



2024 Annual Report



**Charles County
Recreation, Parks & Tourism**



Department Highlights

Charles County Sports & Wellness Complex

- In July 2024, purchased the former **Sears Building at the St. Charles Towne Center** to convert into a Sports and Wellness Complex.
- **Funded CIP Project** - \$53 million through FY25-FY29
- Phase 1 planned features include a **50-meter competition indoor swimming pool** within the current building structure. Phase 2 plans will include **additional indoor sports facilities** to be built on the property.
- Initial feasibility and site analysis completed by **A. Morton Thomas & Associates, Inc.**



New Recreation, Parks & Tourism Offices

107 Centennial Street

Suite A, La Plata, MD 20646

- In 2023, Charles County Government purchased the building at 107 Centennial Street which will become the new headquarters for the Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism. Throughout 2024 the ongoing renovation project was led by the Department of Public Works.
- Renovations include:
 - New employee entrance
 - Reception area for public entrance
 - Open work areas and offices
 - Safety and security enhancements
 - Roof and HVAC replacement
- 24,243 sq ft with 2,600 sq ft balcony on third floor



Department Highlights

Mallows Bay

- **Electricity and Broadband Network Fiber** project was completed in Mallows Bay Park to bring connectivity and future security enhancements into the park.
- A **feasibility study**, funded by the Rural Maryland Economic Development Fund Grant, for the **proposed heritage center** was completed in December 2024.
- Charles County was awarded **\$5 million in federal grant funding** to support the pre-construction and design phase of the future Mallows Bay Heritage Center.
 - This funding is part of a substantial **\$3.3 billion investment by NOAA** under the federal Bipartisan Inflation Act.
- The future heritage center will aim to **enhance education, exploration, and economic opportunities** for both visitors and residents by providing increased accessibility, educational initiatives, and improved amenities.
- This initiative ties into the newly established **Southern Maryland National Heritage Area**, further emphasizing its cultural significance.



Popes Creek Trail and Waterfront Park

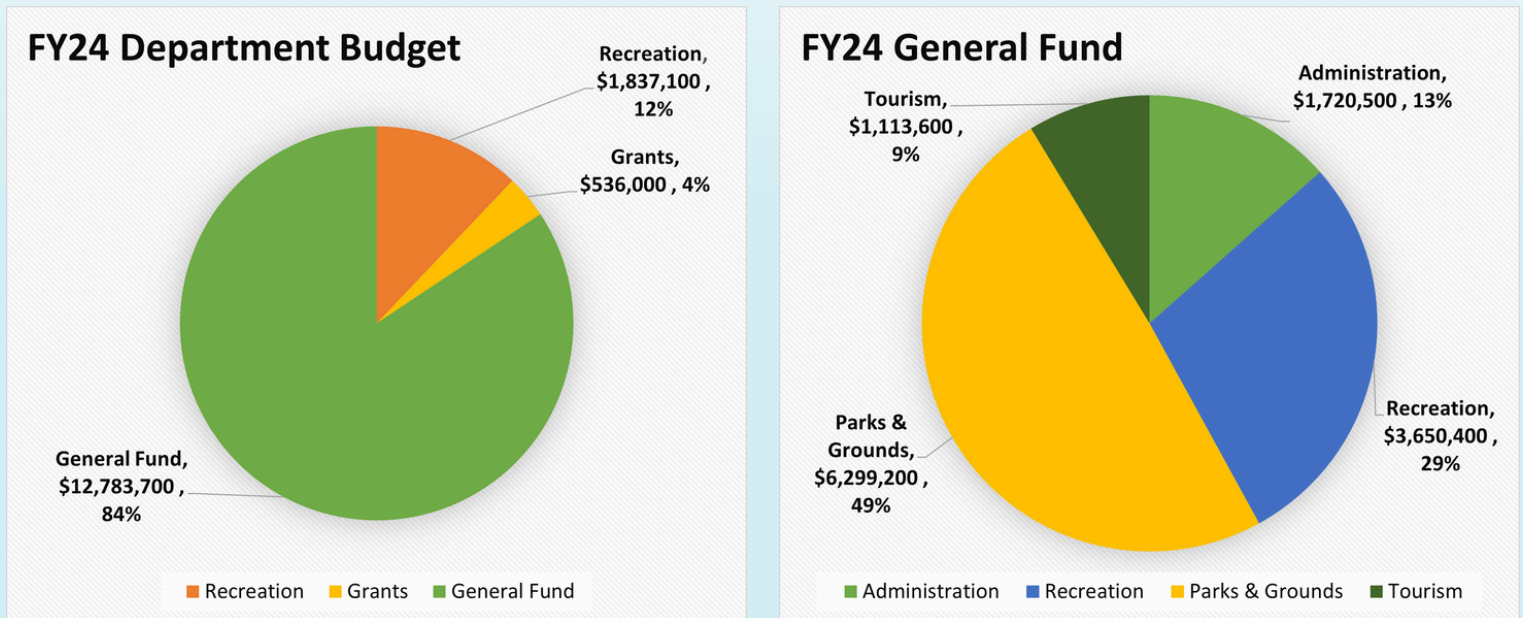
- The Resilience Authority, in partnership with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and Southern Maryland RC&D, is seeking a NOAA grant to design a living shoreline at **Popes Creek Waterfront Park** in Newburg.
- The site, classified as a Disadvantaged Community by NOAA, is **highly vulnerable to sea level rise and storm surges**.
- The project will **enhance habitats, improve water quality, reduce flooding and erosion, and boost climate resilience**.
- Collaboration with Charles County Recreation, Parks & Tourism will establish the first **public beach** in the county, supporting **recreation and environmental education**.
- This effort will showcase equitable, nature-based climate adaptation while **promoting sustainability and community engagement**.

Parkland Dedication Ordinance

- House Bill 1321 passed through the Maryland General Assembly to grant Charles County enabling legislation for the creation of a **Parkland Dedication Ordinance**. This ordinance would require property developers to pay a fee to be used instead of dedicating land (i.e., "fee-in-lieu"), or a combination of dedication or construction of recreational facilities.

Finance & Administration

Fiscal Year 24 Department Budget



- Department budget **increased by 18%** from FY23 to FY24.
 - General fund increased by 15%, Recreation increased by 11%, and Grants increased by 678%
- Added **eight full time positions** in 2024.

Registration

- Expanded **automation within Registration Office** to include online billings for field reservations, pavilion rentals, online food truck reservations.

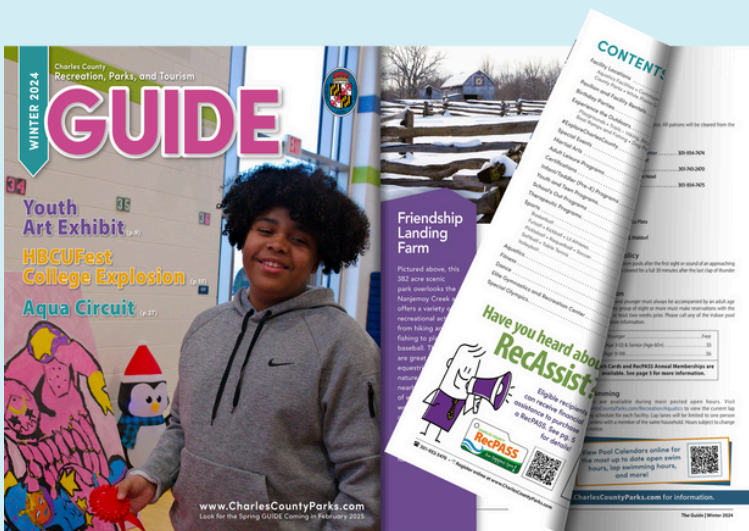
MyRec Metrics	FY23 (2022-2023)	FY24 (2023-2024)	+/- %
Total Registrations	24,508	23,290	-4.9%
First Time Registrations	4,758	3,960	-16.8%
Total Transactions	\$2,293,160.94	\$2,383,716.03	+16.2%

89.3% of MyRec registrations were by residents; 10.7% by non-residents (FY24)

Finance & Administration

Outreach and Media

- Quarterly GUIDE Publication
- **Award Winning** Charles County Visitors Guide - Tourism
- Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Pinterest, and LinkedIn presence
- Email marketing via Constant Contact
- Charles County Government - Media Services collaborations
 - Your Charles County and other video segments



	FY23 (2022-2023)	FY24 (2023-2024)	+/- %
Parks & Rec Email Open Rate	46.60%	47.51%	+1.9%
Tourism Consumer Email Open Rate	35.43%	37.15%	+4.8%
Hospitality Industry Email Open Rate	36.30%	39.55%	+8.9%
Total Social Media Audience	41,096	50,022	+21.7%

Recreation



- Offers diverse recreational experiences for residents of all ages, including fitness, arts, enrichment classes, special events, county-wide sports programs, and summer camps.
- Manages 19 recreation facilities, operates Rec Xpress mobile recreation in county parks, and administers the RecAssist scholarship program, facilitating access to recreational activities for eligible recipients.

	FY23 (2022-2023)	FY24 (2023-2024)	+/- %
Programs Offered	1,948	2,088	+7.2%
Program Attendance	21,248	21,444	+0.9%
Program Revenue	\$1,812,856.91	\$2,106,654.42	+16.2%

Program Development

- **Friday Teen Hangouts**
 - Expanded 1st Friday Teen Program (launched in September 2023) operations to a weekly occurrence.
 - Program offered for FREE to teens ages 13-17 at Billingsley, Davis, Smallwood, Somers, and Stoddert Community Centers, and the Waldorf Senior & Recreational Center.
- **Trade Skills Career Expo**
 - Held at Loral Springs Regional Park in November 2024.
 - 82 registered participants
 - Collaborative event between Recreation and Parks divisions, Department of Public Works, and Department of Human Resources.
- **Intergenerational Programs**
 - Waldorf Senior & Recreational Center facilitated 13 intergenerational programs for grandparents/children which provided various arts and crafts, story times, and general recreational programs that fostered community and bonding.
- **Cultural Awareness Events**
 - Events included Flashlight Easter Egg Hunt, Swimming with Santa, Fall Festival at Bensville Park, Therapeutic Holiday Dance and Social, Santa’s Hotline, National Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration, and Winter Holiday Market.

Recreation

Notable Accomplishments

- **2024 Summer Camps**
 - 42 different summer camps offered
 - 4,605 registered campers
- **RecAssist**
 - \$75,000 funds awarded - maximum allotment
- **Calm Cove Sensory Space**
 - Grand re-opening held in February 2024 at Elite Gymnastics & Recreation Center with 59 attendees.
 - 328 paid drop-ins; \$1,652 in revenue
- **RecXpress**
 - Completed 164 outreach in events in 2024
- **Sports**
 - Indoor Sports Registrations: 6,927 (4,589 male/2,068 female; 6,249 residents/ 678 non-residents)
 - Outdoor Sports Registrations: 2,865 (1,658 male/1,089 female; 2,167 residents/698 non-residents)



Parks & Grounds

- Manages diverse outdoor recreation opportunities across 4,194 acres of parkland, 50 miles of trails, and 84 athletic fields.
- Oversees snow removal at 30 CCG sites, Capital Improvement projects, and issues 335 permits for over 5,000 scheduled games among 50 different local organizations.

2024 By the Numbers



Mallows Bay Park Vehicle Count: **20,812**



White Plains Golf Course Rounds of Golf: **23,190**



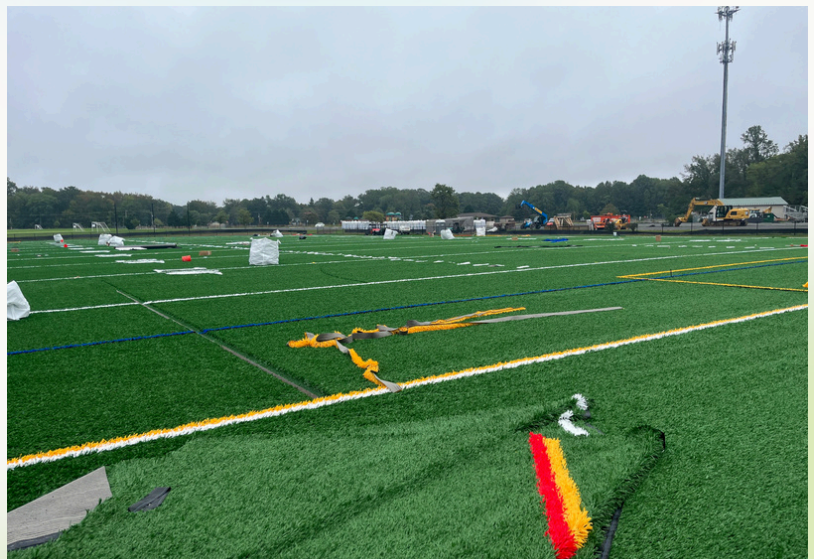
Gilbert Run Park Pavilion Rentals: **400**

Notable Accomplishments

- Secured **\$5 million in federal grant funding** from NOAA to support the pre-construction and design phase. of the future Mallows Bay Heritage Center.
- Turkey Hill Park's **bocce ball courts** opened for public use.
- **ADA-accessible paving projects** were completed at White Plains and Laurel Springs Parks
- A new **maintenance building** was completed at Friendship Farm Park.
- Stethem Park's office/concession building received a **new roof**.
- White Plains Golf Course's **maintenance building** was upgraded with three new commercial garage doors.
- **Electric and internet services** were installed at Mallows Bay Park.

Bensville Multi-Purpose Field

- Construction commenced on **synthetic multi-purpose turf field** in August 2024 and was completed in October 2024.
 - Musco LED field lights - November 2024
 - Outside perimeter paving - December 2024
- The field is striped to accommodate **five different sports**:
 - Football
 - Regulation Soccer
 - U-10 Soccer
 - Boys Lacrosse
 - Girls Lacrosse



Tourism

- Staff supports and partners with the hospitality industry sector to protect, preserve, and promote Charles County as a unique travel destination in Maryland.
- Manages Maryland Tourism Advertisement Grant funding and the Community Grant program.



Charles County
MARYLAND

Legends, Lore and Room to Explore

Special Events

- **Restaurant Week 2024** (30 participating locations)
 - Hosted new social media competition to engage the public and advertise for restaurants.
- The **Classic Car Show** - 4,500 attendees (LY 3,900)
 - Held in collaboration with with The Shops of Waldorf Center Classic Car Show with DMV Rods & Classic Car Club.
- **Black Business Month** - Recognizes and celebrates Black-owned businesses and entrepreneurs across the county.
- **Food Truck Week and Fare** - A week that promotes the unique cuisines of locally-owned and operated food trucks.
- Hosted **six fishing tournaments** at Smallwood State Park (1,329 anglers).



Accolades

- Received **Maximizing Opportunities Award at Maryland Tourism Travel Summit** for collaborative BruMate (insulated cooler retailer) campaign.
 - This initiative aligned the marketing resources of the department, BruMate and Ace Hardware stores.
- **State Tourism Grant Award** for FY25: \$109,470 (LY: \$41,923).
 - The grant award increase is attributed to an increase in local investment and positive overall growth in the tax codes deemed attributable to tourism by the Comptroller of Maryland.
- Awarded **\$38,000 to nonprofit organizations** in a competitive grant process to support tourism product development.
 - 2024 grant recipients include McConchie One-Room School, Maryland Veterans Museum, Working Out Wonders, Charles County Art Alliance, Friends of Chapmans State Park, St. Mary Catholic Church Newport and Mattawoman Creek Art Center.

Tourism

Notable Accomplishments

- Launched **Explore Charles County** YouTube series
 - Monthly episodes showcase hospitality-focused businesses, initiatives, and attractions.
 - Series was one of the highest-performing on the CCG YouTube channel.
- Attended **American Bus Association Marketplace** and **Pennsylvania Bus Marketplace** to recruit and increase motorcoach business in the county.
- Expanded definition of hotel in county code to include **short-term rental operations**.
- Created the first department **Adult Coloring & Activity Book** featuring county parks, recreation activities and facilities, and tourism assets and attractions.
- Launched **Good Morning Washington ABC7 segments** for Dr. Mudd House, Town of La Plata, Copper Compass Distilling Co., and Gilbert Run Park.
- Partnered with Economic Development to launch a countywide gift card program called **"With Love From Charles."**
- Hosted **Fox 5 DC Zip Trip** live segment at White Plains Regional Park to highlight tourism businesses, attractions, and the local community.
- Sponsored **community events**: Charles County Pride, Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission Buy Local Challenge, TrioFest, St. Charles Running Festival, Independence Day Fireworks at Regency Furniture Stadium.
- Established Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement with **Southern Maryland National Heritage Area**.
- Established Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for **Tourism Community Grant**.

