

Charles County



Climate Action Plan

WELCOME

Interactive Webinar #3

February 26, 2025





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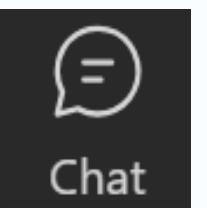
Mic



Raise



Please use the chat function to ask questions during the session.



Chat



If you experience technological issues during the meeting, please message **Colleen Turner** via chat or email, colleen.turner@mbakerintl.com.

During today's meeting we will:

- Review GHG reduction, resilience, and communication **strategies developed by the community**.
- Learn about **additional strategies** the County is considering.
- Prioritize** and discuss strategy implementation.

Meet the Team

Let's Talk About It
Climate Action Planning in Charles County



Climate Action Plan Project Manager



Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

Contracting Authority



Project Team
Lead

Greenhouse Gas
Analyses

Resilience
Analyses

Community
Engagement

Introductions

Let's Talk About It Climate Action Planning in Charles County



Beth Groth
Charles County Climate
Resilience and
Sustainability Officer



Noelani Brockett
Charles County
Planner

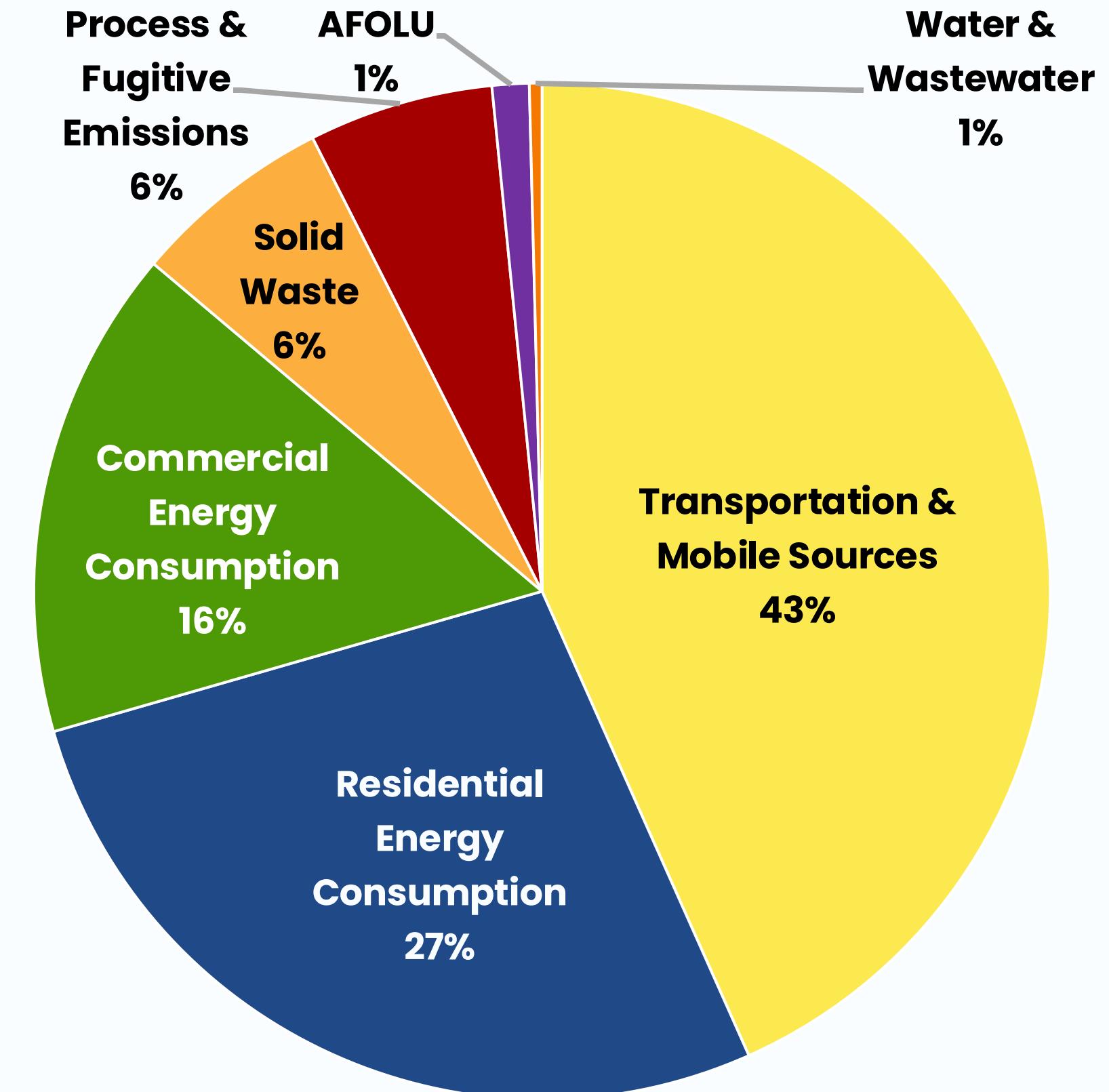


Colleen Turner
Michael Baker International
Associate Vice President &
Planning Practice Lead

Where do GHG Emissions Come From?

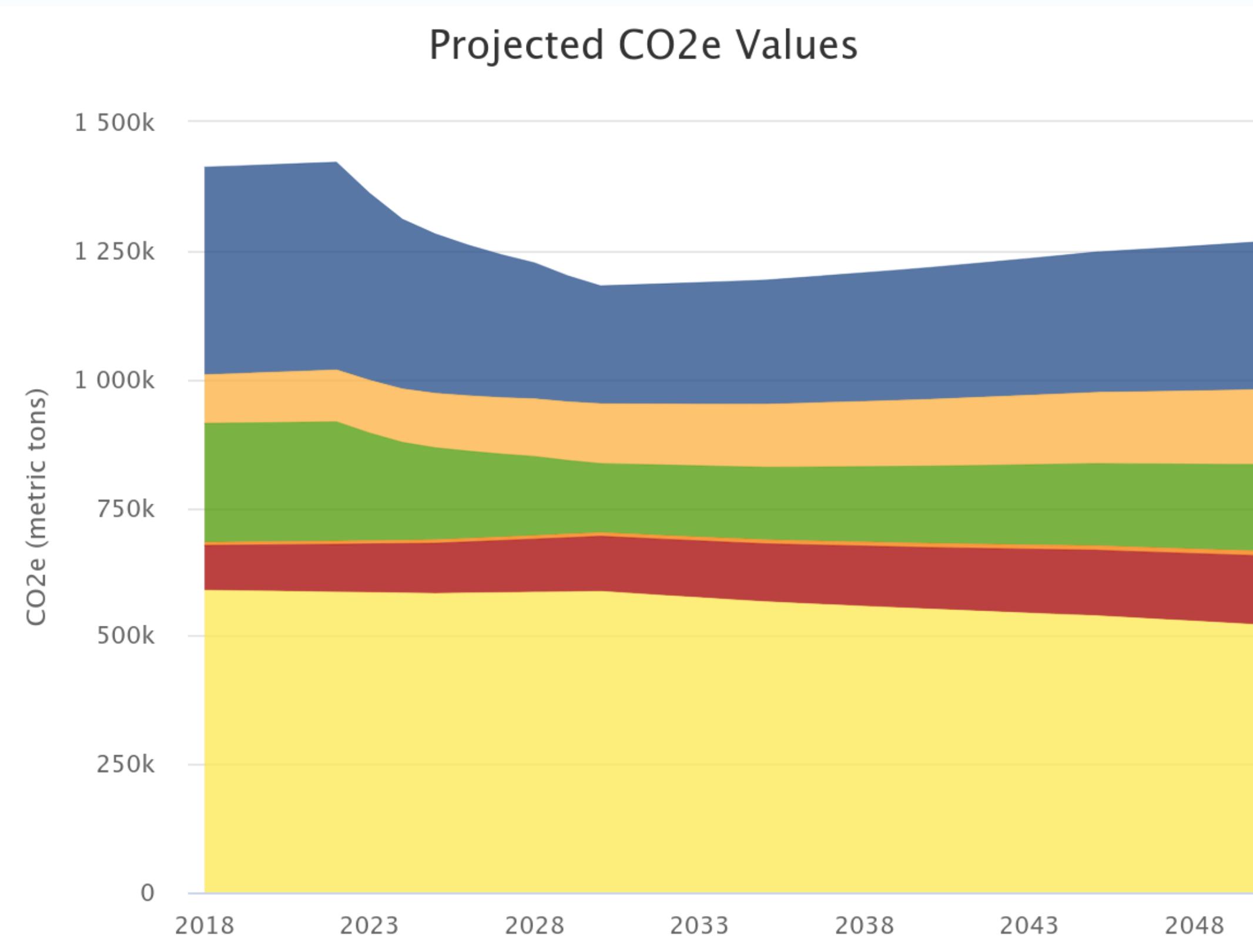
Let's Talk About It
Climate Action Planning in Charles County

- 86% from Transportation and Energy Use
- **AFOLU** = Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use
- **Process & Fugitive Emissions** = Industrial process and manufacturing emissions as well as leaks from equipment or pipelines



What is Business-As-Usual?

Let's Talk About It Climate Action Planning in Charles County



- **MWCOG** cooperative forecast for Charles County population
- **NREL Cambium** projections for electricity emissions factors through 2030. Electricity emissions factor is constant from 2030 onwards.
- **Federal CAFE** standards applied to vehicle efficiency through 2050.

When discussing potential strategies, participants of **Webinar 2: Where are we Heading? Inventories, Forecasts, and Initial Strategy Discussion** breakout groups were asked to think about the following:

- **Challenges and opportunities** in the community related to climate change resilience and mitigation.
- **Actionable strategies** to address those challenges.
- **Individual climate action** supported by County initiatives.
- **Effective communication** strategies for the Climate Action Plan.



Actionable strategy refers to **a well-defined, practical action** that can be implemented to achieve specific goals in mitigating or adapting to the impacts of climate change. These strategies are characterized by their **clarity, feasibility, and measurable outcomes**.



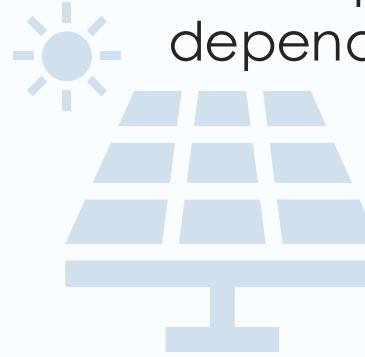
Interactive Polling: CAP Strategy Development

Strategies Developed by the Community



Sustainable Transportation and Community Design

- Transition cars to low emission vehicles.
- Increase access to charging stations for electric vehicles.
- Increase public transportation options, including connecting the Branch Ave. Metro to Charles County via extending the Green Line Metro (the Southern Maryland Rapid Transit (SMRT) light rail line is currently under study).
- Develop more walkable communities to reduce vehicle dependence.



Green Building and Renewable Energy

- Install solar panels to reduce electric bills.
- Commit to green building techniques for government buildings.
- Consider renewable energy storage solutions.



Green Spaces and Native Plants

- Promote the planting of native plants and gardens instead of traditional lawns.
- Support tree planting efforts from non-governmental organizations.



Waste Reduction

- Support the Beverage and Litter Reduction Bill (HB 232) to reduce landfill waste.
- Increase options for composting

Select the three (3) GHG strategies you think are most important for reducing GHG in Charles County.

- 1st**  Develop more accessible communities (i.e. bikability, walkability, micromobility)
- 2nd**  Improve public transportation.
- 3rd**  Enhance green spaces (recreational or natural).
- 4th**  Reduce waste (i.e. recycling, composting).
- 5th**  Adopt low emission vehicles.
- 6th**  Improve efficiency of buildings, and heating and cooling systems.
- 7th**  Install solar panels throughout the community.

Let's talk about the top three (3)!

The top 3 choices in addition to their positive environmental impact also have a positive effect on livability in the community

Making the city more accessible will cut down on the greenhouse gases that cars produce

I put green spaces as #1, and my intent with that was to conserve as much mature forest as possible, and limit any new greenfield development. The development is so poorly planned in the County.

Densifying our existing town core areas and mxing uses will inherently make things more walkable, easier to use transit in, and preserve green space

We need to conserve green space and forests by reducing the amount of development and by enforcing the provisions of the Forest Conservation Act

bus only lanes along 301, 228, 210 especially would likely encourage more people to ride the bus because they can bypass traffic

Since Charles County has a lot of long roads, we could implement more roundabouts that foucs on pedestrian safety and include more bike lanes. Also create more green walking space and cut down lanes

Van Go in more accessible areas, many stops are on the side of the highway

Let's talk about the top three (3)!

more pedestrian/bike only paths that connect existing neighborhoods to shopping centers

reducing emissions of the bus fleet in operation seems to be aligned with helping the biggest source of CO2

Light rail to connect to the metro

maybe some kind of assistance/education about upgrading the insulation/envelope of a home so they are able to better regulate temperature without as much dependence on ac/heating

Invest County funding into preserving property within the new SoMD Woodlands National Wildlife Refuge

rip up pavement in parking lots with a lot of extra space and convert to either green space or buildings

Possibly creating a community garden to encourage native plant gardening

improve actual bus stops county wide. They NEED protected bus shelters with actual seating and a cover. I see people sitting on guardrails waiting for the bus. That is not attractive to most people

Let's talk about the top three (3)!

partner with schools - recycling and waste education, school gardens that collaborate with neighborhoods, nature walks, just general awareness and appreciation for nature

more frequent community trash pick ups

partner with local farmers/master gardeners to deliver food waste to them to compost, if its not possible to do at home

Engaging with HOAs to create community gardens, parks, safer streets.

Bike Buses would be great!! To help kids within a mile or two to school to get to school safely. They're a well established idea in Portland, Or. bikebus.org I think

GHG Reduction Strategies Discussion

Themes:

- **Integration and Overlap:** The top three priorities often overlap and support each other, creating more successful and sustainable communities.
- **Community Involvement:** Engaging the community through education, events, and partnerships is crucial for the success of these strategies.
- **Safety and Accessibility:** Ensuring that public transportation and active transportation options are safe and accessible is key to encouraging their use.
- **Convenience and Cost:** Addressing the convenience and cost of transportation options is essential to changing behavior and increasing adoption of sustainable practices.

Top Three Priorities:

1. Develop More Accessible Communities

- **Overlap of Priorities:** Successful green communities often integrate these top three priorities.
- **Building Codes:** New developments should include bike and pedestrian paths in their design.
- **Land Use and Walkability:** There is a crucial link between land use and the walkability of communities.
- **Walkshed and Bike-shed Areas:**
 - **GIS Mapping:** Creating walk shed and bike shed maps to identify areas needing better connectivity. Most people are willing to walk a quarter mile to half a mile.
- **Local Government Planning:**
 - **Connecting Sidewalks:** New community developments have sidewalks, but there is a need to connect these "islands" of sidewalks to population centers in towns like La Plata. Long-term connectivity improvements would greatly increase walking and biking.

2. Improve Public Transportation

- **Bus-Only Lanes:** Implementing bus-only lanes along 301, 228, and 210 could encourage more bus usage by allowing buses to bypass traffic.
- **VanGo Expansion:**
 - **Expanded Routes:** Highlighted the need for expanded routes to prevent accidents involving late-night workers. MTA buses plan to expand, but it's unclear if VanGo will expand its service areas.
 - **Commuter Safety:** Better lighting would improve safety for late-night commuters.
- **Bus Shelters:**
 - **Safer Stops:** Inadequate bus shelters deter people from using public transport. Issues include lack of wheelchair accessibility, proximity to busy roads, uneven ground, lack of seating and no sidewalk access.
 - **New Bus Stop:** A new bus stop with solar panels and seating is a good start but needs enclosures for safety. The PD Brown Library bus shelter is a good example, but others on 301 feel unsafe.

2. Improve Public Transportation

- **Bus Shelters:**
 - **Bus Lanes:** Needed to increase convenience, making public transport a more attractive option.
 - **Crosswalks and Lighting:** Clearer crosswalks and better lighting are essential.
 - **Trade-Offs:** Consider whether it is cheaper and faster to stay in the car. The only benefit of public transport might be the ability to relax, but this alone may not justify its use.
- **Employer Incentives:**
 - **Public Transportation:** Some employers do not offer incentives for using public transport, which could have made a difference.
 - **Commuter Programs:** Provide information on commuter programs like the Commuter Choice Program from COG and the Maryland Commuter Program.

3. Enhance Green Spaces

- **Overlap of Priorities:** Successful green communities often integrate these top three priorities.

- **Other Points:**
 - **Insulation Education:** Providing education on home insulation, especially for older residents with older homes. A program to help seniors would be beneficial.
 - **Community Events:**
 - **Encouraging Walking:** Organizing community events to encourage walking, which could also improve community health and change mindsets.
 - **Charles County Health Page:** The Walk Charles County Group organizes monthly walks at different parks, providing updates on Facebook and through email. This could serve as a model for similar initiatives.

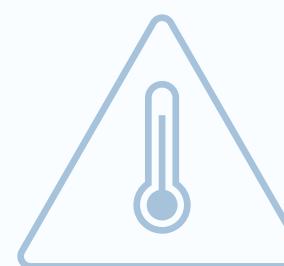
Strategies Developed by the Community



- Evaluate evacuation routes for severe weather events.
- Review building codes and new structures for setbacks and elevation.
- Increase capacity for sewer lines and hardened energy infrastructure.

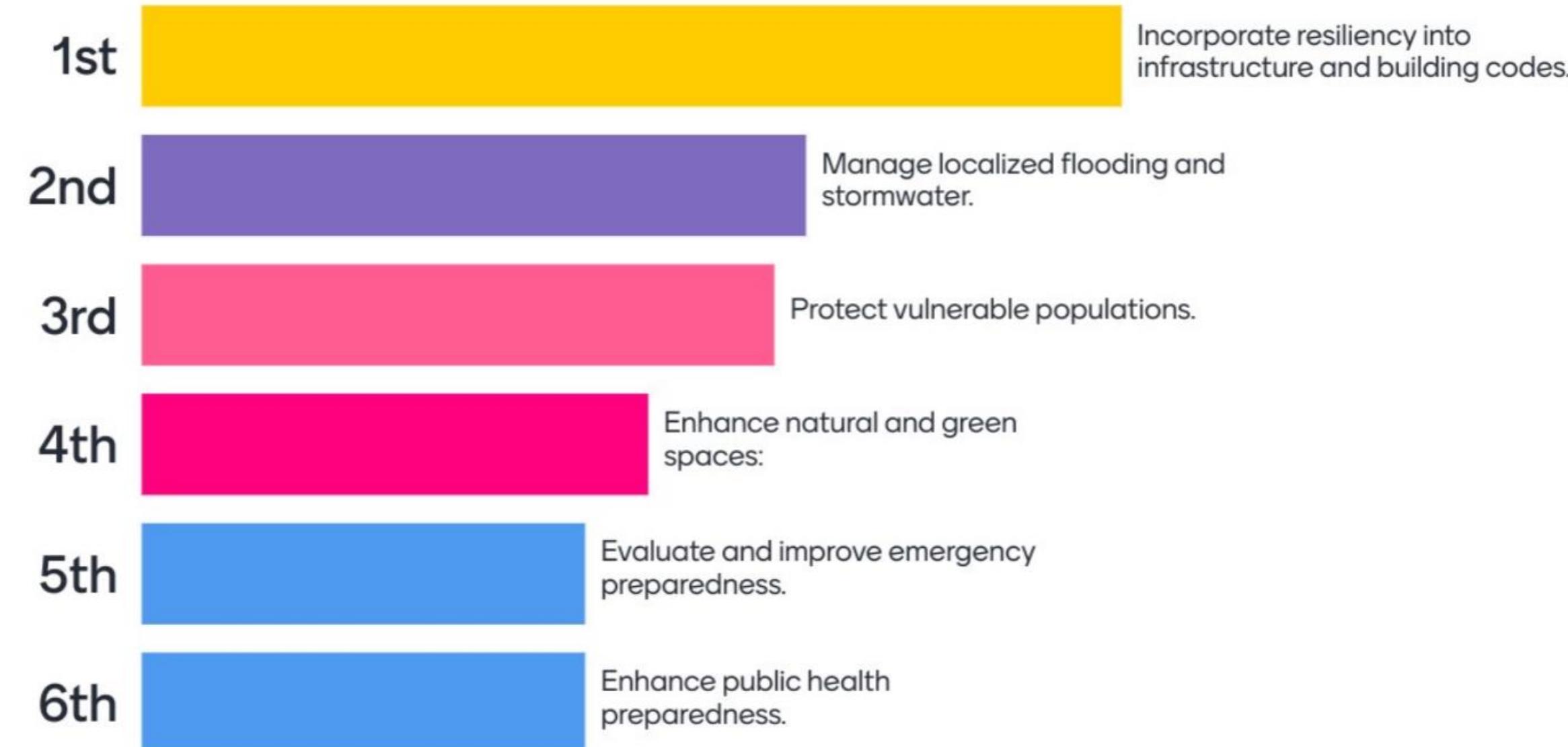


- Increase tree cover and forest areas to absorb water, filter pollution, mitigate flooding, and reduce the heat island effect.
- Address localized stream flooding.



- Develop guidelines to protect outdoor workers from extreme heat.
- Plant more shade trees and provide shaded areas at sports facilities.

Select the three (3) resiliency strategies you think are most important for making a resilient Charles County.



Let's talk about the top three (3)!

A lot of these are also interconnected. Smarter and more climate sensitive buildings and infrastructure will help with flooding and protection of communities by design

The new developments clear cut all trees and rely on retaining walls and extensive grading. DR Horton and Lennar have already received extensive flooding complaints. SoMD is a low lying coastal area.

Not only how to build in ways that can survive climate change (floods, fires, drought), but also where you can build. Protecting lands from development that impact water quality, run-off, etc.

Our road infrastructure needs to be addressed. Not sure if it goes along with this platform, but traffic is horrible

the areas in between highways are great places to have native plant meadows. They don't need to be mowed as much if at all, maybe once a year, and will help with stormwater management.

congestion

Some communities may need additional help in making their structures resilient to climate change.

Heating and cooling centers would help.

Resilience Strategies Discussion

Themes:

- **Sustainable Building Practices:** Emphasize green building techniques, learn from indigenous and European architecture, and pursue context-specific (biome-specific) development.
- **Alternative Transportation Solutions:** Develop bus/bike shared lanes and carpool lanes, enhance bus and train infrastructure and consider shuttles to key locations to reduce road congestion.
- **Preplanned Evacuation Strategies:** Establish meeting locations for evacuation by school bus fleets and optimize evacuation windows to manage road capacity during natural disasters.

Top Three Priorities:

1. Incorporate Resilience into Infrastructure

- **Work with Nature:** Emphasize green building techniques and learn from indigenous and European architecture. Current development often uses generic styles that don't consider specific environmental challenges. Pursue context-specific (biome-specific) development and non-sterile options.
- **Alternative Road Capacity Solutions:** Instead of expanding roadways, consider bus/bike shared lanes, carpool lanes, and improved train and bus infrastructure. Shuttles to key locations like Branch Avenue Metro station could also help reduce road congestion.
- **Preplanned Evacuation Strategies:** Establish meeting locations for evacuation by school bus fleets and optimize evacuation windows to manage road capacity during natural disasters.

2. Manage Localized Flooding and Stormwater

- **Older County Roads:** Many older, winding county roads have low spots prone to flooding, pushing vehicles to larger roadways and increasing congestion, or blocking access to facilities with no alternative routes. Specific examples include Bumpy Oak Rd., Bryan's Rd., and Mitchell Rd. in La Plata.
- **Stormwater Management:** Incorporate native plant gardens and natural creeks around buildings to handle stormwater and reduce flooding. Avoid paving over natural areas to allow for better water absorption.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Consider preplanned evacuation strategies, including meeting locations for evacuation by school bus fleets and optimizing evacuation windows.

3. Protect Vulnerable Populations

- **Mass Transit for Evacuations:** Current mass transit systems are insufficient for reliably evacuating entire populations, especially the most vulnerable. Improved bus and train infrastructure is needed to ensure safe evacuations.
- **Community Resource Days:** Provide more frequent events to support homeless and disenfranchised populations, increasing health and housing opportunities.
- **Agency Collaboration:** Look into successful models like the conglomeration of agencies in Calvert County and consider implementing similar collaborations in Charles County to better support vulnerable populations.
- **Resilience Hubs:** Utilize existing resources like churches to create resilience hubs where people can gather, share information on resilience topics, and receive support.

Other Points:

- **Increase Roadway Capacity:** Outside of expanding roadways, provide opportunities to reduce single occupancy vehicle congestion such as shuttles to public transportation like the Branch Avenue Metro or trains running north and south.
- **Tailored Events:** Organize multiple, smaller events throughout the year, each focusing on specific topics, rather than one large event, to better address the diverse needs of the community.

Strategies Developed by the Community

Public Education and Outreach

- Implement outreach programs in schools to educate young people about climate change.
- Engage local press to write articles about the Climate Action Plan.
- Create a network of community members to spread awareness.
- Set up informational tables at events like county fairs and festivals.



Digital and Traditional Media

- Use email lists to reach a broader audience.
- Improve communication through the county website, TV channel, and postcard-type mailers.



What about climate change in Charles County would you like to learn more about?

15 responses

green energy

not being car-dependent

transportation options

health and safety

road lights

benefits of nature

volunteer opportunities

evacuation plans

noise pollution

money

community gardens

affordable housing

elders

land stewardship

civic engagement

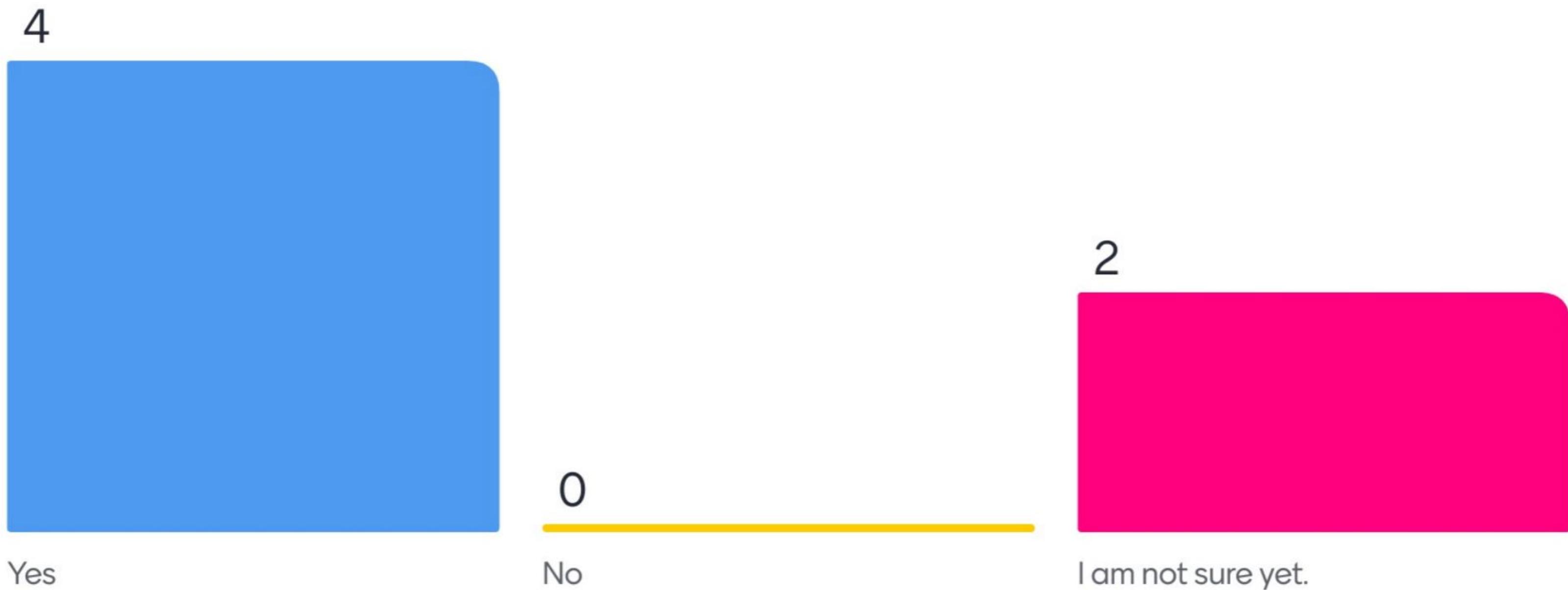
benefits of a green city

Communication Discussion

- **Community Engagement:**
 - **Climate Ambassadors:** Encourage community members to become ambassadors to help spread information and engage their networks.
- **Financial Transparency:**
 - **Cost-Benefit Analysis:** Highlight the financial costs and savings of implementing climate practices and infrastructure to make the information more accessible and convincing.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:**
 - **County and Town Collaboration:** Explore partnerships between the county and incorporated towns to align efforts and engage more citizens.
 - **Partnering with Other Groups:** Identify and partner with groups already working on climate resilience to educate them on how their efforts align with broader climate goals.
- **Resource Accessibility:**
 - **Resource Webpage:** Create a webpage with books, documentaries, podcasts, videos, etc., about climate topics for those who cannot attend events

- **Youth and Community Involvement:**
 - **Youth Engagement:** Collaborate with police and schools to offer additional activities for youth, such as through biking workshops that will keep them active and engaged in the community.
 - **Public Transit Familiarization:** Implement programs to familiarize children with public transit, helping them navigate and use the system, and encouraging their families to do the same.

Are you interested in being a Charles County Climate Ambassador?



Do you have any suggestions on locations for in person meetings? or events for in-person outreach?

Waldorf West Library

HOA/neighborhood
community buildings!

CSM

Libraries, rec centers,
schools

Public schools

CSM

La Plata Library

CCPL Book Fest on April
5

- **Interactive Community Webinars**
 - Meeting #4 – Initial Climate Action Plan Strategy Analysis Results
 - March 26, 2025, 6-7:00 pm
- **In-Person Public Meetings**
 - Various locations through Charles County: April-May 2025
- **Attendance at Community Events**
 - Help us reach the community, be a Charles County Climate Ambassador!
- **Other Stakeholder Engagement**
 - Utilities
 - Government Agencies [State, Federal, regional bodies and local government]
 - Community Organizations and Advocacy Groups
 - Students / Youth
- **Continued Analysis and Strategy Development**

Be Engaged & Involved!

Let's Talk About It
Climate Action Planning in Charles County



Visit our Climate Action Plan Engage Page

<https://charles-county-md.civilspace.io/en/projects/charles-county-climate-action-planning>



Join Our Mailing List

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Thank You For Your Participation!

Beth Groth

Climate Resilience and
Sustainability Officer

Noelani Brockett

Planner

301-645-0692

ClimateAction@CharlesCountyMD.gov

