

QUALITY OF LIFE

SEPTEMBER 10, 2024

PRESENTERS:

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- KELLI BEAVERS AND SAM DRURY | RECREATION, PARKS, & TOURISM



**GOALS &
OBJECTIVES
REPORTING**



Quality of Life Definition

Creating space for community, leisure, and wellness activities, along with social supports, to enhance the experiences of residents and visitors.

GOAL 1

Quality of Life

Create a policy to promote safe, quality, and affordable housing across a range of income brackets to meet the needs of our residents.

OBJECTIVES:

- A. **PROVIDE** financial support for affordable housing projects through tools such as tax incentives or development cost offsets.
- B. **DEVELOP** a communications strategy for the Housing Choice Voucher program enrollment and leasing deadlines.
- C. **REVISE** the zoning code to incorporate regulatory measures that manage, encourage, and incentivize affordable housing.

GOAL 1 OBJECTIVE A

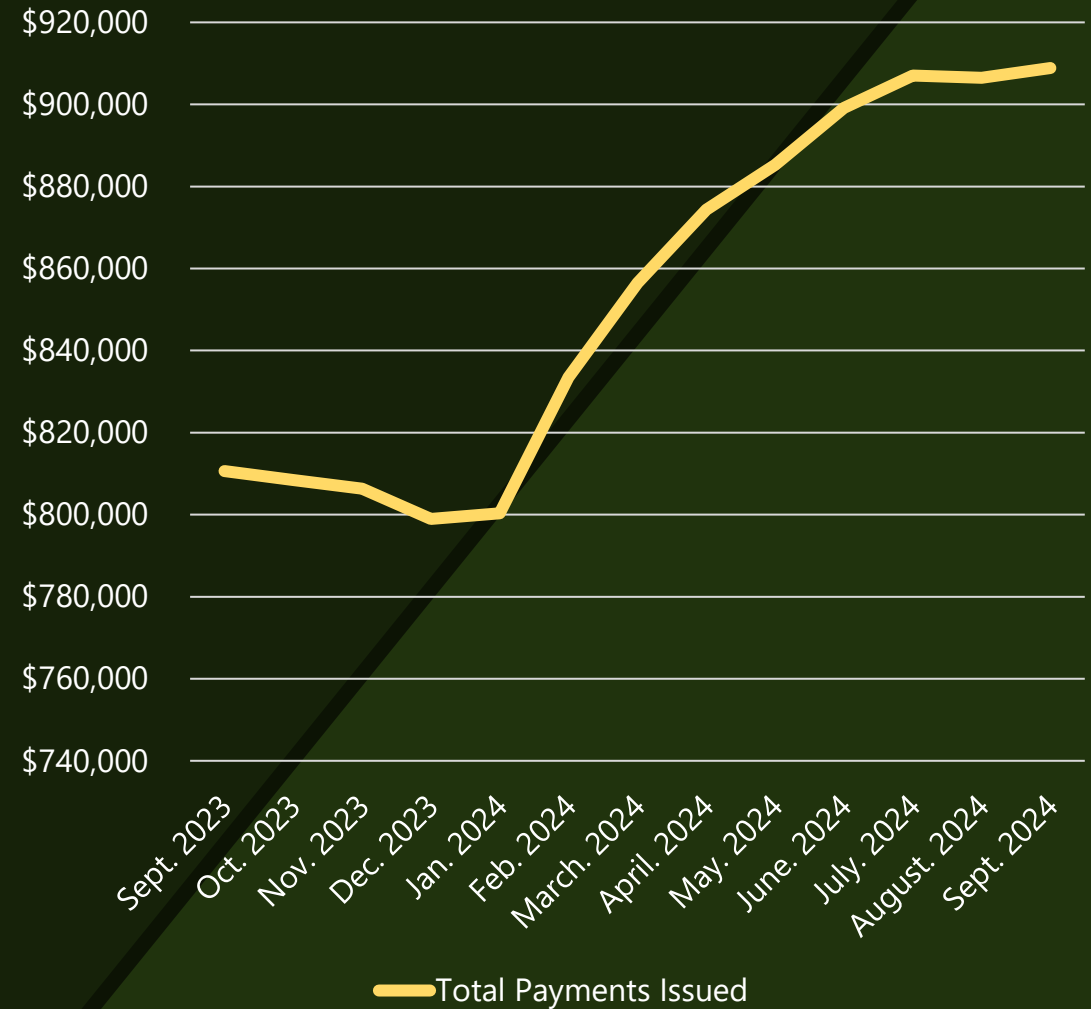
Provide financial support for affordable housing projects through tools such as tax incentives or development cost offsets.

- **Housing Authority programs continue to provide information, resources, & funded services to low-income renters and homeowners throughout Charles County.**

Recent accomplishments include:

- Delivering **\$900,000 per month in voucher payments**, a 10% increase over this same time period last year.
- **\$50,000 in USDA Rural Housing Preservation Grant** funds to eligible homeowners for essential home repairs.
- **\$500,000 in State Special Loan (SLP)** funds secured for 2 home replacement projects.
- Awarded **\$2.4M in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)** towards affordable family housing development, a recovery house for women, and a women's domestic violence home.

Total Payments Issued

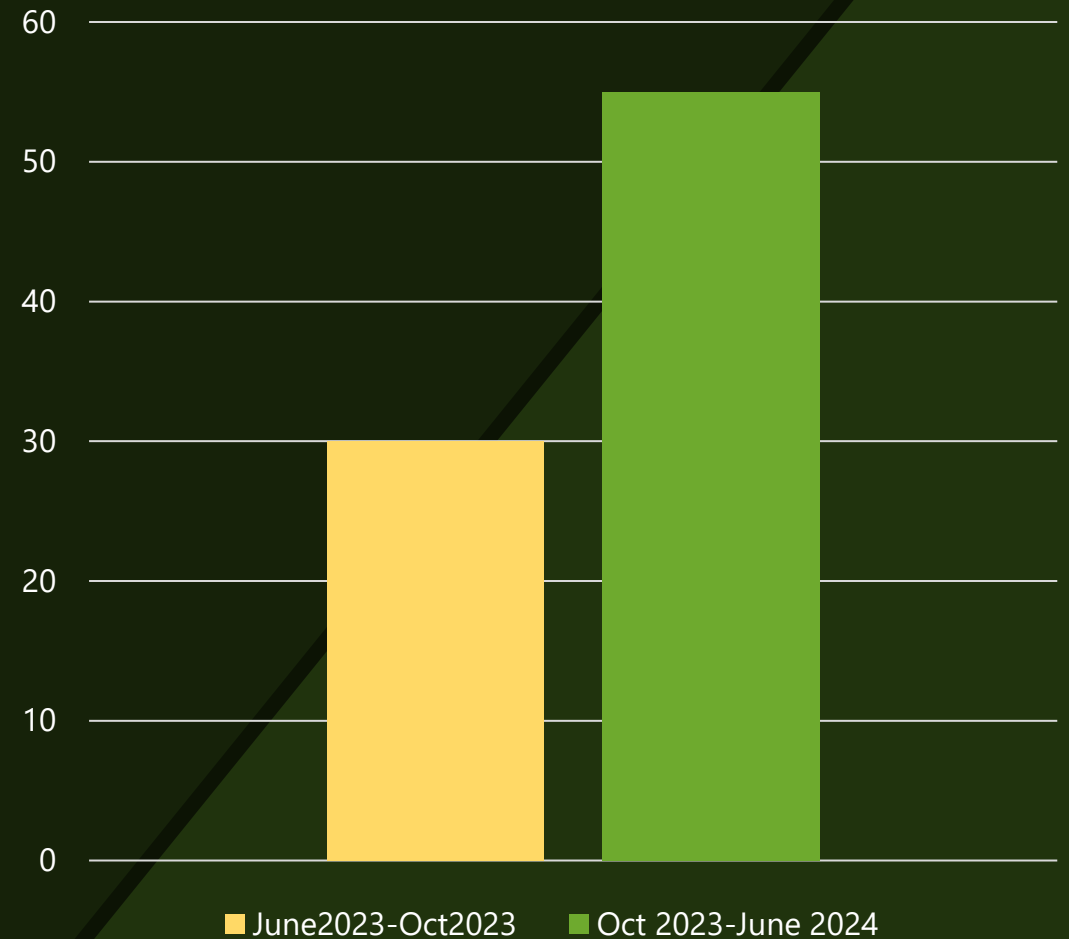


GOAL 1
OBJECTIVE B

Develop a communications strategy for the Housing Choice Voucher program enrollment and leasing deadlines.

- Housing Authority staff processed **217 applications** from the waiting list between Oct 2023 & June 2024. The annual plan states that vouchers should be in use within 60 days of issuance. This is a national performance measure for HUD.
- In fall 2023, the Housing Authority initiated an enhanced communication & customer service protocol for new voucher participants. Staff made **over 100 calls/contacts to remind participants of the 60-day deadline** & offer search resources, if needed.
- As a result of the new protocol, the 60-day voucher **utilization rate improved by nearly 60% this year.**
- The number of search time **extensions requested by new voucher holders decreased by 70%.**

Percentage of Participants who use their voucher within 60 days



GOAL 1 | OBJECTIVE C

Revise the zoning code to incorporate regulatory measures that manage, encourage, and incentivize affordable housing.

Affordable Housing Work Group

- **Established** in 2023 with the charge to develop a comprehensive affordable housing strategy.
 - **Developed** short, medium, and long-range strategies including:
 - Zoning Changes- accessory dwelling units and inclusionary zoning with a percentage of units designated as affordable.
 - Addresses incentives and mandatory requirements.
 - Considers rental and fee simple housing options with a range of housing types.
 - Implemented through zoning text amendments, overall Zoning Code update, and Comprehensive Plan
 - **Developed** a communication strategy with Media
 - Provide public education and present a range of policy tools
 - Created an Affordable Housing Engage Page which includes a Survey (closes October 31, 2024)
 - Filming a “Charles County Now” episode in September
 - **Presented** recommendations to the Planning Commission August 19.
 - **Next Step** - Fall 2024 presentation for the County Commissioners.

Affordable Housing Workgroup

HOUSING

Charles County is working to develop and implement a comprehensive affordable housing strategy to increase the availability of affordable housing.

According to data, 30% of homeowners and 45% percent of renters in Charles County are cost burdened - meaning they are paying equal to or greater than 30% of their income towards housing costs. Additionally, according to the most recent Charles County community survey (August - October 2023), only 22% of residents are satisfied with the availability of affordable housing.

Because so many households are cost-burdened, it is more difficult for low- and moderate-income households to own or rent a place to live. This results in increased demand for services and support to meet basic needs, including food, utilities, and transportation.

A lack of affordable housing also has cascading implications for economic development and growth, particularly for recruitment and retention of employees at the top five employers in Charles County.

As a subgroup of the Planning Commission, an Affordable Housing Workgroup was formed with the responsibility of reviewing and recommending policies and programs that will expand Charles County's supply of housing that is safe, affordable, equitable, and of high quality. The Workgroup will evaluate strategies and develop recommendations for discussion with the Planning Commission, host public discussions, and seek approval by the Board of County Commissioners.

Resources:

1. [Affordable Housing Workgroup Meetings](#)

OPEN

What Does Affordable Housing Mean to You?

Closes: October 31, 2024 at 11:59 PM

Share your thoughts! What does affordable housing mean to you as a Charles County resident?

[Participate Now](#)

Approximate time: 12 minutes

Stay Informed

Get notified on upcoming engagements and the latest project related news.

[Sign up for notifications](#)

"Housing is defined as affordable if total costs, including utilities, are at or below 30% of a household's gross income."

GOAL 2

Quality of Life

Provide community services, programs, and supports for seniors, families, and children.

OBJECTIVES:

- A. **EXPAND** programming at senior and recreational facilities to provide more inclusive, diverse, and accessible activities for residents.
- B. **PLAN AND HOST** inter-generational events at senior centers to improve engagement and mentoring between older adults and youth.

GOAL 2
OBJECTIVE A

Expand programming at senior and recreational facilities to provide more inclusive, diverse, and accessible activities for residents.

Increased Recreation Offerings

- **Mobile Recreation** (Rec Xpress) – WOW Wednesdays, STEM in the Park, and Teens in the Park.
- Expanded **Therapeutic Recreation** programming – Wellness in the Waves Adaptive Aquatics, Rhythm and Party Drum Fitness, and Inclusive Gymnastics.
- Grand Opening of **Calm Cove Sensory Space**.
- **National Hispanic Heritage Month** themed events.
- **Teen Options** – 1st Friday Teen Hangouts and Teen Town Halls.
- Monthly **Fun Happens Here** activity programming at Waldorf Senior & Recreational Center.



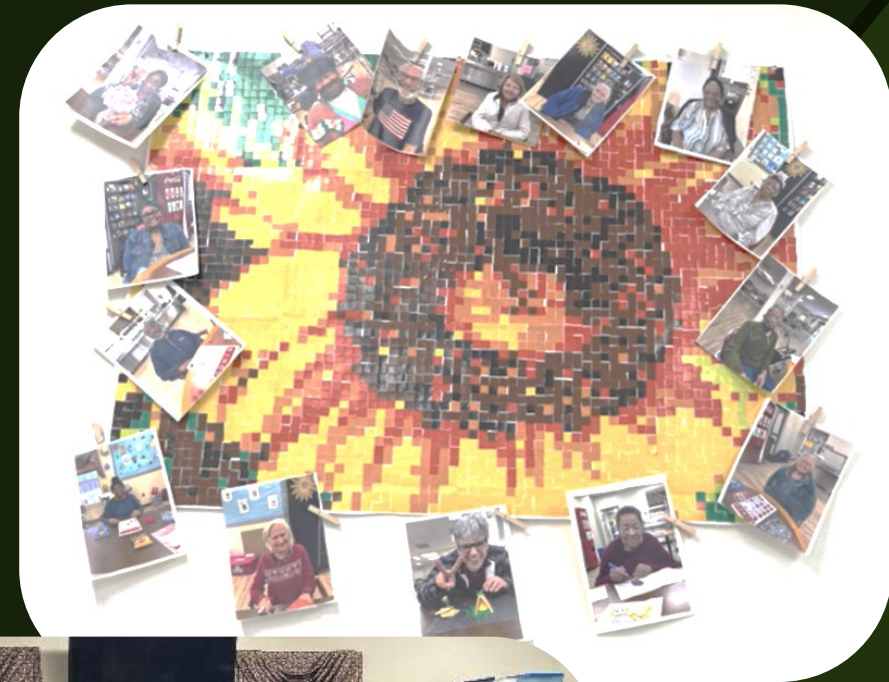
GOAL 2
OBJECTIVE A

Expand programming at senior and recreational facilities to provide more inclusive, diverse, and accessible activities for residents.

The Aging and Human Services Division has applied for a grant that will expand the available capacity of the Senior Center Plus program.

The Senior Center Plus program is designed to meet the varied needs of the more frail senior citizen age 60 or older, who may not be able to participate independently within the senior center setting, yet does not require the extensive supervision and services of medical adult day care.

<https://charles-county.cimediacloud.com/r/hhBiw0GNVHPf>



GOAL 2
OBJECTIVE B

Plan and host inter-generational events at senior centers to improve engagement and mentoring between older adults and youth.

16 inter-generational programs in FY24 included:

- July 2023- **Independence Day Celebration**
- October 2023- **Healthy Relationships**
**partnership with Teen Court*
- November 2023- **Painting & Pizza**
- December 2023- **Christmas Tree Lighting**
- December 2023- **Diabetes 101 for Families**
- August 2023- **Snackin' & Craftin'**
- March 2024- **International Women's Day**
- April 2024- **Lettuce Celebrate**
- June 2024- **Juneteenth Youth Performance**



GOAL 3

Quality of Life

Ensure broad access to public transportation.

OBJECTIVES:

- A. **USE** public feedback and demand to develop a strategy to market VanGO and the bus locator and determine system-wide improvements.
- B. **ADVOCATE** for and support all efforts for the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit (SMRT) project.

**GOAL 3
OBJECTIVE A**

Use public feedback and demand to develop a strategy to market VanGO and the bus locator and determine system-wide improvements.

- Transportation Development Plan Kick Off meeting held
- Transportation Development Plan will conduct rider surveys to assist with determining needs
- Tripshot Software implemented- **3,597 users** through July 31, 2024



 **TRIPSHOT!**



TRIP PLANNING
See everything you need to plan your trip from points A to B.



BUS LOCATION
Check the app to see available stops and routes in real time.



NOTIFICATIONS
Get fast and accurate notifications about VanGO.

Ridership Data



CHARLES COUNTY GOVERNMENT
FOCUS: Quality of Life



USE public feedback and demand to develop a strategy to market VanGO and the bus locator and determine system-wide improvements

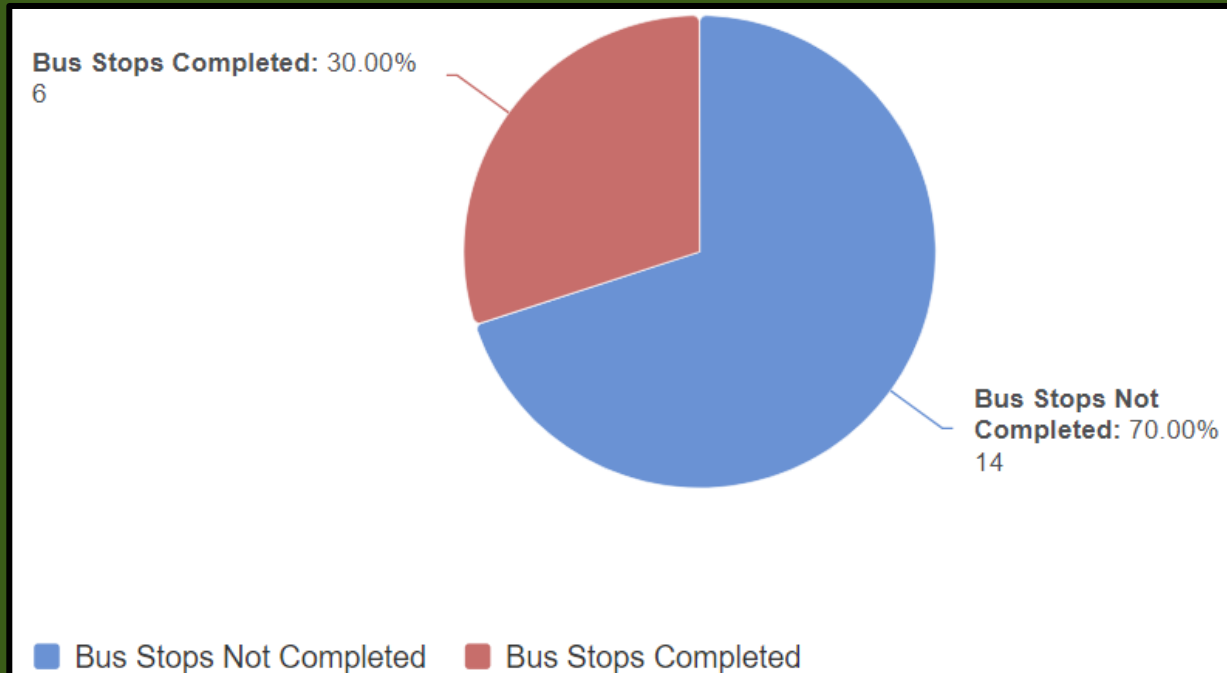
Tripshot Ridership Totals



Data Updated: Aug 28, 2024, 6:28 PM

Bus Stop Improvements

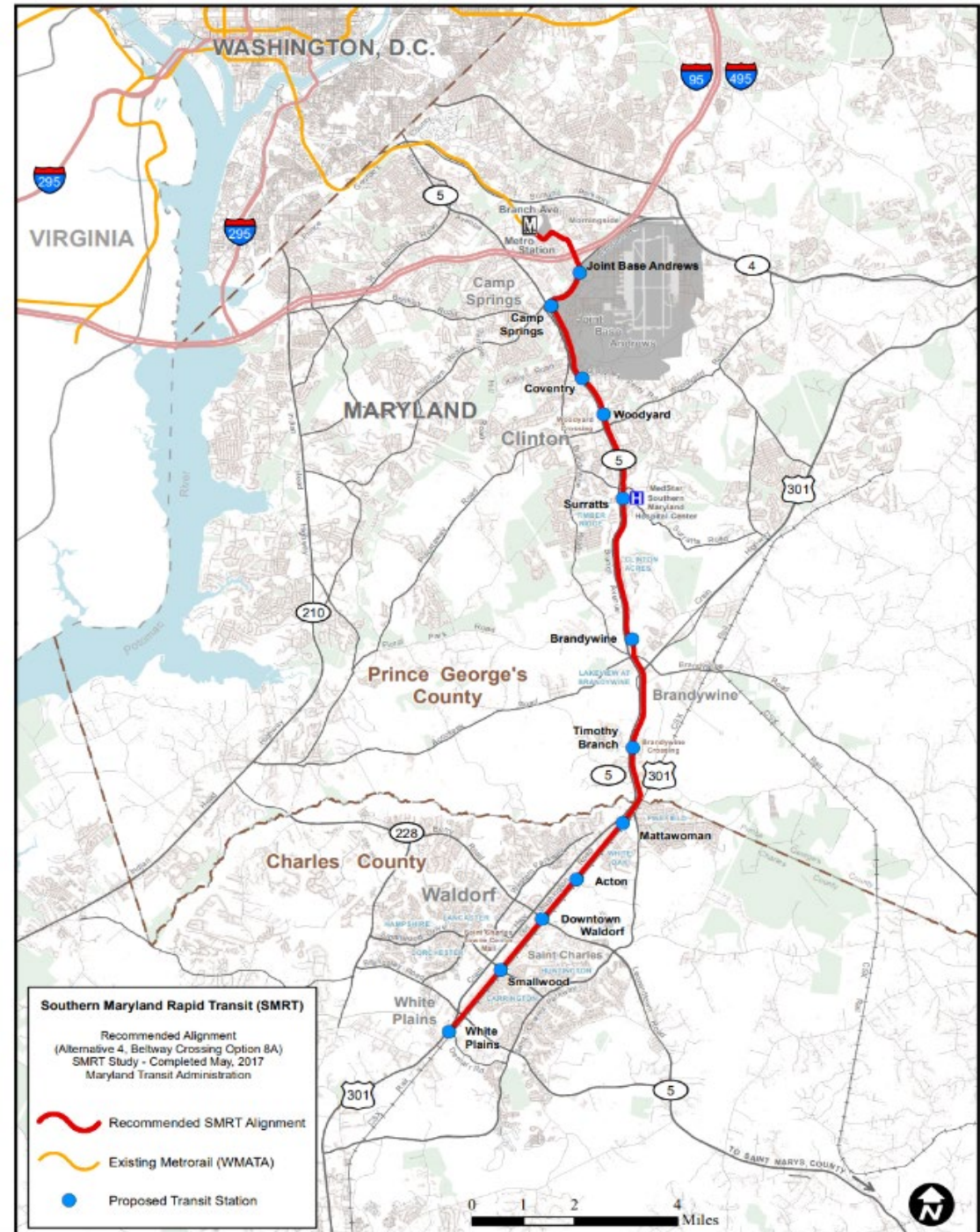
Funding has been secured for bus stop improvements to occur in phases for FY24-FY26.



GOAL 3 OBJECTIVE B

Advocate for and support all efforts for the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit (SMRT) project.

- Completed MOU with the State and Prince George's County to kick off the project
- Secured second **\$5M Earmark** to help fund the project
- Pending FY25 Federal Earmark for an additional **\$5M in funding**
- Steering Committee began meetings for project planning



GOAL 4

Quality of Life

Provide diverse recreation, outdoor, and tourism opportunities for residents and visitors.

OBJECTIVES:

- A. Maintain and update parks, trails, historic sites, and recreation facilities for active and passive use.
- B. Increase leisure opportunities within the County to offer diverse and unique experiences.
- C. Actively engage the community to collect feedback on short- and long-range plans for recreation facilities, pools, parks, and programs.

GOAL 4
OBJECTIVE A

Maintain and update parks, trails, historic sites, and recreation facilities for active and passive use.

Facility Enhancements

- Synthetic Multi-Purpose Field at Bensville Park
- Indoor Bathroom Renovations at Laurel Springs & White Plains Parks
- Electronic Entrance Gate at Chapel Point Park
- Athletic Field LED Light Upgrades at Oak Ridge Park
- Building Renovations and Vault Table Replacement at Elite Gymnastics & Recreation Center
- New Gymnasium Scoreboard at Waldorf Senior & Recreational Center



GOAL 4 OBJECTIVE B

Increase leisure opportunities within the County to offer diverse and unique experiences.

Expanded Recreation Offerings

- **RecXpress** – Broadening **program access** in Nanjemoy, Newburg, and Indian Head, Charles County Public Library collaboration, and presence at community events.
- Emphasis on **outdoor recreation offerings** with monthly line dance program in parks and play dates at community centers.

Community Outreach & Strategic Partnerships

- Maryland Association of County Summer Conference – **RPT Coloring Book**
- Launched **1st Annual Black Business Month** with 26 participating businesses.
- Sponsored local community and tourism events including **SMADC “Buy Local” Challenge** and **TrioFest**.



GOAL 4 OBJECTIVE B

Increase leisure opportunities within the County to offer diverse and unique experiences.

Events

- The Mixtape (Concert Series)
- Charles County Classic Car Show
- July 4th Fireworks – Regency Furniture Stadium

Sport Tourism

Hosted four fishing tournaments:

- MLF Bass Fishing League Northeast (May 11)
- MLF Bass Fishing League Shenandoah (May 18)
- Toyota Series (June 5-7)
- MLF Bass Fishing League Shenandoah (June 22)
- Secured 2025 MLF Bass Pro Tour Stage 6 at Potomac River (June 26-29, 2025)



GOAL 4
OBJECTIVE C

Actively engage the community to collect feedback on short- and long-range plans for recreation facilities, pools, parks, and programs.

**Mallows Bay Visitor Center
Feasibility Study**

- Began feasibility study in July 2024
- Public engagement survey was completed with 484 responses.
- Public meeting held August 9 in Indian Head.
- Contracting with WRA (Whitman, Requardt and Associates) to complete feasibility study.



Questions?





Charles County Government

200 Baltimore Street, La Plata, MD
MD Relay Service: 7-1-1

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