of our most productive working farms and forests.

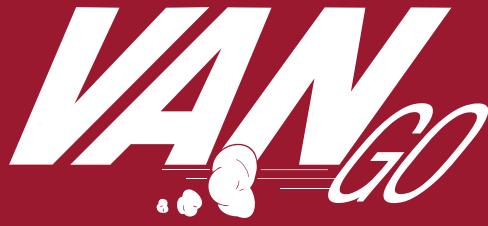
1,700

Permanently Preserved
Acres in Charles County

\$5.1M

Conservation Easement
Acquisitions

The County received an additional **\$2 million in Rural Legacy Program** grant funding to continue purchasing conservation easements within the Zekiah and Nanjemoy-Mattawoman Forest Rural Legacy Areas.



ACCESSIBILITY

VanGO operates an extensive specialized door-to-door service for elderly and disabled residents unable to use the fixed route service.

2023 15K
WHEELCHAIR TRIPS



VanGO drivers can provide door-to-door assistance to make the process of boarding and alighting easier. This vital service allows residents to access services, employment, and recreational opportunities and continues to grow as our citizens age in place. **Over 1,500 citizens** are certified to utilize this service.

Our local public transit system (managed by Planning & Growth Management) serves all of Charles County linking communities to medical facilities, retail, offices, schools, and other popular destinations.

500,000 TRIPS
OPERATING 1.3M MILES

VanGO has direct connections to transit systems operated by Prince George's, St. Mary's, and Calvert County as well as park and ride facilities providing links to commuter buses to Washington DC.

All VanGO fixed route buses are equipped with wheelchair lifts and bicycle racks, making transit more accessible to patrons.

Broadband in Charles County

The **Rural Broadband Task Force** has continued to make significant strides in reaching **the mission** of —

BRINGING BROADBAND TO UNSERVED AREAS OF OUR COUNTY.

In 2023, the North Nanjemoy Broadband Buildout was launched as an extension of the Nanjemoy/Cobb Neck (NCN) project. In this new project, the County is again partnering with ThinkBig Networks, LLC to extend service to an additional 350 properties in the Nanjemoy area. The original NCN project is expected to be completed in 2024.

The County is also partnering with Comcast on several projects. The memoranda of understanding (MOU) for both the fiscal 2022 and fiscal 2023 Connect Maryland grant programs was executed in 2023. These projects will bring access to broadband to over 1,000 properties in areas such as Dentsville, Charlotte Hall, Newburg, and Hughesville. Construction began in late 2023.

Verizon also received funding for broadband projects in the County through the fiscal 2023 Connect Maryland program. The County and Verizon are in the process of negotiating an MOU, which is expected to be completed in 2024.

As of December 2023, we have provided funding to 99 residences through the County's Long Driveway grant program (LD-Cat3). This program provides financial assistance to construct service drops that connect homes at the end of long, private driveways to the existing broadband network on the road. Residents are eligible to participate in the program if their service drop is constructed between July 1, 2021 through December 30, 2024.

The County continues to seek funding opportunities to bring broadband access to our residents. In December 2023 we applied for the Maryland Office of Statewide Broadband's "Difficult to Serve Properties" grant. If successful, the County will receive an additional \$1 million for broadband projects.

350 More Properties

Service to be extended in the Nanjemoy area

1,000+ Properties

Connect Maryland grant programs will bring access to broadband in areas such as Dentsville, Charlotte Hall, Newburg, and Hughesville

99 Residences

Received funding through the County's Long Driveway grant program

\$1,100,000 for Broadband Projects

Additional grant funds for Charles County, if successful, will be received through the Maryland Office of Statewide Broadband's "Difficult to Serve Properties" grant



[CharlesCountyMD.gov/our-county/
rural-broadband-in-charles-county](http://CharlesCountyMD.gov/our-county/rural-broadband-in-charles-county)

Economic Development



Aerojet Rocketdyne, an L3Harris Technologies company, and Naval Surface Warfare Center Indian Head Division (NSWC IHD) have signed a multi-year agreement to increase production for solid rocket motors.

Pictured left to right: Tyler Evans, President of Missile Solutions, Aerojet Rocketdyne; Ross Niebergall, President, Aerojet Rocketdyne; Ashley Johnson, Technical Director, NSWC IHD; Navy Capt. Steve Duba, Commanding Officer, NSWC IHD.

January, 2024

ENERGETICS COMPREHENSIVE MODERNIZATION PLAN

The Naval Surface Warfare Center Indian Head Division (NSWC IHD) has developed an Energetics Comprehensive Modernization Plan (ECMP) to prepare the Navy's arsenal infrastructure to meet wartime requirements. There are 500 modernization projects planned for completion through 2032.

Starting in 2022, NSWC IHD has seen the completion of key infrastructure restoration and modernization projects to increase their critical capabilities to produce the energetic products U.S. fighting forces need in the ongoing strategic competition with peer competitors on the global stage. Furthermore, in conjunction with the National Armaments Consortium (NAC), NSWC IHD hosted two successful Naval Energetic Systems and Technologies (NEST) Other Transaction Agreement (OTA) collaboration events that year. NSWC IHD's recent authority to establish the NEST OTA, allows the command to enter a contract outside Federal Acquisition Regulations with nontraditional defense contractors.

In March of 2023, NSWC IHD announced a new public-private partnership (P3) agreement with X-Bow Launch Systems Inc. Under this 20-year agreement, the two organizations will work together to develop, qualify, and manufacture propulsion systems for current and future commercial and warfighter needs.

In January 2024, NSWC IHD officially announced the signing of another P3 Agreement with Aerojet Rocketdyne, an L3Harris Technologies company, under the command's Center for Industrial and Technical Excellence (CITE) designation.

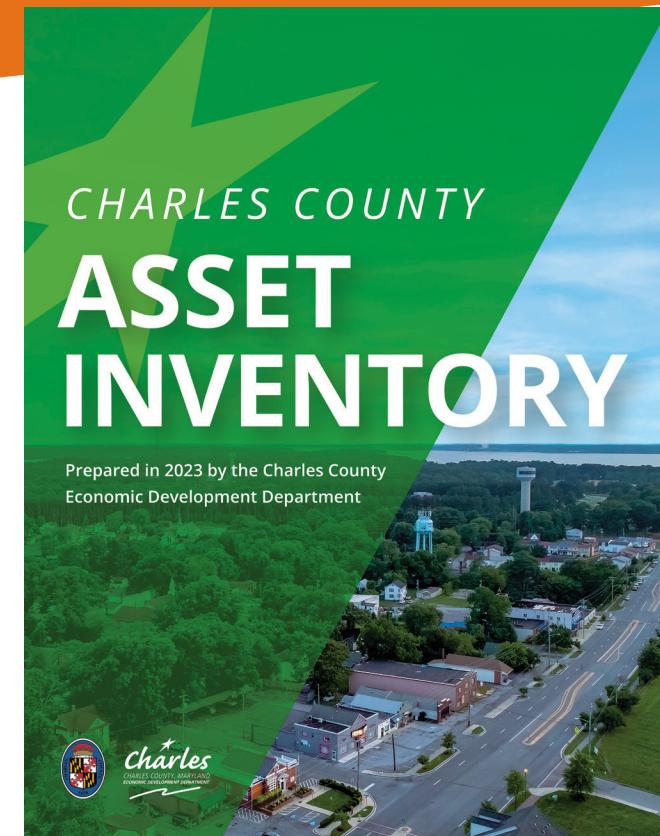
CITE is a statutory authority allowing P3s to perform work related to the command's core competencies. This designation allows the Navy to more efficiently maintain an organic energetics capability and manage under-utilized capacity.

Under this 10-year agreement, NSWC IHD and Aerojet Rocketdyne will work together to increase the production of solid rocket motors for national defense programs. The manufacturing activities will be performed at NSWC IHD's existing industrial plant complexes.

In 2023, Economic Development created an **ASSET INVENTORY** as a crucial step in its strategic planning process.

The Asset Inventory identifies and categorizes the diverse array of tangible and intangible assets within the region that can be harnessed to support workforce and economic development initiatives.

By systematically cataloging these resources, county leaders gain valuable insights into the intricacies of their economic landscape, pinpointing both strengths and areas requiring additional investment. This comprehensive understanding not only informs strategic planning but also facilitates resource allocation and the forging of partnerships, ultimately serving as a foundational tool to guide the county's developmental trajectory in an increasingly competitive global landscape.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR CHARLES COUNTY



Business Support & BGAP Statistics

236	Business Visits
888	Businesses Supported (engagement hours)
900	Engagement hours
14	Workshops hosted
220	Business Welcome Letters
4	BGAP Cohorts
52	Total Participants/Graduates
43	Minority Businesses
\$430,000	Total BGAP Grants Disbursed
\$85,000	Pending Grant Disbursements

\$558M IN INVESTMENTS

The Economic Development Department is engaged with a number of major projects that impact on the County's commercial tax base expansion. These investments represent an estimated \$558M upon project completion.

CAPITAL INFUSION EDD Loan Programs, and Federal and State COVID Relief Grant Programs

10 COVID-19 Loans totaling \$50,000 issued, with 8 to minority-owned businesses	\$396,517.55 in Business Development Loans to 14 businesses, of which 10 benefited minority-owned businesses	\$250,000 in Target Industry Loans to 3 businesses, of which 2 are minority-owned businesses
--	--	--

ATTRACTING BUSINESSES TO CHARLES COUNTY

Digital ad campaign visibility

2,843,859 ...Ad Impressions

8,198 ...Clicks

= 3.81% ...Click through Rate



Recreation, Parks & Tourism ACCOMPLISHMENTS & HIGHLIGHTS

Recreation, Parks, and Tourism (RPT) completed the first two **synthetic turf fields** with one at **White Plains Regional Park** and the other at **Laurel Springs Regional Park**. Both synthetic turf fields are striped in different colors to accommodate six different sports, including football, regulation soccer, intermediate soccer, boys & girls lacrosse, and field hockey. Both fields can withstand heavy use, ensuring that the field remains accessible for practices, games, and events throughout the year. These new fields are important for the community, promoting physical activity, sportsmanship, and teamwork among youth.

The department expanded free public event programming by introducing the Charles County **Classic Carb Show**. Collectively with the **Fun Filled 4th** event, these events brought out **3,700+ attendees**.

RPT purchased **RecXpress**, the mobile recreation vehicle, and conducted **47 activities and community outreach events** between June and December 2023.

Tourism staff collaborated with **BruMate**, (insulated cup brand) and Media One (advertising company) to market Charles County as a destination for travel in **50+ Ace Hardware locations** throughout the DMV.

Tourism staff achieved 13.6 million impressions with strategic and **target advertising campaigns**.

RPT staff expanded **youth and teen programs** with the development of the First Fridays Teen Hangout nights at the community and recreation centers as well as expanded the partnership with Charles County Public Schools At-Risk Teen Program in select Middle Schools.

RPT completed the **new park concept plans** for **Waldorf Park**, **Popes Creek Waterfront Park**, and **La Plata Farm Park**. Learn more at CharlesCountyParks.com/about-us/development.



22,817 Paid Recreation Program Registrations

20,984 White Plains Golf Course Rounds of Golf Played

1,714 Offered Programs and Activities

364 Gilbert Run Pavilion Rentals

3,378 Summer Camp Participants at **37** different camps

21,000+ Vehicles Visited Mallows Bay Park

104,600

No. of travelers to visit the Crain Memorial Welcome Center in 2023



Tourism & the Entertainment Industry

Charles County's economy, through the development of tourism and related industries, contributes to increasing tax revenues and investment attractiveness. Tourism

facilitates innovation and the expansion of industries that strengthen the tax base, support job growth, and attract visitors.



Visitor Spending

(In Millions)

	2021	2022
Lodging	\$36.8	\$41.8
Food & Beverage	\$64.8	\$73.9
Recreation	\$18.6	\$22.1

Provided by Maryland Tourism
Source: D. K. Shifflet, Tourism Economics

1,042,100 Vacationers!

No. of people that visited Charles County in 2022

Visitors in 2021: 948,500



611,600
Day Visits

12% Higher than 2021
at 542,100



430,600
Overnight Stays
6% higher than 2021
at 406,500

Human Resources

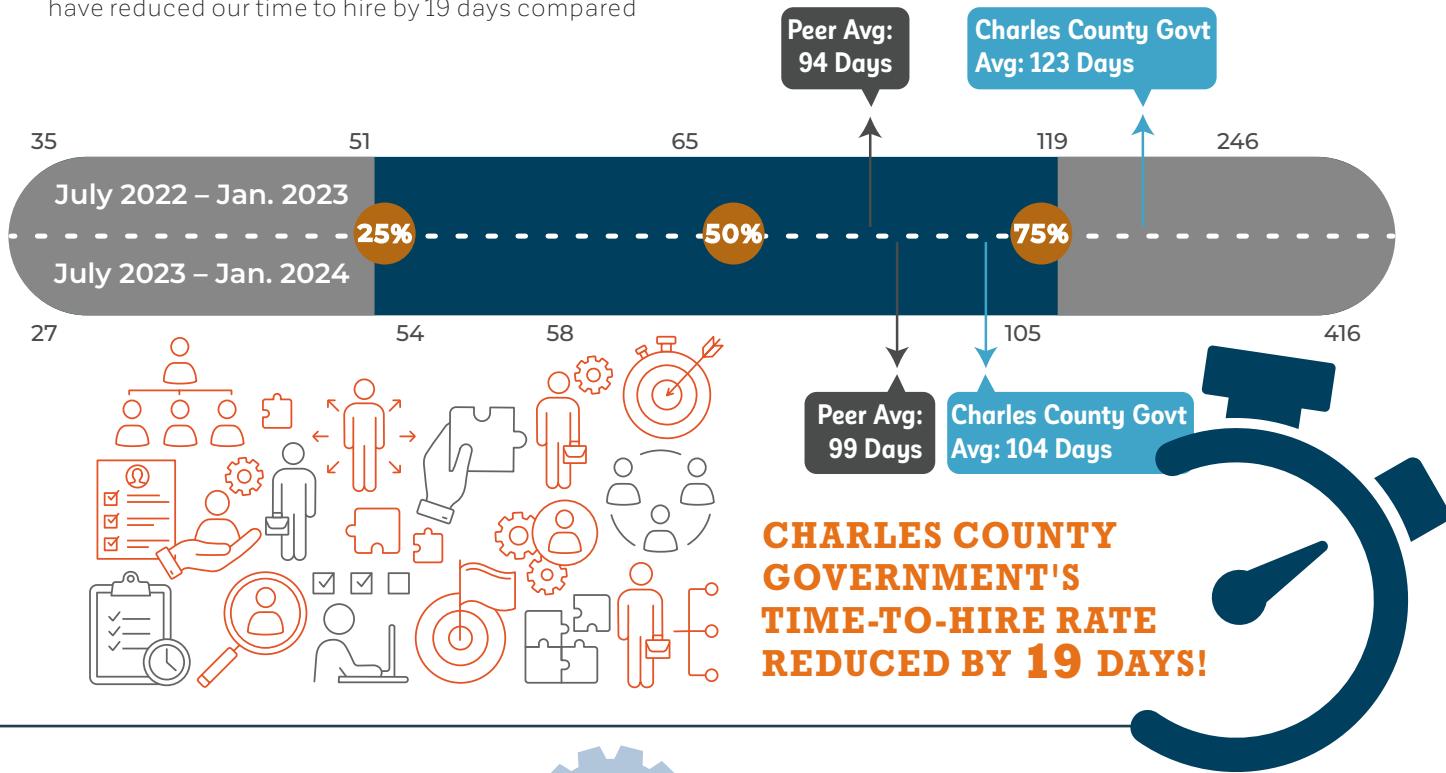
RECRUITING CONTRIBUTION

In Human Resources, we work to support all of the departments within Charles County Government to ensure they can be better prepared for the work they do. One of the major functions we provide is recruiting.

Recruiting has been a challenge across the country. In a time when organizations are taking longer to fill positions, we are pleased to see that our recruiting team has reduced the time to fill vacancies across the organization. We have reduced our time to hire by 19 days compared

to our peer average of increase of 5 days. This means that new hires are in place and ready to serve our community that much sooner and we are proud to support that outcome.

As we continue to make improvements to this and other programs supporting our departments, we expect to see continued reductions in the time to hire metric.



Fiscal 2023 STAFF TRAINING

394 **15.15**

Course
Attendees

Average
Per Course
Attendance

27 Course Titles
39 Sessions



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



The primary focus of the **Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI)** is continuing to help our workforce understand the importance of equity in all that we do. ODEI continues to expand our workforce's understanding and application of equity, providing robust and accessible training options for all. The training program grew again this year, adding additional topics, sessions, and speakers.

One example of the effectiveness of the DEI training program is the successful creation, implementation, and launch of our **budget equity tool**. In 2022, ODEI established the equity assessment tool development as one of our equity emphasis areas.

This year, to assist in developing our budget equity tool, under the coordination of ODEI, staff from multiple departments participated in the **Government Alliance on Race and Equity** (GARE) focus area training. We utilized the GARE training information and worked diligently with Charles County Government's Budget Division staff to create and implement a budget equity tool for all departments. ODEI launched the budget equity tool during the fiscal 2025 cycle. The budget equity tool expands our organization's focus on positive community impact. The budget equity tool aims to help staff consider the tradeoffs and benefits of our budget requests and encourage positive outcomes for our community.



CHARLES COUNTY CONNECTED

Maryland State Connected Devices Program



Connected Devices, hosted by **Charles County Advocacy Council for Children, Youth, and Families / Local Management Board** is a grant program designed to assist in digital equity and inclusion efforts in Maryland. The program provides new, internet-enabled devices to families most at need.

Charles County Government received two rounds of funding from the Maryland Office of Statewide Broadband. The program provided FREE Chromebook devices to eligible, low-income households, earning under 200% of federal poverty threshold.

**ROUND 1
DISTRIBUTION**
Concluded
Dec. 2023

22 Distribution events held
500 Devices distributed

The program was operated with the Local Management Board as the lead in partnership with Charles County Public Library, and University of Maryland Extension. Recipients from all walks of life including elderly, un-housed, single parents, and individuals with disabilities were served.

Recipients were identified as:

88% Persons of color
36% Persons with a disability
15 County zip codes represented



CHARLES COUNTY CONNECTED DEVICES
WAS MANAGED THROUGH A PARTNERSHIP
ENDEAVOR WITH THE CHARLES COUNTY
PUBLIC LIBRARY

Assisting Charles County Seniors



5,826	Unduplicated individuals served through programs
51,271	Meals on Wheels meals served to 458 seniors
18,963	Meals served at the senior centers to 1,229 seniors
27,316	People provided Information & Assistance contacts (includes all calls and information materials sent out)
83	People received legal assistance for free
262	Daily average of people using senior centers
54,559	Participation in physical fitness classes or programs



On March 12, 2024, members of the Board of Commissioners and Charles County Government staff were joined by Jacob R. Day, Maryland Secretary of Housing & Community Development, to tour the newly constructed home.

Community Services

A Special Loans Program Success TOTAL HOME REPLACEMENT

The Charles County Housing Authority's Community Development staff utilized funds from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's Special Loans Program.

This home was completely replaced from the foundation up as it was deemed more cost-effective than renovations due to the significance of the repairs.

The senior homeowners can now enjoy their home knowing it is safe, sanitary, and secure.

The program is available to eligible persons who own their home, have low to limited income, and the home needs significant repair.



RECYCLED MATERIALS

Did you know that Charles County is required to meet an annual recycling rate of **35%** per the Maryland Recycling Act?

The county's calendar year 2022, the **source reduction rate achieved was 49.69%** (2022 is the most recent rate to share). This rate not only reflects the recyclables collected at county facilities, but also includes all waste generated in the county and recycled by private industry and commercial operations.

Maryland Recycling Act

2022

All Recyclables Recycling **47,188 tons**

Yard Waste & Organics Collection* **17,302 tons**

Recycling Center & Landfill Operations

2022

2023

Recycling Collected **11,341 tons** **10,543 tons**

Yard Waste Collection* **12,681 tons** **110,508 tons**

Landfill Waste Received **137,009 tons** **126,085 tons**

Tonnage includes curbside and recycling center single stream, plus metals, plastics, electronics, tires, household hazardous waste, and textiles.

* Yard Waste is from Curbside Pickup, Recycling Centers, or Piney Church



Curbside Recycling Collection

Curbside recycling grows each year. The program geographically covers Charles County in its entirety and **serves nearly 51,000 homes**.



Annual Cleanup Events

Potomac River Watershed Cleanup (April), and the annual Community Cleanup (May), resulted in **16.63 tons of debris removed**.

Scrap Tires Days

The state-funded Scrap Tire Drop-Off Days in Charles County generated a total of **198.03 tons** of scrap tires.

An event for agricultural tires only was offered in May. The successful event resulted in **162.17 tons of agricultural tires**. A separate event for resident's scrap tires was offered in September, and resulted in **35.86 tons of scrap tires**. Scrap tires are accepted at all four of the county's recycling centers. Residents may bring two tires per day to be properly recycled.

Adopt-A-Road & Adopt-A-Spot

The Environmental Resources Division conducted **140 county road cleanups** as part of the Adopt-A-Road program in 2023.

The new Adopt-A-Spot program was introduced in 2023. The program invites residents or community groups to adopt a public open space, such as parks, playgrounds, and trails. The program quickly adopted **3 spots** and hopes to add many more in 2024.

Environmental Workshops

Three Rain Barrel and Composting workshops were held in 2023. Environmental Resources sold **98 rain barrels and 59 composting Geobins**.

Bikes for the World

A partnership with Bikes for the World began in August of 2023. Since then **354 bicycles have been collected in just 5 months**. The non-profit organization collects and refurbishes a wide variety of bicycles and distributes to those in need.

Medical Equipment

The Durable Medical Equipment (DME) collection box was relocated from the Pisgah Recycling Center to the Charles County Landfill. The more visible location caused the program to flourish, **collecting 273 pieces of medical equipment**.

The Maryland Department of Aging accepts donations of DME, which include wheelchairs, power wheelchairs, power scooters, rollators, walkers, crutches, canes, shower chairs, tub transfer benches, bedside commodes, toilet safety rails, pediatric equipment, home hospital beds, bed rails, and mechanical lifts. The items are transferred to a central location in Maryland for repair and sanitation prior to distribution to Maryland residents in need of mobility assistance.

Public Works Charles County Government Fleet Efficiency Vehicle Comparison



	MPG Equivalent	Green House Gas Rating (10 = highest)	Carbon Dioxide (Co2) Grams Per Mile	Annual Fuel Cost	Maintenance Cost	Range in Miles
PLUG-IN HYBRID ELECTRIC + GAS VEHICLE						
Mitsubishi Outlander	Battery	64	9	115	\$1,250	\$234
	Gas	26	5	342	\$1,400	\$521
BATTERY ELECTRIC + GAS VEHICLES						
Ford F150 Lightning	Battery	68	9	169	\$1,100	Data Unavailable
	Gas	19	4	451	\$1,900	\$800
Ford Transit	Battery	116	0	Data Unavailable		
	Gas	Data Unavailable				
Chevy Bolt	Battery	133.8	0	101	\$650	\$872
	Gas	Data Unavailable				



DID YOU KNOW?

The **Public Works Utilities** Operations and Maintenance team operates seven wastewater treatment plants and fourteen separate water systems, not including very small water systems at local parks.

4.3 Billion Gallons
Wastewater treated

2.5 Billion Gallons
Potable water produced

Emergency Services



CHARLES COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES AWARD "OUTSTANDING EMS PROGRAM"

An excerpt from the "Maryland EMS News"

This award recognizes a program that offers an innovative approach to reducing death and disability. Through its Resuscitation Quality Improvement Program, the Charles County 9-1-1 Fire/EMS Communications Center – in conjunction with RQI Partners, LLC, the American Heart Association, and Laerdal Programs – is working to help its 9-1-1 specialists' more quickly recognize incidents of cardiac arrest and, in turn, initiate cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) as early in the prehospital stage of patient care as possible.

First implemented in August 2019, the program is designed to boost telecommunicators' performance in providing T-CPR instructions, establishing the correct rate for compressions, and limiting interruptions to CPR, resulting in the delivery of high-quality prehospital patient care. Incorporating cognitive learning and scenario-based training, quarterly completion and compliance reports, and continuous feedback, the program enjoys 100% compliance, resulting in the procurement or renewal of 28 RQI-Telecommunicator credentials. In the first quarter of 2023, recognition of cardiac arrest occurred in 100% of the calls submitted for case review, meeting the KPI goal for start-of-call to recognition of cardiac arrest. The first three months of this year also saw the best problem-solving scores and fastest first-compression times recorded since the program's launch. Since its inception, the survival rate of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests has increased 220%.

Through this quality improvement initiative, 9-1-1 specialists have helped to improve patient outcomes by reducing death and disability while demonstrating significant improvement of delivery of viable patients to area hospitals.



"Cat"errific SUCCESS STORY

Charles County has had a huge success this year with the first ever of its kind in Southern Maryland, a brand-new Cat Café! The **Feline Felons Cat Café** collaborated with the Charles County Animal Care Center (CCACC) and officially opened its doors in September 2023. To date, the café has adopted out a whopping **111 cats**, all from CCACC, to their new FURever homes! Not only did these awesome cats gain homes, but CCACC was able to clear its cages for the incoming homeless and stray cats. This sounds like a purrfect success and massive win for our feline friends!

One of the Café's first adoptions was for our feline sweetie named CINNABON, who had been living at the CCACC for 69 days with no prospects for adoption, was ADOPTED WITHIN 48 HOURS of being in the café!

Guests being able to sit back and relax in the Café while playing and interacting with these amazing, adoptable cats has proven to be a recipe for purrfect pet matchmaking. CCACC does a fantastic job ensuring all cats are vetted prior to visiting the café so rest assured that your cat pals are always ready for their new homes!

All guests are welcome to come to the café, potential adoptee or not. It's a great place to come, knowing that your feline buddies will always be happy to see you, snuggle or play! The Cat Café even holds events for the community such as the crowd favorite, **CAT YOGA**! Visit online for more information: FelineFelonsCatCafe.com.



This endeavor has truly taken on the Emergency Services mission of...

*Answering the call,
saving lives!*



GET CONNECTED TO CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

CharlesCountyMD.gov



About Charles County Government

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

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

CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT

200 Baltimore Street | La Plata, MD 20646

301-645-0550 | Fax 301-645-0560

Maryland Relay: 7-1-1 (TDD: 1-800-735-2258)